**SPECIAL ASSEMBLY MEETING**
**THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA**

Meeting Minutes - April 25, 2016

**MEETING NO. 2016-19:** The Special Meeting of the City and Borough of Juneau Assembly, held in the Assembly Chambers of the Municipal Building, was called to order at 6:15 p.m. by Mayor Ken Koelsch.

## I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

As this was a Special Joint Meeting with the Assembly and Planning Commission, following is a list of all members from both bodies present at the meeting:

**Assembly Present:** Mayor Ken Koelsch, Mary Becker, Jamie Bursell, Maria Gladziszewski, Loren Jones, Jesse Kiehl, Jerry Nankervis, Kate Troll and Debbie White.

Assembly Absent: None.

**Planning Commission Present:** Ben Haight, Chair; Matthew Bell, Nathaniel Dye, Percy Frisby (telephonically), Carl Greene,Michael LeVine, Bill Peters, and Paul Voelckers.

Planning Commission Absent: None.
Staff Present: Rorie Watt, City Manager; Kim Kiefer, City Manager; Mila Cosgrove, Deputy City Manager; Amy Mead; City Attorney; Beth McEwen, Deputy Clerk; Rob Steedle, Community Development Director, Beth McKibben, CDD Senior Planner; Greg Chaney, Lands Manager; Bob Bartholomew, Finance Director; Scott Ciambor, Chief Housing Officer

## II. AGENDA TOPICS

A. Roles and Responsibilities Overview

Mayor Koelsch thanked the members of the Planning Commission (PC) for their service. Mayor Koelsch invited City Manager Watt to begin the discussion of the topics as listed on the agenda. Mr. Watt said there has been a lot of change during the past year on the Planning Commission, with the Assembly and with staff and he hoped to be able to identify ways they could all work together towards the success of projects within the community. He asked members from both parties to recommend ways to improve process as well as communications.

Mr. Jones said during the subdivision review process there were quite a few items with which he disagreed with the standards being recommended for paved streets, sidewalks, lighting, green areas etc…He said that now that those ordinances are in place, he hopes that the Planning Commission would lean towards ensuring that there are no gravel roads approved and lighting and sidewalks are included in proposed subdivisions.

Mr. Voelckers said he'd like to see some improvement in the workings across departments. He mentioned issues sometimes come before the Planning Commission which touch multiple departments such as Lands, CDD, Docks & Harbors, etc… His impression has been that there is a sense of ownership being expressed by one department over another for specific areas and it would be good to know the big picture goals from the Assembly.

B. Process Improvement Discussions

Mr. Watt said he would like the members of the PC to bring what they might be hearing on the ground to the attention of staff and the Assembly. He hopes they would avail themselves of their role to provide comment and advise the Assembly. He said the CIP process and Neighborhood Association links can provide information to the Planning Commission and he'd like to see them pass that information along to the Assembly. If the PC is hearing about developments, land scarcity, or project issues, he would like them to communicate those things with the Assembly. The Commission is the appointed body that is best able to provide the comments regarding land development issues of the community.

Ms. Gladziszewski said she served on the PC for almost 12 years. She said that prior to being on the Assembly, she assumed that when an issue was referred from the PC to the Assembly, that the Assembly was fully informed with the same information that was before the PC. Now, through her service on the Assembly, she realizes that is not necessarily the case. She suggested the PC chair or another representative come to the Assembly meetings when topics are before the Assembly so they can answer questions or speak on the reasons the PC may have made a specific recommendation.

Mr. LeVine said he appreciated Ms. Gladziszewski's point and would be interested in seeing how that would work. Ms. Troll asked if it would be possible for the PC chair or their designee to come and represent the PC on those issues that are particular interest or are substantive in nature. Mr. Haight said he thought that could be addressed a couple of different ways. They may not need to do it for the fairly simple and straightforward issues but a member of the PC could attend Assembly meetings and provide additional information and/or background regarding the decisions that they did make. Mr. Voelckers said agreed with that process.

Discussion took place regarding the rezone ordinance change process and how the minutes and/or staff reports could be streamlined when they come from the PC to the Assembly. Members expressed their concern with the large size of the PC packets ranging from 800-1,000 pages per meeting. Mr. LeVine said he appreciated receiving the paper but suggested perhaps there would be a way to highlight key points or issues to be addressed. Mr. Voelckers suggested rather than printing all the back-up information in the paper packet, to provide links to the online resources.

Mr. Watt expressed his concerns with large packets being not only difficult for the PC members, but also for the staff who are producing them. It is a lot to digest and although he wants to do the process right, he also wants to make sure it is not too onerous to serve on the PC. He'd like us to nurture PC members, giving them a chance to learn the ropes and want to serve more than one term. Mr. Watt said he wants to look at things from the applicants' standpoint and think of ways that could help them get projects through the process. He asked anyone with suggestions for process improvement to forward them to Mr. Steedle.

Mr. Haight said they have an upcoming PC Committee of the Whole meeting at which they will be looking at how to improve the roles of the PC members, their work with staff, and identify sections of the documentation for each project that are the most important. They have a fairly new commission and need to spend the time on that type of work. That PC COW meeting is scheduled for sometime in May.

C. Legislation Change Timeline Overview

Mr. Watt said that changing the code sounds easier than it is to do. There is a lot of hard work that goes into it and quite a bit of thought process involved to make sure to avoid any unintended consequences. When they are doing code changes, they need to clearly prioritize what is being worked on. The policy goals and intentions need to be very clear because even in the best of situations, any code changes take time and there are a lot of steps in the process. Staff's time is prioritized by the people who are walking through the door and staff is processing those applications. In addition to those applications, staff then tries to fit in other priorities such as special projects, policy work, code changes, etc... Because of that, Mr. Watt said he would like to see more flexibility in the code where it makes sense. One way to do this would be a broadening of the CDD Director's decision making authority on certain applications. He said they need to be wary on how these code changes are made as it has to be a balance of policy goals with the other work.

Mr. Steedle said they have been discussing this subject for awhile and it recently came up when looking at all the variances that come before the PC. He said it is clear that the Land Use Code does not quite fit our community. There have been a lot of variances for setbacks in the downtown area coming through and that is not a great use of PC time. He said perhaps the best solution would be to change the zoning of that area. He gave this as an example of one solution bringing additional issues and if they were to lay a new zoning district over that area, that would then cause quite a few issues of its own. He gave another example of code changes that have been in the works for the past year. Ms. McKibben has been working on an eagle's nest code change that touches on many areas of the community but since it has not been high on the priority list, it has not yet been finalized and adopted.

Additional discussion took place regarding ways to streamline the code change process. Ms. Troll said they recently made changes to Title 49 to allow the director more decision making power and she wants to see how well it was or wasn't working before making other changes to grant additional powers. Mr. Jones said he felt that areas not currently working are areas with land access/easement issues such as N. Douglas lots for which DOT will not grant multiple access points. He referred to the practice of ordinance enforcement vs. current practice and that there are still pieces of that issue that CDD and Law are working out. Mr. Watt acknowledged these challenges and that they are being worked on. Mr. Kiehl spoke to the complexity of issues that arise when drafting ordinances and referred back to what former City Attorney John Corso used to say which was to ask the Assembly to come up with the policy first and he would then draft an ordinance based on that policy. He said he didn't think there were any big policy problems with respect to variances but wherever there are policy issues, he hopes the Assembly will work on those and then request legislation to be drafted.

Additional discussion took place about the ordinances currently being worked on by the Law Department and both the Assembly and Planning Commission look forward to seeing those once they are ready.

D. CDD Legislation and Planning Priorities

Mr. Steedle had included a memo in the packet that outlined the following top priorities currently being worked on at CDD:

- Title 49 updates

- Auke Bay zoning changes and development incentives
- Shared access
- Variances
- Street Standards
- Parking
- Signs

Mr. Watt said this is a living document and that as some items on this list get resolved, others will get added to the list. Mr. Steedle said these are the 'big darn deal' items and they are just the tip of the iceberg. There are a lot of items that need to be addressed and they will be working through them as resources permit. Ms. Becker asked if these were in any priority order to which Mr. Steedle responded they were not, they were just the top priorities for their department.

Assemblymembers expressed their desire to see a discussion about the LID process and how the cost for property owners is determined since they appear to range from 15% - 100% of the costs. Mr. Watt explained that is something that would fall to the Engineering Director and while it is something that is at the discretion of the Assembly, he would be willing to work with the new Engineering Director on that issue.

Mr. Nankervis said he recently attended a Planning Commission meeting at which three members of the Assembly were present. He said that is a rare occurrence and he encouraged the Planning Commissioners to take advantage of any similar opportunities for a chance to talk with Assemblymembers about the Assembly's policies and goals.

Mr. Bell said as a fairly recent appointee to the Planning Commission, he is still learning the ropes and it has been an eye opening experience. He would like to see these joint meetings occur more frequently and he thanked the Assemblymembers who have attended the Planning Commission meetings. He said the wealth of knowledge they have is very insightful and he thanked them for the opportunity to have these types of conversations.

## III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public participation on Non-Agenda Items.

Mr. Koelsch asked Mr. Kiehl to give an overview of what was coming up at the Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting. Mr. Kiehl said in light of Lands Committee action just prior to this meeting the topic regarding Renninger Subdivision wasn't quite ready to come before the COW so the remaining topics on the COW agenda were Economic Development Activity Update; Assembly Goals, and Executive Session for an Exit Interview with City Manager Kim Kiefer. Ms. Troll said she wanted to be sure the Assemblymembers were all aware of the proposed private/public partnership relating to the Renninger Subdivision.

## IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Koelsch adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

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| Signed: ______________________________ | Signed: ______________________________ |
| Elizabeth J. McEwen, Acting Clerk | Kendell D. Koelsch, Mayor |