

APPROVED MINUTES

Agenda

Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU

Mandy Cole, Chair

April 22, 2025

I. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – Read by Mr. Salik.

We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. Gunalchéesh!

II. ROLL CALL

Mandy Cole, Chair, called the Regular Meeting of the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Planning Commission (PC), held in Assembly Chambers of the Municipal Building, virtually via Zoom Webinar, and telephonically, to order at 6 p.m.

Commissioners present: Commissioners present in Chambers – Mandy Cole, Chair; Erik Pedersen, Vice Chair; Adam Brown; David Epstein, Jessalynn Rintala, Lacey Derr, Douglas Salik

Commissioners present via video conferencing – Nina Keller

Commissioners absent: Matthew Bell, Assistant Clerk

Staff present: Jill Lawhorne, CDD Director; Madeline Carse, CDD Administrative Assistant; Sherri Layne, Attorney III, Brandon Robinson, Planner II

Assembly members: Christine Woll

III. REQUEST FOR AGENDA CHANGES AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

SMP2024 001 was moved from the Consent Agenda to the Regular Agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 25, 2025, Draft Minutes, Regular Planning Commission

MOTION: *by Mr. Epstein to approve the March 25, 2025, Planning Commission Regular Meeting draft minutes. The motion passed.*

V. **BRIEF REVIEW OF THE RULES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

VI. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS-** None.

VII. **ITEMS FOR RECONSIDERATION-** None.

VIII. **CONSENT AGENDA**

SMP2024 0001 was moved to the Regular Agenda.

IX. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS-** None.

X. **REGULAR AGENDA**

SMP2024 0001: Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority (THRHA) requests a preliminary plat review for the first 25 lots (phase one), of a 46 unit single-family/multi-family development at North Douglas Highway in a D18 zone.

Applicant: Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority

Location: North Douglas Highway

Director's Report

Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority (THRHA) requests a preliminary plat approval for the first 25 lots (phase one), of a 46 unit single-family/multi-family development in a D18 zone.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the Director's analysis and findings and approve the preliminary plat with conditions and plat notes.

Director Lawhorne shared that they received an email that expressed concern that staff did not include and address and meet the legal requirements for public notification under the code. She confirmed that staff did meet the legal requirements for public notification and that most vacant properties throughout the Borough do not have addresses and usually do not give out addresses unless there is a structure. She said they use the Parcel ID number, and the applicant posts notice signs, staff post in the newspaper and mail the abutter notification. She pointed out that the emailer clearly heard of the hearing, because they were able to comment, which shows that our

public notification did its job. She noted that they also send out postcards and alter colors, so people do not get used to them. She expressed that the point is to give a notification that something is happening in the vicinity with the planner's name, email, phone number, and website, so they can look further into it and/or submit comments.

Mr. Epstein stated that the email made reference an incident that happened several years ago where staff were forced to re-notice with more detailed information. He asked what the difference is between what happened then and the situation now.

Director Lawhorne responded that she did know what the previous one was in reference to.

Chair Cole asked Attorney Layne if she had any concerns about the public notice that was given for this item.

Ms. Layne did not have any concerns about the notice, as it meets what is required in the code.

Lorraine DeAsis, Tlingit & Haida Regional Housing Authority Director of Construction, explained that the project is on North Douglas Highway, about 0.5 miles from the roundabout on the left, and spans about 17.5 acres. She said they have been working on the road plan and site plan for the entire 17.5 acres and have split it into two phases. The first phase will begin this year and pertain to the lower portion of the lot, and next year they plan to start the upper portion. They are planning single family homes that will be for sale, planning mixed use with multiple income levels, and will not be limited to tribal citizens.

Mr. Pedersen inquired about the first phase and if they are envisioning one builder coming in and constructing homes on all the lots or a mix of selling bare lots or is Tlingit & Haida going to follow through with the development after it is subdivided and build the dwelling units.

Ms. DeAsis responded that at this moment, the first phase is 21 lots, and they have the funding for approximately 15 homes, but they will see where it goes. She shared that they do not fully have it figured out if they will develop all 15 homes in the lower section but know they will not get to all of that this year, and she did not know if they would sell the lots empty or build and sell. She said the plan is mixed use, but she does not know if that will be a house that we build; however, they have a large construction company and typically do their own house construction.

Chair Cole asked if the unique street names, street light locations, sidewalk locations, hydrants, and plat notes in the conditions that CDD proposed for preliminary plat seems correct.

Ms. DeAsis responded yes. She added that they have been working with the City Engineering Department, and input from them is the reason that the plan in the packet was updated. She expressed that it will be city roads without a Homeowner's Association.

Chair Cole asked if it sounds familiar that the city was not asking for a traffic study, but DOT could be asking for one before the second phase.

Ms. DeAsis answered no that she received emails saying they did not need one, but if they will do one if needed.

Director Lawhorne clarified that in the staff report it says that depending on future development and what the second phase may be, if it meets the threshold, then it may trigger a TIA.

Chair Cole said she viewed an email from DOT that stated they wanted a TIA or traffic study if it is built out according to plan.

Director Lawhorne voiced it does state that in the agency comments.

Ms. DeAsis mentioned that they had an engineer do a traffic impact study, but it was not a full one, as he said they did not need one. However, they will comply and will do whatever needs to be done.

Director Lawhorne pointed out that the date of the DOT comments was over 6 or 7 weeks ago, so things may have changed since then.

There were no public testimony participants for the item.

Chair Cole asked the Commission for discussion.

Ms. Derr stated that the DOT study was mentioned in the introduction and also on page 177 in the packet. She asked if the Planning Commission or CDD would see that before the final plat.

Director Lawhorne answered that is not something the Commission typically would see unless it was done in advance of an application, and the Commission does not have authority over TIA. She stated that if there is something that really needs to be addressed with a project, they will typically talk about that in advance and will know to wait for a TIA. She added that usually for projects like this, DOT and the City work with what they have, and DOT has the final say on issuing the driveway permit and access. However, in her experience with working with DOT over the years, if there was really a concern, they would have flagged it more than they have.

Mr. Pedersen asked if this would come back to the Commission for approval of the final plat.

Director Lawhorne answered yes, and once they get to final plat, the applicant will have spent a lot of money on engineering and all other costs, so any concerns need to be brought up now.

Mr. Pedersen stated that the TIA is not being prompted by city code, but by something that is within DOT's regulations, but if they cannot get the approach road permitted through DOT, the subdivision cannot be built.

Mr. Epstein expressed that he would like to see a copy of the TIA.

Chair Cole commented that the issue with seeing a TIA, if required by DOT, is that it would need to be conditioned today, because it would have to be presented during the final plat review. She asked if that would get us anything.

Director Lawhorne answered she did not believe it would. She stated she would be happy to share a copy of the TIA with the Commission if one is required.

Chair Cole stated that they need to figure out what the question is they are trying to answer with

the TIA. She asked if they are concerned about access, traffic, and load, and maybe they need to be able to ask that question in such a way that they can craft a condition for the Housing Authority to meet prior to final plat review, but just reviewing the TIA would not get them there.

(The Commission took a 3-minute at ease)

Mr. Epstein shared that the issue with traffic is not at the approach road, but at the 10th and Egan Intersection and additional traffic at the roundabout.

Chair Cole commented that in her time on the Commission, they have talked about the volume of traffic that the bridge can handle at either end and further stressing those intersections. She said they all know that there needs to be another access to Douglas for health and safety and to relieve those intersections, but they do not have money to get a second crossing built. She stated it important for them to think long and hard before conditioning something that the applicant has no individual ability to influence.

Director Lawhorne voiced they have a comp plan that has looked at land use and zoning, and this land is zoned for single and multifamily use, and housing is a critical need and the number one goal of the Assembly and community. She expressed that this is a good project, and they need the development. She understood the concerns and the need for a second crossing, but it should not be on the back of just one development, and she thinks the Assembly would appreciate the Commission's support in a second crossing. She noted that they received federal funding through a program called Thriving Communities and are actively working in this area with the tribes, and Tlingit & Haida are the first ones breaking ground on the project. She said they are working to address access issues and hope that by working together, we can develop the neighborhood in a comprehensive manner that addresses as much as they can.

Chair Cole stated they are just trying to figure out if there is anything to mitigate the stress on these two intersections.

Ms. Derr appreciated the conversation because she is not a builder and sees the information just as the public would see it, and she wants these questions to be out in the open, so they are not seen as trying to cover something up or not including something.

Chair Cole asked if the first 25 lots will be single-family and multi-family use, or if multi-family will be part of phase two.

Director Lawhorne answered that phase one is 25 lots for single-family use.

Mr. Pedersen noticed there was no drainage report or runoff calculations, so there is no way to look at stormwater impacts downstream of the development, but there are emails in the packet with Public Works saying the drainage study was reviewed and acceptable. He said in the future it would be nice to have more of the drainage study included in the packet.

Director Lawhorne responded that she is happy to meet with the subcommittee to talk about other things they would like to see in the applications. She said that typically the drainage and stormwater fall under general engineering and grading permits.

MOTION: by Ms. Derr to accept staff's findings, analysis, recommendations, and conditions and plat notes in the report, and approve **SMP2024 0001**. The motion passed.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS - None.

XII. STAFF REPORTS

Director Lawhorne reported that they are working on the new Title 49 Code that will go live in a couple of weeks and they are trying to set expectations. She believes they will get quicker once they have the permit software system in place. She noted that their goal is the end of 2025, and they are still on par for that. She stated that the Comprehensive Plan kicked off today at Centennial Hall during the luncheon listening session, and there will be more one more tonight and two tomorrow. She said that they have a lot of public engagement coming up over this process. She noted that the first Advisory Committee Meeting is on Thursday. They discussed cancelling June 10th, as that day is scheduled to be a large emergency training exercise where staff may be involved. She said if it becomes necessary, they will talk again, but right now the Commission does not have many cases coming in so they can accommodate that.

XIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Derr noted the Lands Housing and Economic Development canceled their meeting for yesterday and moved it to May 5th.

Mr. Pedersen reported that the Short-Term Rental Task Force met last week, and they are going through different regulatory options and trying to get a tiered system set up so the Assembly can choose their level of impact on the short-term rental market using various regulations and will hopefully finish that next meeting. He said they are also trying to get things wrapped up so they can have several public meetings and get the public's input on proposed short term rental regulations.

XIV. LIAISON REPORTS

Ms. Woll reported that they are in the middle of the budget and that is the primary focus for the next month or so. She said she is also looking forward to seeing what Short Term Rental Task Force comes up with and will pass on that the Planning Commission supports a second crossing to help with the upcoming development plans mentioned earlier.

XV. CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS - None.

XVI. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Epstein asked for clarification that this is the last 6 p.m. meeting until fall.

Chair Cole confirmed yes, and that the next meeting, on May 13th, will be at 7 p.m.

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

The April 22, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m.