

ASSEMBLY LANDS HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MINUTES

August 4, 2025 at 5:00 PM

Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar



<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/94215342992> or 1-253-215-8782 Webinar ID: 942 1534 2992

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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!

C. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Chair Wade Bryson, Paul Kelly, Ella Adkison, Neil Steininger

Members Absent: none

Liaisons Present: Paulette Schirmer, PRAC liaison; Jim Becker, Docks & Harbors Board liaison

Liaisons Absent: Lacey Derr, Planning Commission liaison

Staff Present: Dan Bleidorn, Lands Manager; John King, Deputy Lands Manager; Roxie Duckworth, Lands and Resources Specialist; Jeff Hedges, CDD Building Code Official; Joseph Meyers, Housing & Land Use Specialist

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – approved as presented

Mr. Bleidorn introduced the new Deputy Lands Manager, John King

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **July 14, 2025 Draft LHED Minutes** – approved as presented

F. AGENDA TOPICS

1. Ordinance 2025-26 Amending Title 19 Building Regulations

Mr. Hedges discussed this topic. Ms. Adkison asked about the flood and what has changed. Mr. Hedges replied that there were a number of Juneau related things that were put in, as those weren't included in the body of the code, and some moved in the code, we had to delete one section and add a small section. The code has gotten, in some ways, more prescriptive, but also has broadened with construction practices to say, in this type of soil, this type of region you need to follow this line of construction, or if you are in a drier climate or higher altitude climate, with areas for floods, earthquakes, everything, it is in there.

Chair Bryson asked about Title 49 regulations, we are in the middle of that rewrite, does this have any impact on those that we're trying to improve or do these two areas ever connect? Mr. Hedges replied no but there's a flood section that says, if you want to appeal or go for a modification of the flood regulations in the I-codes, you have to go through the Planning Commission (PC) for that. We do not allow a modification to code that has anything to do with health or life safety, if you are trying to do a modification or variance of the flood code, you have got to go through the PC. That's the only section that mentions Title 49 or the zoning code.

Ms. Adkison asked about heat pumps, the was last updated in 2012 and we've had technological advances since then, like heat pumps, were there any related changes in that area? Mr. Hedges replied no and the requirements around a heat pump is you're required to have heat in your home. We don't go into, "you have to use this type of equipment," it just says you're required to keep your home at 68 degrees, 3 feet from the wall, 2 feet from the floor, but it doesn't say how to do that, you get to come up with your own way, heat pump is one of those ways. In code it specifically says, either do it per code, or use the manufacturer's instructions to install said piece of equipment. With heat pumps we get the manufacturer's requirements and go out to the home and say, yep, you installed it the way the manufacturer said, you're good to go.

Chair Bryson asked if it's really in code that we need to keep our house at 68 degrees. Mr. Hedges replied that code doesn't say that you have to keep it there, it says that you have to be capable of doing that.

Ms. Adkison moved that the Lands, Housing, and Economic Development Committee review and consider the Title 19 Building and Fire Code rewrite and forward a recommendation of adoption to the full Assembly. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Request to Purchase City Property on Meander Way

Mr. Bleidorn discussed this topic. Mr. Kelly asked how this works, the plat was conveyed to us for river access, but it can no longer be used for that purpose, as long as we take no action, is our status of managing this property secure? Mr. Bleidorn replied that when we were reviewing City properties in 2015 for the adoption of the 2016 Land Management Plan, we came across a number of Valley subdivisions from the late seventies and early eighties, where part of the subdivision conditions, the Planning and Zoning board required that there be open space or riverfront access to be preserved for public use, this falls into that category. It is public river access as a plat note, but it's Parks managed land. The do nothing option leaves this as a Parks property. Although we're thinking about temporarily restricting public access, the ultimate long term goal would be to restore public access and continue to use it as a Parks managed property.

Mr. Steininger asked about another Parks river access that's now also blocked by the Hesco barriers, have the property owners adjacent to that property had similar difficulties as this property owner. Any other things we should be aware of coming from that Hesco barrier project and the different river access points. Mr. Bleidorn replied that property Mr. Steininger is referring to is off of Betty Court, which is a few streets north of this with similar subdivision plat requirements and riverfront access. Neither of those neighbors have reached out to the City about that property. We've had a number of questions come up, but nothing that's risen to the level of an application being submitted. There's general curiosity of these City properties, and how we manage them. That one has the Hesco barriers in front of it and access is probably going to be restricted. If it comes to a point where the neighbors are reaching out to the City we'll probably work on something similar while the Hesco barriers are there, or while we're in flood season, maybe have restricted access.

Mr. Steininger said it was mentioned that the desire is to restore river access to the public once the Hesco barriers come down. Probably just a problem for us to deal with once we get to that point, but with the riprap and changes to the bank is there still the ability to have viable public river access in those places or is it going to be a pretty significant lift to restore public access to the river. Bleidorn replied that he thinks that public river access can be defined in many ways, such as building some sort of facility or managed parkland, this has always been natural riverfront access, and thinks of it as nearby households who maybe want to walk their dog and get down into the sandy areas of the river. It doesn't necessarily need to be a facility as much as it is open space where citizens can walk through a City-owned property and end up somewhere in the river. This lot has low potential for anything more than that, just with the decades of erosion, riprap, and now the Hesco barriers. It's impossible to tell what the future will hold, maybe in 50 years this access has another value to the City, the drainage easement that runs through it, which is part of the confined storm drainage of the Valley, is also important for the City to be able to manage and maintain indefinitely.

Chair Bryson asked if there's a way to restrict public access as this area is blocked by the Hesco's and no longer being used as river access. Would we be able to block off access until the time when the barriers are gone. Is there a walking trail or path that goes through that property. Mr. Bleidorn replied that there's no manicured trail that goes from the right-of-way to the river. Trees were recently cut as part of the Hesco barrier installation process. He talked to Engineering and the people working on the Hesco barriers and asked their opinion of the situation. They said the Hesco barriers have no trespassing signs, but part of restricting access could be hanging a sign between the right-of-way and this property that says temporary access denied, or no public access at this time. Right now the neighbors don't have any authority to point to something to say that you can't be on this property, or where property lines are. Even just having a sign there that Engineering could put up, the neighbors could say, there's a sign here, there's no public access at this time, and it gives them a starting spot to talk to people who are or who would then be trespassing.

Mr. Kelly moved that the Lands, Housing, and Economic Development Committee provide direction to the CBJ Manager to deny this application but to work with the applicants to restrict public access until such time when public river access can be restored. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bleidorn noted that he spoke with the applicant after drafting this memo, and although it wasn't the outcome they were hoping for, they were very understanding and grateful of the fact that we could try to work with them to try to prevent those trespassers, so they'll be appreciative of that motion.

3. Ridgeview Update

Mr. Meyers discussed this topic. Ms. Adkison commented that she found this annual report to be quite interesting with their reasons for not continuing with the project, as they seem to blame the Juneau public, which is interesting. Did they reach out to the City at any point with, "hey, can you clarify what our loan terms were? or would you mind communicating to the public what we know?" What was the agreement, was there any communication to head off some of the concerns they mention in the program feedback section Mr. Meyers replied that in terms of reaching out, they had a discussion with the Manager's office.

Mr. Kelly commented about affordability. He also found it interesting, as Ms. Adkinson did, and thought it was a little ironic that they implied that it was misinformation that an affordable housing loan did not have the intent for affordability. He followed up with staff and got a possible explanation that maybe it's because there was no affordability element in there, but thinks it involves a bit of cognitive dissonance to fill out a Juneau Affordable Housing annual report and say that it's misinformation that affordability is an intention.

Chair Bryson commented that it looks like the foundation's concrete framework was being poured, did they decide not to pursue that building once they poured that second foundation, wasn't this project moving forward? Mr. Meyers replied that the most recent update he has received is the agenda memo and his understanding is that they are not currently moving forward on this project and are seeking other options.

Chair Bryson asked how many units did they build and how much money are they going to have to give back to the City. Mr. Meyers replied that they completed 24 units. Their total loan amount was 1.2 million dollars, and they are currently in repayment as of January, and they are current as of July.

No motion on this topic, information follow-up only.

G. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

- Docks and Harbors Board Update – Mr. Becker noted the celebration of the Storis coming to Juneau.
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) Update – no update
- Planning Commission Update – no update
- Mr. Kelly commented about the Affordable Housing Fund, with one of the projects being constructed just down the street, not even a 5 min walk, from his house, and it's been coming along nicely. They have a nice looking mural on the side of it. If anybody wants to pay a visit to my house, you can come and take a look. He spoke with the contractor and got to see a couple of the units and was happy to learn that it looks like it's a 2 building complex and the first building should be ready to accept occupants in the fall, that's. A little bit of good news to share is that one of our Affordable Housing projects could be holding tenants as early as fall.

H. STANDING COMMITTEE TOPICS

- Privatizing Eaglecrest Operations – Chair Bryson asked that the committee members take some time to review this topic, no new information on this topic.

I. NEXT MEETING DATE – September 8, 2025

J. ADJOURNMENT – 5:28pm