

APPROVED MINUTES

Agenda

Planning Commission

Committee of the Whole Meeting

CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU

Mandy Cole, Chair

August 26, 2025

I. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – Read by Chair Cole

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, Chairwoman, called the Committee of the Whole Meeting of the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Planning Commission (PC), held in Centennial Hall Ballroom 1, virtually via Zoom Webinar, and telephonically, to order at 7 p.m.

Commissioners present: Commissioners present in Chambers – Erik Pedersen, Mandy Cole; Douglas Salik; Larry Gamez; Adam Brown; Nina Keller; David Epstein; Lacey Derr, Jessalyn Rintala

Commissioners present via video conferencing – None

Commissioners absent: None

Staff present: Scott Ciambor, CDD Planning Manager; Irene Gallion, Senior Planner; Tanya Howard, CDD Administrative Officer; Madeline Carse, CDD Administrative Assistant; Sherri Layne, Attorney III; Joseph Meyers, Senior Planner; Forrest Courtney, Senior Planner; Minta Montalbo, Senior Planner; Justin Smith, Planner I; Brandon Robinson, Planner II; Nicole Lynch, Attorney III

Assembly members: None

III. REQUEST FOR AGENDA CHANGES AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Pedersen requested doing a reorganization of officer positions prior to the regular agenda, following Item C. There were no objections.

IV. REORGANIZATION OF OFFICER POSITIONS

Chair Cole explained the purpose of this is because she will be gone for three months on sabbatical, so they need to reorganize the officer positions and appoint a chair.

Mr. Pedersen proposed himself as Chair, Commissioner Derr as Vice Chair, Commissioner Brown as Clerk, and Commissioner Epstein as Vice Clerk. He added that they will do another reorganization of officer positions at the beginning of next year, after they have new or reappointed commissioners. All commissioners named were accepting of the proposal and there were no objections.

V. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Our Juneau, Our Future Comprehensive Plan Update

Sachi Arakawa, Overall Project Manager for Cascadia Partners, presented the Comprehensive Plan Update. She explained that to support CBJ's work on the Comp Plan, a group of consultants with Cascadia Partners were hired to work on community engagement, scenario planning, and policy and plan development. The Planning Commission and consultant team exchanged introductions.

Ms. Arakawa discussed scenario planning and how it relates to the Comprehensive Plan process. She said scenario planning is a tool they use to explore uncertainty and make sure the policies they put forward in the Comp Plan perform well under a broad range of potential future conditions. She said they are wrapping up phase 1, called listen and learn, which will result in a set of guiding principles that will be a framework for the plan, as well as a lot of data and information to shape the scenario planning process. She voiced that a scenario planning approach helps them plan in a way that is more responsive to a variety of future conditions, such as flooding, emerging technology, social unrest, infectious disease, tourism, economic shifts, state and federal policies, aging population, etc. Ms. Arakawa talked about the five steps of the scenario planning process, which are identifying drivers of change, critical uncertainties, strategies, scenarios, and then the Comp Plan. She further explained that they talked to over 25 local subject matter experts and the Community Advisory Committee, which helped them come up with the top 10 drivers of change. She noted that all 10 drivers of change will be a part of the Comp Plan, but they worked with staff to pick three critical uncertainties from those, which

are tourism and its spillover effects, climate change and environmental hazards, and federal and state funding and policy decisions. She said they will use those three critical uncertainties to test strategies for land use scenarios and they are currently working with staff and the advisory committee to start discussing and refining potential resilient strategies. Once they get those, they will put those together in a set of land use scenarios that represent different ways we can grow through sets of policies or strategies, and each land use scenario will have a corresponding map and report card. She added what they get out of the scenarios is ultimately a preferred scenario, which forms the future land use map for the Comprehensive Plan and the goals and policies they will put forward in the Comp plan.

Chair Cole stated that the description for the critical uncertainties is that there are crucial, unpredictable factors that significantly impact the future, and if that is the future, they are literally predicting and choosing which unpredictable factors they want.

Ms. Arakawa gave an example that they know tourism is very impactful to the community and economy in Juneau and is out of internal control to some extent and it is uncertain whether tourism will continue to rise or not, so they want to have a variety of ways to deal with that with policies that are flexible and work well.

Chair Cole inquired how they came up with the three critical uncertainties.

Ms. Arakawa answered that they did a workshop with staff and talked through the description of a critical uncertainties. They wanted things that are more external and those are the three they came up with.

Mr. Pedersen asked where in the plan the ones that did not wind up being a critical uncertainty would come back into the thought process within the Comp Plan.

Ms. Arakawa answered there are other policy and goal language and recommendations that will be happening in the Comp Plan that do not necessarily relate to land use.

Mr. Gamez asked if mines would be covered in the Comp Plan and the possibility of them closing up, as they receive a lot of money from both mines.

Ms. Arakawa responded that one of their critical uncertainties is the changing viability of traditional industries, which mining is a part of. She shared that they have heard a lot of mixed things on what is going to happen with mining and how Juneau wants to handle resource extraction industries. So, there is a balance there

they will have to think about in policy and is an uncertainty they might have to grapple with in scenario planning.

Mr. Epstein asked for clarification on the connection between this process and the Title 49 Rewrite.

Scott Ciambor answered that the Title 49 process and this process are going on concurrently and are both kind of feeding each other.

Ms. Derr shared that in the last week she has read that Juneau is getting a casino and an Icy Point style community on Douglas, which are huge changes to their community that do not seem to have any local government ability to control. She inquired if their scenario plans include those.

Ms. Arakawa responded this is a long process and they design flexibility to be in it because so much changes so quickly, and they have talked about ways to monitor the progress and performance of the policies and land use map even after the plan has been adopted. However, there is only so much they can do with land that is not owned by the city. She added they will be looking holistically at what is going on in the community and that will be a part of the conversation.

Ms. Rintala asked for more information on the final future land use map tool.

Ms. Arakawa expressed what is interesting and educational about scenario planning is they can just sketch out ideas and test them so they can make a final decision. It also allows the public to see the process and think like planners.

Mr. Salik said he is looking forward to how the three critical uncertainties chosen will play out, as they have seen in the last couple of years how much federal, state, and political decisions have swung, and he felt that being able to go through scenario planning could help them be in a better position regarding those things.

Ms. Arakawa gave project updates, including developing the project website, branding, and material for Our Juneau, Our Future, holding various engagement activities and events with the community, analyzing current conditions and trends in Juneau, and spoke with experts in Juneau to inform drivers of change and understand the unique challenges and opportunities. In Phase 1, they had community listening sessions, an online community survey, held two advisory committee meetings, and conducted five focus groups. She went over the top priorities that were heard from the community. She said they created a set of draft guiding principles from all the feedback they have gotten so far, which included lifeline wellbeing and family support, housing for all, resilient, year-round local

economy, environmental protection and climate leadership, connected community and neighborhoods, and culture and community identity. Ms. Arakawa talked about the engagements that will be happening this week and how the Planning Commission can participate. She had the Planning Commission engage in the activity they will be doing with parents and kids at the school, which is a time capsule activity to write to Juneau 20 years in the future.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The Meeting of the Committee of the Whole was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.