

# ASSEMBLY LANDS HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MINUTES

January 26, 2026 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 Alicia Hughes-Skandijs, Paul Kelly, Neil Steininger, Maureen Hall

**Additional Assembly Members Present:** Mayor Weldon, Christine Woll

**Liaisons Present:** Paulette Schirmer, PRAC liaison; Lacey Derr, Planning Commission liaison

**Liaisons Absent:** Jim Becker, Docks & Harbors Board liaison

**Staff Present:** Dan Bleidorn, Lands Manager; Alexandra Pierce, Visitor Industry Director

**Members of the Public Present:** Liz Perry, President & CEO Travel Juneau

## D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – approved as presented

## E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. December 1, 2025 Draft LHED Minutes – approved as presented

## F. AGENDA TOPICS

### 1. Douglas Island Development LLC Request to Purchase City Property

Mr. Bleidorn discussed this topic. Mr. Kelly asked why this is currently zoned D5, and why they think that it would be eligible to be elevated to D18. Mr. Bleidorn replied that this is part of a really large track, that is D5 zoning which makes sense given the size. It was probably set up originally to think about how that lot would be subdivided in the future and some would remain D5. Chatting with the CDD Director about this zone change, and it seems very practical, this small piece is surrounded by D18 on the road system, so the fact that it didn't have that direct connection to the road system is probably why it ended up in the D5. It seem like a good candidate for a lot consolidation, and being added to that property that is currently D18 zoning, it seems like a good candidate for that rezone.

Ms. Hall asked about the right-of-way, point out on the map how that would affect the adjacent city-owned property, or if it would, or do they have an existing right-of-way to that portion? Mr. Bleidorn brought up the map to point it out and replied that if this right-of-way was to continue through this we wouldn't want it to be part of their property, it sets the city up to be able to continue that right-of-way in the future and maybe head to the other privately owned property in the future, there's some utilities that could run under it and it would be part of this property here in the future. They would use the existing right-of-way and access the entire lot through a driveway. It doesn't prevent the city from extending the right-of-way in the future. There is some potential with this larger piece of property where we don't want to cut any right-of-way off, and this was a neat little square that they could add onto their property to increase the number of units that could possibly be built there.

Mr. Kelly asked if that right-of-way would be large enough to meet the needs of any emergency services for D18. Mr. Bleidorn replied that he believes it is and knows that it is wide enough for it but not certain if it's built to the current standards for that, but if this moves forward, if they do anything on their existing lot, even without this, that building permit process is going to highlight the need for

infrastructure improvements there. If we receive a motion this evening and we start to take it towards the Planning Commission, they're going to be asking questions related to the consolidation of this property and the acquisition, but they're also going to be requesting information on the type of thing they're planning on building to get the ball rolling for those types of building permits.

**Ms. Hall moved that the Lands Housing and Economic Development Committee forward this application to the Assembly with a motion of support for working with the original proposer for the negotiated sale of City Property. Motion passed unanimously.**

**2. AT&T request to lease CBJ property at Dimond Park**

Mr. Bleidorn discussed this topic. Mr. Kelly asked about the building plans, they're planning on building an underground conduit that would house their cables, would it also house ours, or would we still have access to be able to maintain everything that we needed without going through them? Mr. Bleidorn replied that they're going to have a small underground conduit that would be for their infrastructure. Our electric would remain but wouldn't go through that location, and the city would still be responsible for changing light bulbs because the communications tower would be incorporated into one of the light poles over the fields. There's still a lot of work that would need to be done on this through the Planning Commission and the Permitting Department; we would begin evaluating a lot of that if it moves forward.

**Mr. Kelly moved that the Lands Housing and Economic Development Committee provide a motion of support to further consider this proposal through direct negotiation with the original proposer. Motion passed unanimously.**

**G. STAFF REPORTS**

**1. Travel Juneau Update**

Ms. Pierce and Ms. Perry from Travel Juneau discussed this topic. Mr. Steinger noted that it wouldn't involve any kind of budgetary changes with the grant that we give Travel Juneau, so it just would come in the form of maybe rewriting the MOU that we have with them and formalizing it, but ultimately, nothing changes about their operations, it just makes it clear that they are invited to some parties. Ms. Pierce replied that it is an excellent characterization.

Mr. Kelly wanted more specificity on what types of events we would be inviting them to, because he thinks it's important that Travel Juneau stay in the lane. It keeps them more defensible to keep them in the lane, that they are here to bring independent travelers that end up bringing us a lot of more revenue than the typical individual cruise ship passenger. Cruise ship passengers also represent future independent travelers, potentially, and so I can get behind supporting that. Is the intent for Travel Juneau to attend these events to try to get more of these cruise ship passengers and convert them into independent travelers, or would you be able to speak a little bit more to that? Ms. Pierce replied that Travel Juneau, again, is a Destination Management and Marketing Organization (DMMO). So, while the Assembly has provided directive on how they market, they are partially funded through marine passenger fees, and they perform cruise industry functions in our community. Things like the first ship event, plaque and key ceremonies, and also just Travel Juneau's role within the community as an organization that we look to for visitor industry expertise, they should be able to weigh in and discuss our visitor industry as a whole. That doesn't necessarily mean that we're asking them to market to the cruise industry. Other Alaskan communities' DMMOs do market to the cruise industry, but the assembly has been pretty clear they don't want Travel Juneau to do that. I do think that it's appropriate, given their management function and their role in the community, that there not be this kind of hardline distinction where, "oh, this is cruise-related, we can't be part of it", it creates a bit of a messy situation that is kind of avoidable. This isn't necessarily related to their marketing function, it's more related to their management function and their role in the community.

Ms. Woll was curious about some of the conversations a while ago that led to the MOU between us and Travel Juneau being rewritten and didn't remember getting into meetings where we don't want them in. I feel like the direction has been clear, and I would trust Travel Juneau and staff, if necessary, to figure out what those lines are to represent our interests, but am I wrong, has the assembly come to you, or come to Travel Juneau and said, why is Travel Juneau here versus there. Ms. Pierce replied that no current assembly members have come to her in the past with that. That has been the interpretation by Travel Juneau and staff, and without going back into where and when that deviation was made I think the point of why I'm here tonight to have this conversation is more to highlight the management function that Travel Juneau is performing for us, and hope to open the door for exactly what you're saying, that Travel Juneau and staff can interpret the MOA to allow Travel Juneau to play a role in the community that represents the visitor industry as a whole, recognizing that we want their marketing function to be focused on independent visitors.

Mayor Weldon wanted to reiterate what Director Pierce is saying. In the past, Ms. Perry has not felt that she should be going to the first cruise ship opening, because other assembly members have said, "what are you doing here, you are just independent travelers." I wanted to say that I think the focus needs to remain on independent travelers, especially our conventions, but a lot of our independent travelers are people that have been on the cruise ships and are coming back to see our great city that we love so dearly. It needs to be acknowledged that we could try and keep their marketing to just independent travelers, but we know a lot of the cruise ship people are looking at all their websites and all their social media, so it's just more of an acknowledgement that this is occurring. I don't think their budget should change, as Mr. Steiner noted, but I do think this allows us to potentially use marine passenger fees a bit more instead of hotel bed tax, if the function changes slightly. I'm also hoping that, perhaps with this move, then we can look at some of our other entities and see if we're duplicating services, we've been talking about that quite a bit, about not duplicating services between some of our partnering entities.

Chair Hughes-Skandijis commented that she appreciates the explanation and as a current assembly member certainly have brought it up with staff, including Ms. Pierce, in terms of stand-alone incidents. I think it's important that when we have an MOA, then the MOA is spelled out, and like, so many things that we have with people, then we just trust staff and the entities that have the MOAs to interpret that, without getting into the weeds of specific, "they can go here, but they can't go here." I think that's best practice, and I will certainly agree with that. Anything more specific than that, then I think, it would be helpful to have a memo or something that is specific to that would be appreciated, just because that's not part of what we have here tonight. Thank you for clarifying the difference between that the management and marketing organization versus as far as a trend.

Ms. Woll asked about the challenges with people getting transported out to the Glacier Visitor Center and the impact on our local infrastructure, or buses. We've done a lot of work to address that. I think that's been largely successful, but how is those folks greeting visitors, dealing with that issue? Are you directing people to our buses? Are you letting them know that that's a community concern? I know it's cheaper for people, but they do have to walk a long ways. Ms. Perry replied that we train all of our staff, at the visitor centers and give them talking points. We keep information about the bus system as well as other opportunities and other ways to get out to the Glacier Visitor Center handy. It is a top question that we get, Capital Transit is a public service, so we're not going to refrain from handing that information over, but we are always very careful to let visitors know what the risks are in taking public transit out to that last stop. We tell them how long it's going to take, and how much of their day is going to get eaten up, basically, riding the bus. Some folks, that's what they're there for, that's the one thing that they want to do, and that's fine, but I do feel that we're working with Capital Transit, the City, and

with the Glacier Visitor Center to try to limit the number of people who are taking the bus by just making people aware of what they're in for when they step off the vehicle.

Chair Hughes-Skandijs commented that thinking ahead to the budget, we will have that conversation when it is that time, and maybe we can have additional conversations outside of that, you mentioned that, and I appreciate you thinking of that, these are all the sorts of partners that have been good partners to us that I think will be a difficult part of the conversation.

## 2. Mendenhall Valley Air Quality Program Staff Report

Mr. Bleidorn discussed this topic. Mr. Kelly was noticing that during the last air emergency called in December, it was during a particularly cold time and understand that it is in CBJ code that homes must have a secondary heat source. They can't have a fireplace or woodstove as their sole heating source normally, but maybe somebody's normal heating source might break down. I'm wondering if when we put out that notice and we say, please don't burn anything in your fireplace, is there any exception that might be made for people whose normal heating system might be down at that time. Mr. Bleidorn replied that if we call an air emergency and somebody reaches out to our office and they say that their primary heating source is non-functioning, and they're working on fixing it, we would probably work with them to provide them with some type of exception to the code. It would likely involve proof that they're having it serviced, and I think there's a maximum of a 3-day window. It would depend on having the proof and the information. I'll also add that you mentioned this in your question, that city code states that homes have to have a source of heat that's not combustion-based, so it would be another type of furnace as their primary use. The air emergency in December lasted just about a day, it's always the clear, cold, still days. It's the days when an air inversion can form in the Mendenhall Valley, where there's this lens of warm air. Usually, as you rise in elevation, air gets colder. You go up at Eaglecrest, it's snowing and it's raining down here. An air aversion sets up in the Mendenhall Valley when there's this lens where the air gets warmer at a higher elevation and then gets colder again, and that lens acts to trap all those pollutants at ground level. Those lenses only form when it's very clear, very cold, and very still. It happens to be some of the days when we have wind warnings downtown where the valley is very stagnant. It's unfortunate that the time when the environmental conditions set up or we have pollution problems are also the days that are the coldest and the clearest.

Ms. Hall asked, with more and more people installing heat pumps, are you noticing any difference in fewer air emergencies, or is anyone collecting data on that? Mr. Bleidorn replied that this winter has been seeming to be colder, and it doesn't seem to be less snowy, but the past few years, weather conditions have been such that when we've had those cold stretches, there's also been a little bit of wind. It's hard to tell if it's just seasonal variations or some type of pattern that's happening. There's no indication that the number of air emergencies is going down based on air source heat pumps or anything like that, but I do know that over the last 15 to 20 years with wood stove permitting, you have to have a certified wood stove, it's cleaner than stoves were even just a couple decades ago, it's amazing to think that the cleanliness of the stoves is also increasing.

## H. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Schumer from PRAC gave an update that they had a meeting since the last time we met, and we discussed discuss Trail Mix and the things going on there, as well as that easement application and our capital improvement plan. I would like to invite everybody to the Mendenhall Library, where we will be discussing and having open forum on Jackie Renninger Park, which is the skate park. And that is from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday the 28<sup>th</sup> in the big public library, large conference room.

I. NEXT MEETING DATE – February 23, 2026

J. ADJOURNMENT – 5:42pm