

APPROVED MINUTES

Agenda

Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU

Erik Pedersen, Chair

March 24, 2026

A. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – Read by Ms. Rintala

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!

B. ROLL CALL

Erik Pedersen, 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 –Erik Pedersen, Chair; Lacey Derr, Vice Chair; Mandy Cole, Clerk; Jessalynn Rintala, Vice Clerk; Douglas Salik; Larry Gamez; Carlee Simon; Karinne Wiebold

Commissioners present via video conferencing – Keith Koruna

Commissioners absent: None

Staff present: Scott Ciambor, CDD Planning Manager; Forrest Courtney, Senior Planner; Madeline Carse, CDD Administrative Assistant; Nicole Lynch, Attorney III; Justin Smith, Planner I; Kathryn Oberlin, Planner I

Assembly members: Greg Smith

C. REQUEST FOR AGENDA CHANGES AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. February 24, 2026, Draft Minutes Regular Planning Commission

MOTION: *by Ms. Derr to approve the February 24, 2026, Planning Commission Regular Meeting minutes.*

E. BRIEF REVIEW OF THE RULES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

F. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

G. ITEMS FOR RECONSIDERATION

H. CONSENT AGENDA

1. **VAR2025 0006:** Non-Administrative Variance to reduce the front yard setback from twenty-five (25) feet to five (5) feet to build a single-family structure in a D1(T)D3 zone.

Applicant: Mallarie Yeager
Location: 2765 Fritz Cove Road

Director's Report

The applicant requests a Non-Administrative Variance to reduce the front yard setback from twenty-five (25) feet to five (5) feet. Steep slopes (exceeding approximately 35%) constrain the buildable area and limit feasible placement of a single-family structure and two required off-street parking spaces on the lot. The variance would allow the family to construct a single-family structure and accommodate the two required off-street parking spaces. Staff finds the requested variance meets all criteria of CBJ Section 49.20.250(b)(1), Non-Administrative Variances.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt the Director's analysis and findings and APPROVE Variance VAR2025 0006

MOTION: *by Chair Pedersen to accept staff's findings, analysis, and recommendations, and approve VAR2025 0006.*

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

J. REGULAR AGENDA

1. **VAR2025 0007:** Non-Administrative Variance to reduce the front yard setback from 25 feet to 15 feet in a D3 zone to build a boat condo with overhead living space.

Applicant: Lucas Mesdag
Location: 16470 Ocean View Drive

Director's Report

The applicant requests a Non-Administrative Variance to reduce the front yard setback from 25 feet to 15 feet. The lot is developed and contains a single-family dwelling, ADU, sauna, driveway, grading, and drain field. The lot meets minimum size requirements for two single-family dwellings in the D3 zone. The requested setback reduction is to allow placement of a second dwelling, proposed as a boat condo with overhead living space. Staff finds the requested variance does not meet the criteria of CBJ 49.20.250(b)(1)(A), (B), and (D).

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt the Director's analysis and findings and DENY Variance VAR2025 0007.

Lucas Mesdag, applicant, explained he had been looking for a place over the last couple years to put up a boat condo with a living space. He said that his dad proposed that he use the bottom part of his property, as he has not had any luck to do this elsewhere. He shared that when he brought this idea to the Planning Commission, they originally said he had a natural barrier with the drain field, but later the planner said it wasn't natural and they were going to deny it, as there is tons of space in the back of the property to build. The applicant voiced that it was up a slope in the back. He stated they are proposing putting the corner of the building within the setback, and he is just wanting to develop something where he can park his boat and increase housing. He did not believe he could make it any smaller.

Ms. Cole asked why not square it up, as it appears from the drawings it could be squared up.

Mr. Mesdag answered there was not space for it, as many boat condos are typically 50-60 feet long. He said this is the only way they think they could maybe get it where they can back up a truck and boat and it all be off the road. He added it would also require a lot of removal to try and make it flat, so that is less an ideal.

Mr. Salik inquired how far they would be getting into the setback.

Mr. Mesdag responded the best he can tell from the survey, it does get into the setback 10 feet, so it would reduce the setback from 25 to 15 feet.

Mr. Salik voiced that from the aerial, it looks like it is heavily wooded. He asked if anyone would be able to see it from the road.

Mr. Mesdag answered that everyone would notice, as it would completely different.

Mr. Gamez expressed the property is obviously on a slope. He asked if they decided to approve it, would it still be a steep driveway for the boat, truck, and everything else they would be parking there.

Mr. Mesdag responded that is why they proposed to place it down at the bottom, because he believes they could get it pretty close to street grade with some removal. He shared he was asked why they could not make it narrower, and the reason they can't is because the farther they go towards the back of the driveway, there is more of a slope and being able to back a boat up there would be difficult.

Ms. Wiebold asked for clarification that it is just the one little corner of the building that would be infringing on the setback.

Mr. Mesdag answered yes.

Ms. Simon inquired what the applicant's alternatives would be if they continue with the city's recommendation.

Mr. Mesdag responded it would be the end of this project on that piece of property, and he would then continue trying to find a different place to do it.

Ms. Simon asked if he would be interested in sizing it down or working with some orientation.

Mr. Mesdag said he would love to and would be open to suggestions. He stated there are size limitations with a project like this, as it has to be long enough to fit a boat, and he did not feel the garage door could be facing the street up against a setback because there would be times when everything is attached and he could be blocking the street, and if he was to push the aspect further up the hill, it would make it difficult to get it in.

Chair Pedersen asked for public testimony. There were none.

There were no questions for staff from the commissioners.

Chair Pedersen asked the commissioners for discussion.

Ms. Cole commented she could not support this as a variance, as variances are narrowly tailored to a specific few criteria, and she did not think the drain field met that criteria. She agreed they need housing, but that was not what the variance was for.

Chair Pedersen added there were three different findings in the staff report stating it did not meet the variance criteria. He said if they were to approve this variance, they would have to have some discussion as to why they thought this variance met those standards. He shared they have really tried to make variances not a normal thing to grant, so it is hard to meet that burden. He was not in support of granting the variance.

Ms. Derr understood this was the optimal placement for this size of condo, but it was not the only placement and size that could fit in this specific area, which furthers not meeting the criteria of a variance, so she was not in support.

Chair Pedersen expressed they all recognize the need for housing and that this could be a great project, but he did not agree with doing this with a variance.

MOTION: *by Ms. Derr to approve VAR2025 0007, a non-administrative variance to reduce the front yard setback from 25 feet to 15 feet in a D3 zone, to build a boat condo with overhead living space.*

The motion failed 8-1.

K. OTHER BUSINESS

L. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Ciambor shared that Director Lawhorne is on leave through mid-May, and he will act as interim director for that time period. He said their next PC Meetings are April 14th and May 12th. He shared the Title 49 Advisory Meeting is meeting on April 9th, where they will talk about code changes. He said the Community Development Department is currently recruiting, as they have an Administrative Officer position, Planner 1, Planner 2, and two senior planners posted. The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee met last week and there are details online with information and data gathered in the last phase.

Ms. Derr asked if their department has considered a reclassification study of their planners to make the positions more attractive, allow for movement up or down, or if any letters or recommendation from the board could help their department in that area.

Mr. Ciambor responded he has been with HR a lot in the last couple of weeks to do things like that, and they made some modifications in their postings and are trying to be a little bit more aggressive in outreach as they get into their building season. He said they have gotten adequate and good attention from the HR Department in the last few weeks.

Ms. Simon asked for clarification they are not going to be meeting on April 28th.

Mr. Ciambor answered that is correct, as they do not have any cases for that date.

M. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chair Pedersen reported the Title 49 Rewrite Committee met fairly recently, and at the April 9th meeting, they are going to go over the Table of Permissible Uses and a few other items. He said right now they are just trying to formulate the next round of revisions that are being forwarded to the Assembly.

N. LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Smith expressed that at the March 17th Title 49 Rewrite Meeting, they discussed parking, drive-throughs, outdoor lighting, and outdoor storage. He said some of those are things not regulated or well-defined in code and others are in code but up for discussion on possible changes. He reiterated the main focus at the April 9th Meeting is to review the revised Table of Permissible Uses. In regard to the Assembly, they will soon get really deep into the budget process, and they will have the budget introduction on April 1st, where they will hear the first viewing of the CIP and marine passenger fee proposals. On April 11th, they will have an all-day Assembly meeting where the manager will present their budget, along with details and possible changes.

O. CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

P. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Q. EXECUTIVE SESSION

R. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

1. Additional Materials

S. ADJOURNMENT

The March 24, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.