

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Meeting Minutes – September 20, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Assembly Committee of the Whole Meeting, held in the Assembly Chambers and broadcasted virtually via Zoom and Facebook livestream, was called to order by Deputy Mayor Jones at 7:01p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Assemblymembers Present: Deputy Mayor Loren Jones, Carole Triem, Wade Bryson, Alicia Hughes-Skandijs, Greg Smith (joined via phone at 7:15pm, joined in person at 7:50p.m.), Christine Woll, Michelle Hale, and Mayor Beth Weldon.

Assemblymembers Absent: Maria Gladziszewski

Special Guest Present: Senator Jesse Kiehl

Staff Present: City Manager Rorie Watt, Deputy City Manager Robert Barr, City Attorney Robert Barr, Assistant City Attorney Sherri Layne, Municipal Clerk Beth McEwen, Deputy Clerk Diane Cathcart, Engineering/Public Works Director Katie Koester, Finance Director Jeff Rogers, Lands Manager Dan Bleidorn, Community Development Department (CDD) Director Jill Maclean, , CDD Planning Manager Alix Pierce, and CDD Planner Teri Camery

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Deputy Mayor Jones to rearrange the order of the agenda, so that Mr. Smith would be present for the Homeless Update and Landslide Hazard Mapping. He requested moving the Solid Waste Presentation as Item #1, followed by the Homeless Services Update and Landslide Hazard Mapping. *Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved as amended by unanimous consent.*

V. AGENDA TOPICS

A. Solid Waste Recommendations – presentation by Public Works Director Katie Koester Recommendations from the Public Works and Facilities Committee

Public Works Director Katie Koester referenced a memo within in the COW packet that featured Solid Waste Plan recommendations created by the Public Works and Facilities Committee. She said that her goal with her presentation is to provide context as to how the committee reached their decision.

Director Koester explained the “who/what/when/where/why/how” regarding the Solid Waste Plan, identifying the “Why” as one of the Assembly Goal/implementation strategy: “Develop a solid waste strategy including plans to increase recycling and deal with abandoned/junk

vehicles.” Other reasons as to “Why” mentioned the community’s concern regarding the landfill odor, and the landfill’s limited capacity.

PWFC Solid Waste Plan Recommendations:

1. Odor Control

PWFC received a presentation from Waste Management (WM) that addressed the issue of the odor emanating from the Lemon Creek Landfill. WM proposed minimizing the size of the landfill working area.

2. Reduce the Waste stream

Mid-term (as funding is available):

Introduce an ordinance to appropriate \$50,000 for CBJ to partner with the private sector on a composting pilot program that can create additional supply of compost and grow local composting capacity. One example could be to initiate composting at city facilities (school district, Eaglecrest, CCFR). Program development would occur at the PWFC level.

Director Koester spoke to the need to determine the feasibility of composting cardboard, creating a public facility food waste collection point, and if there is a market for composting, the next steps would be to choosing a site, and evaluating the potential costs associated with composting.

Mayor Weldon recalled the WM consultant at the PWFC meeting saying that he did not think that there was enough of a market in Juneau for composting.

b. Zero Waste Plan

Director Koester described the zero waste plan as a community effort that would require for all sectors of the community to participate. She also recommended forming a coalition of stakeholders, and tasking the coalition to draft a plan for the City to implement in its efforts to achieve Zero Waste.

In Director Koester’s memo, it mentioned that the resources required for a plan are dependent on the scope of work and how ambitious waste reduction goals are. If drafting a plan in house, they would expect to spend half a position on staffing the task force, research, and plan development. If an outside consultant is used, staff support will still be critical to the success of the plan to provide local input on opportunities and challenges and staff the task force. Developing and implementing a zero waste plan is a long-term commitment. She said they would expect to spend 18-24 months on plan development. The first step PWFC recommends is to amend Assembly goal 5.d to refer specifically to a zero waste or waste reduction plan. An appropriation of (\$100,000) during the FY2023 capital budget process will initiate a planning process followed by a resolution to establish a solid waste coalition/task force.

In regards to timing, Director Koester’s presentation detailed implementation timelines for each of the projects addressed tonight.

The odor control issue was categorized as an ongoing process alongside Waste Management, which included providing regular updates to the PWFC.

The timeline for the composting facility showed the intent to purchase equipment in winter 2021, then to explore feasibility in FY21-22.

The Zero Waste Plan timeline started with prioritization at the Assembly retreat in December, funding through the CIP in July 2022, organizing the coalition and hiring staff in fall 2022, and presenting a draft Zero Waste Plan in spring 2024.

Mr. Bryson asked Director Koester to describe the size of the cardboard shredder, and to explain if it would impact the already-established cardboard recycling systems in place.

Mr. Smith joined the meeting at 7:18p.m.

Director Koester explained that Public Works has ordered a small-scale cardboard shredder, any large-scale shredders would need to be assessed through the feasibility study and approved by the Assembly. In regards to the impact of a small-scale shredder, she said that it could be successful, but there are no certain answers to what its impact could be as of this time.

Deputy Mayor Jones noted that the City recycles household cardboard, but there is not a system in place that collects and recycles cardboard from businesses. He asked Director Koester to clarify if the small-scale shredder would be able to accept commercial use cardboard, or if allowing commercial use cardboard would overwhelm the machine.

Director Koester identified Deputy Mayor Jones' question as the point of the feasibility study, to determine the shredder's capacity to accept industrial cardboard from businesses. She also mentioned that Fred Meyer is starting to compost through Juneau Composts, and they have removed their large industrial garbage disposal from their facility as a result.

Ms. Hale asked if the feasibility study would address the issue of grocery stores opting to dispose of foods down the sewer system. Director Koester noted that the Sewer Treatment Facility is overwhelmed by the volume of food that is process down the drain. She envisioned the feasibility study to examine and report on all waste streams identified in the study, and determine how to address each respective waste stream.

Deputy Mayor Jones asked if the PWFC needed anything from the Committee of the Whole at this time. Director Koester said that the PWFC will bring authorizing legislation to the Assembly in the near future, and they asked the Assembly to consider funding the Zero Waste Plan during the budget cycle.

B. Homeless Services Update

Mr. Watt provided the Homeless Services Update, and began by encouraging the Assembly to go visit the New Glory Hall facility. He said that the location seems to be working out very well; the decision to move to the valley does not seem to have created any barriers in regards to access.

Mr. Watt referred back to the Mayor's 2020 Homelessness Ad Hoc Committee recommendations:

- 1) Support establishment of Youth Shelter – *Completed*.
- 2) Appoint an Assembly liaison – *Completed*.
- 3) Provide for the coalition to update the Assembly – Mr. Watt suggested the Assembly arrange for an update to be provided sometime this fall.
- 4) Support long range planning and resource development – Mr. Watt identified this recommendation as the Assembly's next steps moving forward.

Mr. Watt recommended the Assembly schedule an update from the coalition, and to keep in mind that funding requests will be brought to the Assembly during the November Assembly Finance Committee (AFC) meeting.

Mr. Bryson noted some changes that came as a result of the new facility, such as a lack of public restrooms in the valley, and the relocation of a bus stop resulting in additional traffic in the commercial district near Crest Street.

Mr. Watt said that he would talk with Glory Hall staff to see if they have any solutions.

Mayor Weldon asked Mr. Watt to explain how the Youth Shelter is coming along. Mr. Watt said that the Youth Shelter is open and operating. Deputy Mayor Jones added that the Youth Shelter has been open for about a month.

Ms. Hale asked if it was possible to add porta-potties to address the lack of public restrooms. Mr. Watt said that they can look into the options, but added that he was cautious about unsupervised porta-potties.

Mr. Watt explained that The Glory Hall (TGH) was in need of additional funding from Assembly. From a budgetary standpoint, Mr. Watt agreed that TGH needs more funding. He added that St. Vincent is also in need of additional substantial funding to support the cold weather shelter. These needs and funding requests will be coming to the Assembly, and he said that the Assembly can thoroughly discuss these requests at the November AFC meeting.

The Committee of the Whole took a break at 7:40p.m. The meeting resumed at 7:50p.m.

C. Landslide Hazard Mapping.

CDD Planning Manager Alix Pierce gave a presentation on the development and creation of the landslide and avalanche maps; following her presentation, Tetra Tech consultants gave an additional presentation detailing the actual maps and answering technical questions.

Ms. Pierce explained that CDD was awarded a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2018 to update the existing landslide and avalanche hazard maps in Downtown Juneau. The initial application was for many different areas in town, but only the downtown area was awarded in the project grant, due to already-existing maps and its particularly hazardous areas. She said that CDD would like to try to get more funding in the future for mapping other areas of town.

Ms. Pierce reported that the maps currently used by CBJ were adopted in September 1987, but the maps are actually from the early 1970s. The 1987-adopted maps combine both the landslide and avalanche hazard zones, which she described as inaccurate as those two types of hazards have vastly different characteristics and impact.

The initial project process intended for CDD to update and adopt the new hazard maps, then FEMA would provide additional funding to CDD to conduct a regulatory review. CDD received comment from the public and recommendation from the Planning Commission on various ways to reevaluate the process to allow for more public input and outreach.

The updated 2021 maps clearly distinguish between landslide and avalanche risks, and has incorporated risk levels for both avalanches (low, moderate, and severe) and landslides (low, moderate, high, and severe.) The 2021 maps also expanded the project area to include a larger swath of land, and opted to follow topography lines rather than property lines. Ms. Pierce explained that topography lines are more scientifically accurate, and allow for CDD to precisely determine whether a structure is in a hazard zone.

Ms. Pierce presented a map that illustrated the differences between the 1987-adopted map and the 2021 map. She noted that the 2021 map added 217 properties to the High/Severe hazard zone, and she addressed the concerns of the property owners in relation to insurance and selling their home in the future.

Last July, CDD held a meeting for public comment that hosted over 101 participants, and lasted over three hours due to the amount of testimony they received. CDD is currently working with FEMA on ways in which they can provide additional public process and conduct a community review. The Planning Commission forwarded a Notice of Recommendation to the Assembly for direction on next steps towards a community review and adoption process. The Planning Commission further recommended that updated landslide and avalanche hazard mapping results should be held without adoption, pending development of associated hazard zone policies and regulations.

The original FEMA grant funded \$180,000 to CDD to conduct a draft Landslide and Avalanche Assessment. FEMA recently committed to transferring the remainder of the grant funding toward public outreach amid growing public concern. Grant funding for regulatory analysis and mitigation would be applied for through a separate grant process in 2022.

Ms. Triem asked Ms. Pierce to explain how much this process will cost. She also asked why the City waited 45 years to address the outdated maps, and why it chose to rely on grant funding from FEMA to do so.

Ms. Pierce explained that the City did not deliberately wait 45 years to update the maps, as there was an attempt to update the maps in the 1990s. However, those maps were not adopted due to concerns about property values, similar to the concerns that are being raised today.

Ms. Triem asked if CDD received any public comments from mortgage brokers or real estate experts that explained the potential impact the hazard maps could have on homeowners. Ms. Pierce said that they have not received any comment from the real estate community in Juneau. CDD has done some research on the current zones; she understood that a larger down payment is required, but homeowners are still able to receive mortgages.

Mr. Smith asked if the Assembly was required to adopt maps per FEMA requirements. Ms. Pierce explained that the 1987-adopted maps that are currently in use are very difficult to work with. She highly encouraged the Assembly to adopt the 2021 maps, as they are compatible with current technology and are a more accurate representation of today's landscape.

Ms. Woll asked Ms. Pierce if there was anything they could do that might mitigate the risk of avalanche and landslides on slopes above these properties. Ms. Pierce mentioned that CDD is considering ways to decide how best to approach individual property interventions in the regulatory review. She added that the community seemed interested in engineering interventions on a case-by-case basis when that was brought up at the July meeting.

Tetra Tech Consultants Ms. Rita Kors-Olthof, Mr. Vladslav Roujanski, and Mr. Alan Jones joined the meeting with presentations on landslide mapping and avalanche mapping. Mr. Alan Jones presented on the avalanche hazard maps. Tetra Tech identified 52 avalanche paths in the project area, in three specific areas: Mt. Juneau (25 paths), Gastineau Avenue (11 paths), and Thane Road (16 paths).

Ms. Woll noted that local avalanche professionals at AEL&P and at DOT had not been consulted. She asked if Tetra Tech had considered collecting data and information from organizations that are local to Juneau. Mr. Alan Jones said that they had spoken with some local experts. He had anticipated meeting with additional local organizations, but the pandemic changed their public process. He added that he would incorporate the knowledge and expertise of local avalanche professionals in the future.

Ms. Triem asked Mr. Alan Jones to elaborate on the term "avalanche modelling." Mr. Alan Jones explained that the study incorporated the use of dynamic modelling and statistical modelling in their research. Dynamic modeling consists of using programs to simulate avalanche events. Statistical models involves the uses of mathematical elements and estimations.

Ms. Kors-Olthof presented on the hazard mapping. She explained that the maps refined the landslide hazard designation system categories as follows: Low, Moderate, High, and Severe. “Low” represented gentle to moderate slopes (0° to 26°) with no historical record of landslide activity or property damage/loss of life.

“Moderate” represented moderately steep slopes (27° to 35°) in areas where there may be signs of historical activity or located within runout zones underneath slopes with landslide activity.

“High” represented steep slopes (35° and beyond) that meet at least two of the following criteria: Thin colluvium, maximum slope of 70° to 80°, and an average slope of 40° to 50°. These areas might also have written record on property damage or loss of life.

“Severe” represented steep to vertical slopes (35° and beyond) with signs of recent activity, repeated historical activity, and written record of property damage or loss of life.

Mr. Watt asked Ms. Kors-Olthof if the landslide hazard maps featured a method to estimate the probability of an event occurring within the project area, similar to the avalanche study. Ms. Kors-Olthof clarified that the final report will not feature mapping for the landslide study in the same way that they have for the avalanche study. She said that it is hard to gauge the probability of an event without conducting a magnitude frequency analysis.

Mr. Watt felt that the issue was that the public had asked for a risk assessment, and the answers provided indicate that Tetra Tech does not know how to gauge the probability of an event due to the lack of a magnitude frequency analysis. Ms. Kors-Olthof said that the study takes into account areas in which landslide activity has occurred; she added that tracking the amount of debris and where it needs to be cleaned up can help determine the events.

Mayor Weldon asked if property owners could change their hazard designation status if they put up mitigation factors. Ms. Kors-Olthof said that they would need to be an engineered structure.

Mr. Roujanski clarified that they have not conducted a risk assessment, they have only done a hazard assessment. He added that mitigation can be expensive, and would require a separate study that has not yet been conducted. Ms. Triem asked Mr. Roujanski if there was a difference between predicting avalanche events versus predicting landslide events. Mr. Roujanski explained that landslide modeling is considerably more complex compared to avalanche modeling, as it requires specific geological information that has not been made available to Tetra Tech at this time.

Mr. Alan Jones added that CBJ also has some avalanche expertise, which provides them more information to create a relatively precise avalanche hazard mapping system. In comparison, it can be more difficult to forecast a landslide due to the comparative lack of precise information.

Ms. Hale asked if it would be worthwhile to pursue the more expensive option of conducting geotechnical research to create a more detailed landslide hazard map; or would the maps essentially tell the Assembly what they already know in terms of risk areas.

Mr. Roujanski said that the expensive additional studies would likely just confirm what we already suspected, and reinforce the information provided by the air photo and historical analysis.

Deputy Mayor Jones thanked the Tetra Tech consultants for their presentation.

Deputy Mayor Jones advised the Assembly to be cautious when proceeding with hazard maps, and encouraged them to engage with homeowners and the housing community throughout the public process.

Deputy Mayor Jones mentioned that Senator Jesse Kiehl had told him that the Reapportionment Board brought forward four additional Redistricting maps for consideration in addition to the two previous maps they put forward. The Board stated that communities can request a public hearing of the commission to discuss the details of the maps. He suggested the Manager and Mayor could draft a letter to request a public hearing in Juneau.

Deputy Mayor Jones noted that this was his last COW meeting, but he will be attending two more Assembly meetings, and will act as chair of the Housing and Development Task Force.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Assembly, the Committee of the Whole meeting was adjourned at 8:56p.m.

Minutes drafted by Administrative Assistant Lacey Davis and respectfully submitted by Municipal Clerk Beth McEwen this 20th day of December, 2021.