

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES
LANDS HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA
November 1, 2021, 5:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

III. ROLL CALL - Chair Hale called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Members Present: Chair Michelle Hale, Greg Smith, Wade Bryson, Wáahlaal Gíidaak

Members Absent: none

Liaisons Present: Chris Mertl, Parks and Recreation; Lacey Derr, Docks and Harbors

Liaisons Absent: Dan Hickok Planning Commission

Other Assembly Members Present: Alicia Hughes-Skandijs, Mayor Beth Weldon

Some Members of the Public Present: Karla Allwine, Liz Perry, KINY News of the North, KTOO

Staff Present: Dan Bleidorn, Lands Manager; Roxie Duckworth, Lands & Resources Specialist; Jill Maclean, CDD Director; Scott Ciambor, Chief Housing Officer;

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – The agenda was approved as presented.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - September 27, 2021 Draft Minutes were approved as presented.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - No public participation.

VII. AGENDA TOPICS

A. Request for a Negotiated Property Exchange in Auke Bay

Mr. Bleidorn discussed this topic. Mr. Bryson asked if there are any plans for this land, what the City's intent is once we have access to it. One of the things that we have noted for neighborhoods is if they are not properly accessed then that creates problems for development. If we are squeezing a tiny right-a-way in between two properties and that is the tenuous access that the public would have, or if there's no access to the land, except for a very small right-a-way, that doesn't seem to be adequate for the rules that we have for neighborhoods, that they have multiple access points and adequate access. Another question is if this right-a-way is big enough to create access for housing.

Mr. Bleidorn replied that in initial discussions with the Community Development about this land trade, we discussed having a 60-foot wide right-a-way here. That would be a large right-a-way and would allow for development. In the future, I could see potential access points to Auke Bay Elementary, which would allow for ease of buses for a better intersection. There is an opportunity where the City owns property further west of here, where the current trailhead for Spaulding Meadows is, that could be developed as a secondary access point. We are investigating opportunities to access this property with efficiency. As far as what could be developed, this is still very early in the development stages and the first part is to gain access points. Future possibilities include investigating a zone change to make the density more viable for development, right now it is D3 zoning. We will look at the Auke Bay plan and discuss further with CDD and the Assembly if we do gain this access point. I think this property will move up on our list of potentially developable properties and we will investigate what we to do here and conduct a development study.

Motion passed that the Lands, Housing and Economic Development Committee forward this application to acquire City property through a property exchange to the Assembly with a motion of support for working with the original proposer in accordance with 53.09.260.

VIII. INFORMATION ITEM

Travel Juneau Update

Liz Perry from Travel Juneau provided an update with former LHED committee member Ms. Hughes-Skandijs. LHED met with Travel Juneau to find out what we currently had, where we were, and where the committee might want to go. It was decided to have a smaller group, Ms. Hughes-Skandijs and Ms. Perry, work on a scope of work based on Mr. Jones's past idea of taking something out to bid. Starting with a scope of work and looking to get a general sense of what we want and then let that snowball into what we do. The first draft has had only one round of review between Ms. Perry and Ms. Hughes-Skandijs. It is in the format of an MOA, as that is the board preference. More work is needed for the scope of work. Some things for this committee to consider is whether visitor services belong in this general scope of work or whether they would belong in the marine passenger fee portion. What, if any, ideas that you would like to see in the performance metrics.

Mr. Bryson noted that he is the new liaison for Travel Juneau. One of the outcomes of having a precise scope of work benefits Travel Juneau because it will tell them exactly what we want them to do, and gives the Assembly some of that same assistance to say hey, this is the four or five tasks that we want you to be great at. One thing that I want to include is that every member or person that works for Travel Juneau should understand Juneau. Having a background and living in Juneau, they are connected to either the economy or the tourism industry. Regarding the scope of work, if we are going to look at an MOA, I would want it to have an inclusion that says how much of the staff are local. If we are going to be looking at other people, making these decisions with marketing anybody can give you a lower budget. I can market Juneau for \$100, we are not going to get very far but somebody can always undercut you. The people that have the background knowledge of Juneau are the people that understand Juneau. If we are going to have a group marketing Juneau, they at least need to understand Southeast Alaska and know why we are different from other parts of Alaska. That is the advantage that Travel Juneau, they live here. The Board lives and works here, and you are not going to have any more compassion than the people that live in a place when talking about marketing your city for tourism. While we are creating this matrix, a valid question is if we are going to put it out to bid, how much of the organization is part of Alaska, part of Southeast, so they at least understand what we are going through. It is a fair component of it because it gives somebody more insight when saying here is why you come to Juneau as opposed to a very clever down South marketing firm that comes up with catchy slogans. If we could include the local aspect, we are employing people; their jobs are staying in the economy. This is one of the strongest attributes that Travel Juneau has and should be included in the scope of work.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs commented to Mr. Bryson that is the point on why we would be better served to focus on what type of strategy we want. One thing Ms. Perry and I agreed on is that we do not want to create a camel trying to get into the wordsmithing, which is best left to staff. It is not necessarily the best idea for the committee to be trying to write an MOA, and it might be better served to put that under the Manager's Office.

Wáahlaal Gíidaak commented that it would be nice to see some language drawing attention to slogans that have caused harm to the indigenous population in the past, like "The Last Frontier," things of that nature that go to erase our existence. It would be nice to include something that draws attention to cultural sensitivity or acknowledgment of the indigenous population in some way, shape, or form.

Chair Hale commented that when Mr. Jones was still on the Assembly, he had drafted an ordinance to put this work out to bid, but that ordinance did not pass the Assembly. A draft of that ordinance was forwarded to this committee to work on, but there is nothing on the table right now that this must go out to bid. We can follow the direction that Ms. Hughes-Skandijs is pointing in and go for specificity in

deliverables and that is what the Assembly has been asking for. That will help Travel Juneau. That proceeds any kind of decision for going out to bid.

Mr. Mertl asked Ms. Perry if Travel Juneau would be working with sports and tournament groups coming to Juneau, which is one of the challenges, to coordinate travel with the ferry system and hotels. Sometimes it becomes cost-prohibitive, in the shoulder and winter season, those are great opportunities. The scope of work looks great, but I thought working with those groups was included in that package. Ms. Perry replied that those fall under the portion of work that we would market to so, for example, when the swim and dive championships were here in Juneau, we assisted as much as we were asked and felt comfortable doing. Getting those things launched in and off the ground, such as the Ironman coming to town in August, we are managing those big groups, so they are part of our marketing effort.

IX. STAFF REPORT

Mendenhall Valley Air Quality Program

Mr. Bleidorn discussed the Air Quality program in the Mendenhall Valley. This is something that Lands monitors every fall and winter and due to the physical parameters of the Valley, it is in the bowl where sometimes air is trapped at ground level because of air inversions, which causes the air particulate matter to rise to concentrations that are unhealthy, in which case the City would call an air emergency. This program is partnered with the State who provides the data with a monitoring station on top of Floyd Dryden Middle School and the Clean Air Act, which sets the parameters for these guidelines. We look at the data seven days a week to keep an eye on it during the winter.

Mr. Bryson asked if there are legal exceptions for when the temperature are very low, into the single digits, and there is minimal outdoor activity. When you remove a heat source away from the population you put the burden on the most socioeconomically challenged individuals. In the Valley people that can get their firewood for free are now not able to provide heat for their house, because we have an air emergency and during the coldest times of the year, when people aren't outside. Mr. Bleidorn responded that the answer is most likely no; I do not think that they are going to allow for any exceptions, especially in Juneau when those cold, clear days are the days where inversions are set up and we have the worst air quality. We do have the ability to provide somebody with a hardship if their furnace goes out, we can give a few days allowance if there is air emergencies in place. The Community Development Department and the City have regulations, stating that wood stoves cannot be your only source of heating. I also live in the Valley and burn my woodstove so I am also directly affected by this. Staff can look into it, but it is most likely going to be no, especially in our case, when cold clear days are the days that we have an inversion setup. Another thing to think about is in the last few years we have had zero air emergencies. That might be from current weather patterns, or people are burning more efficiently, or using their stoves less, but for the last two years we've had zero air emergencies and we usually only call a couple of per year on average. This year could be different with La Niña setting up; we will see what happens this year, but it usually only a couple of days a year.

Wáahlaal Gíidaak asked if there is something in writing about the cultural significance of smokehouses that pertains to our residents. In the summertime, air quality is not kicked on by lower temperatures, but it is something that continues with our culture and has, for the last 10,000 years, and would like to see it go for the next 10,000. Mr. Bleidorn asked to clarify if this is for smoking fish, and that our

ordinance that sets up the authority to monitor and call air emergencies is strictly based on wood stoves. Things like outdoor fire pits, grills, and smokers are not included in this ordinance.

Chair Hale noted that this has been a big issue in Fairbanks for a long time, and there are no exemptions for cold weather there. Juneau's problems are control well by our program and we rarely have exceedances. Mr. Bleidorn noted that we have an excellent relationship with the State of Alaska Division of Air Quality and work with them closely to make sure our site is functioning properly, they are prompt to answer questions. Occasionally we have phone calls from around the country because our program is successful, in part because of our geography of the Valley, which is primarily wood stoves; we do not have coal-burning power plants. Very few places have gone from nonattainment, which means you are exceeding the air quality to attainment and that is something that Juneau has successfully done.

X. STANDING COMMITTEE TOPICS

A. Status of Housing Initiatives

Mr. Ciambor provided an update. In July, the Assembly put forward \$700,000 to be used as a competitive round for the Juneau Affordable Housing Fund. Applications were due last Friday at 4pm and we received six applications, with a review meeting scheduled next week. For our next LHED committee meeting you will have a memo and a recommendation of what to do with those funds.

B. Status of Title 49

Ms. Maclean provided an update about the Downtown Parking Ordinance. It went to the Planning Commission and they asked staff for more work to look specifically at a core area of downtown around City Hall. We have run into some challenges with providing ADA parking spaces in that type of downtown business district. We are also working on the Alternative Development Overlay district, which is for downtown Juneau, South Franklin Street, all the way up around Fifth Street, down over around Telephone Hill and then out to the waterfront. This overlay would allow some flexibility, setbacks, height and some other issues that typically in the past, people have received variances. I have met with Law and we are working through a couple of the questions. Rather than going to the Assembly, we will be bringing that back to the Planning Commission because we have one change that is significant enough that they need to hear it again and hoping to have that potentially on the November 23 meeting, if not the December meeting. One item the Assembly has directed us to look strongly at was Coastal Management. Title 49 met last week and we are working on an update to the stream setback ordinance, which has concerns about challenges from the development sector. We are also working on the stream ordinance, trying to address some of the challenges and still balancing development with protecting the habitat. We have listened to the Assembly and we are wrapping the Coastal Management into that process and seeing how it may fit best. We did discover last week that we have more work than we initially thought, with at least part of the Coastal Management, but working through that. Title 49 will hear that again on November 30.

XI. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS – None

XII. NEXT MEETING DATE - November 29, 2021

XIII. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS - TRAVEL JUNEAU RED FOLDER ITEM

A. Tourism Marketing Strategy - Watt Memo

XIII. ADJOURNMENT - Chair Hale adjourned the meeting at 5:36 PM.