

**ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES  
LANDS HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA**

August 9, 2021, 5:00 P.M.

Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar Meeting

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. ROLL CALL**

Chair Gladziszewski called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

**Members Present:** Chair Maria Gladziszewski, Wade Bryson, Alicia Hughes-Skandijs, Greg Smith

**Members Absent:** none

**Liaisons Present:** none

**Liaisons Absent:** Chris Mertl, Parks and Recreation; Lacey Derr, Docks and Harbors, Dan Hickok  
Planning Commission

**Other Assembly Members Present:** Loren Jones

**Some Members of the Public Present:** Liz Perry

**Staff Present:** Dan Bleidorn, Lands Manager; Roxie Duckworth, Lands & Resources Specialist; Jill  
Maclean, CDD Director

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Agenda was approved as presented.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

July 19, 2021 Draft Minutes were approved as presented.

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No public participation.

**VI. AGENDA TOPICS**

**A. Assembly Priorities and Title 49 Land Use Code Update**

Ms. Maclean discussed this item. Mr. Bryson asked about planning and zoning maps, what ones provide the most challenges resident concerns, what are the logistical or physical challenges. Ms. Maclean replied that Auke Bay was probably one of the most challenging because that process was started close to a decade ago, back in about 2012. There have been three directors before her and multiple planning staff that are also no longer with CBJ, lack of continuity and not jumping right into the implementation of that plan. She noted that if we do an area plan it is best to keep that momentum moving, keeping the Steering Committee and the members of the public involved, along with more legwork. With Auke Bay, we lost some of the key people at the table and were not able to bring out support, which contributed to it failing. She believed there is support out there but they did not show up to the meetings and unfortunately there was a dozen or so people that came out against, which was the way that that vote went. Floodplain was also challenging, simply because it raises people's insurance rates. We have little control over it at a local level and it is sort of one of those things we just have to accept if we want to participate in the insurance program.

Mr. Smith asked about area plans, their benefits and in term so prioritization. Ms. Maclean replied that the overall comprehensive plan is probably the most critical because that gives the City, public, and staff the guiding document of where we're all trying to go to and what is moving forward. It aligns with the area plans and is the higher vision document that they should be reporting to. Ms. Maclean noted that smaller neighborhood plans would be more beneficial and gain more support from the community than larger area plans. For instance downtown, it stretches from the rock dump all the way through downtown to Star Hill, north to JDHS area and all the little neighborhoods and nooks and crannies in

that vicinity. Trying to take all of that in one plan is a lot. Area plans have their place, but if we are really trying to garner more community support and involvement that may be taking it down a notch to neighborhood area size plans with the comprehensive plan the guiding document. Mr. Smith asked if it is just a chance for the community to come up with some priorities and projects to create some of the flavor for an area. Ms. Maclean agreed and noted that Blueprint had its share of issues with Covid, but opposite to that would be the South Douglas/West Juneau area plan, which seems a little bit more compact with areas are a little more similar. In addition, this was happening during Covid, so we more or less continued the same process and the same approach. People have been used to coming to zoom meetings and participating that way for that area plan, and I think that format was just a hindrance to Auke Bay and Blueprint.

Mr. Smith asked about Title 49, what is the process and how does the interaction with the committee and staff relate to housing development, what does that look like or how is it envision going forward in terms of trying to make code more supportive of housing development. Ms. Maclean replied that each year the Assembly sets its goals and there is a joint meeting with the Assembly and the Planning Commission. These priorities have been on the list for a number of years CDD staff is diligently trying to tackle them and balance the day-to-day permitting, building permit reviews, plan review appeals, and Planning Commission work. With these updates, Title 49 takes their cues from the Planning Commission and Assembly priorities, knowing that there are two goals to work towards, housing and economic development. Some of the newer priorities, such as a new update to accessory apartments, would support housing opportunities. We just presented lot depth before the Assembly and are working on streamside buffer setbacks, which would be not just for housing, but also for development, balancing with the protection of the environment. New zoning districts were not applied in Auke Bay, but they are still worthwhile to put into the land use code, as options because they provide smaller scale development that may be more appealing and could provide housing opportunities that may not exist in some locations. The list in the packet is the one that staff has been handed and are working their way through. Lot depth and private shared are the most recent that really touches on easing the infill development that we see trying to take place now.

Mr. Smith followed up asking about housing, knowing it is a big priority, and pairs with other economic and social growth. What are some potential ideas that would be significant changes to Title 49 and how can those types of ideas or changes be incorporated into the process, through guidance from the Assembly and Planning Commission, in terms of goals and priorities. I hope that Title 49 can at do some ground sleuthing and collaboration with staff to crack this, or maybe we just cannot, maybe the economics are just going to be what they are going to be. I would like to know that staff is looking at all those different possibilities and understand that if staff capacity is an issue and, it would be good for us to know what you need. It would just it would be nice to be able to say, "Hey they have looked at a huge swath of possible changes this one didn't work, for this reason." Maybe those conversations are happening, but how do we know that they are, or that they will, or there is some kind of plan for that to happen in the future. Chair Gladyszewski commented that the table in the packet was starting to address Title 49 and confirmed Mr. Smith's question that he was asking how Title 49 got its priorities and direction. Mr. Smith replied that he was wondering about broad thinking, such as with housing, that we are evaluating many different options for things that could change. Ms. Maclean replied that those conversations are happening as things move through Title 49. LHED has tasked staff to look at other dimensional standards but staff has not gotten there yet, hopefully soon. Staff is also looking at zoning and some may not be the best fit for Juneau and will have to look into possibly other options. Another area the Chair and Ms. Maclean have talked about is looking at the table with permissible uses and questioning, if you are in a multifamily zoning district and you are building to the density that is

permitted, why do you need a conditional use permit at all. If we want to make it easy to do housing that maybe some of those three should become ones, or maybe review what goes to director approval over the Planning Commission, having a higher threshold at least before going to the Planning Commission. Looking at transition zones, the Assembly has adopted resumes that are dependent on something being met, whether it was water, sewer, or some other utility, there is at least a half dozen that have not been addressed. The Commission can address those on their own, and so that is on the list to bring to Title 49 and the Commission. Some of these have been around number of years, and it makes sense to bring it back to have a meeting or hearing on them. Another area is going through the TPU and seeing what makes sense for each zoning district, what best fits it.

Mr. Bryson asked about area and zoning plans, how do those increase regulations when there is both and does the developer have to pay attention to two sets of rule books. Does an area plan circumvent zoning requirements and how does an area plan on top of the zoning plan impact people's desires to develop. Ms. Maclean replied that the area plan does not circumvent the zoning plan and they are in the land use code, which states that if the land use code is more restrictive than the area plan or the comp plan, then the land use code prevails. The area plan gives guidance to development that the community and neighborhoods want to see in that area. It is not so much of a challenge as more of an opportunity for developers to know what that area wants to see. Staff would address that and conditional use permits if one is required when it comes to the Planning Commission so that the Commission knows it is conforming to the adopted plans. The zoning and area plans work hand in hand, but if there is a conflict then if the land use code is more restrictive that one for prevails.

Mr. Bryson replied that it sounds like it adds another level of bureaucracy and another level of understanding that a developer needs. It also sounds a little like a homeowner's association and any further zoning maps, like Auke Bay planning map, it sounds like we need to wait for the citizens or residents of that neighborhood to request an area plan like to indicate that this is the direction from the neighborhood on how to develop that area. Why would CBJ get involved on how to do an area plan if the citizens who live in that neighborhood have not requested it. Using Auke Bay as an example, there was a lot of CBJ staff time to discover that the neighborhood did not really want the plan or a map. Wouldn't it have saved City resources and time if we only did planning maps at citizens' request. Ms. Maclean replied that on a personal level before she was in land use, she would not have known what an area plan was or what it could do for her as a homeowner, property owner, or as a renter. It might be shortsighted to the public to say they need to ask for it when they may not know what they are asking for or what they need to ask for. Area plans often direct development that is wanted in area, in that sense; it should make it easier for developers to know what to do in that area. At the same time as much as we want to ease development challenges, we need to balance that with the neighborhoods and the property owners that exists in place, which can be a little challenging. There is a balance to going out and doing area, neighborhood, or comp plans, obtaining public input and feedback, and then building off that so staff can guide developers through the process. It is a balance of keeping property owners, the neighbors the renters, with the needs of the development sector.

Chair Gladziszewski commented that she remembered the neighborhood in Auke Bay wanted that process and some of those people faded away or perhaps went on too long and they didn't want to continue with the meetings over years. It is not happened but the people and wanted it at one point. It is a worry the same will happen to Blueprint, which is not getting a quorum, which indicates a lack of wanting to finish it or not worth their time. Mr. Bryson commented that Ms. Maclean's answer only solidified it more that I only heard the definition of zoning, which is why we have zoning rules to create waterfront, commercial, and mixed use. We set the zones for the different areas and the moment we

had a chance to tweak a zone, we said to leave it alone. These area maps we are spending City dollars on, we are not giving improved neighborhoods, we are creating economic difficulty because it is more difficult and expensive for developers to develop. It is necessary for the City to give developers, who is their job is to build, ideas or directions on what they need to build. They know what is being asked of them to be built; we could save money and time by eliminating area plans and just use zoning map. Chair Gladziszewski replied to Mr. Bryson that he brings up the issue of priorities. Given what happened with Auke Bay, that is for the Assembly to decide and people on the Assembly wanted area plans, which I am beginning to cool on them myself. So when looking at these things, Mr. Smith was talking about how do you come up with a priority, what gets done or what doesn't get done. Going through a couple of items on the list and looking at the table, Ms. Maclean can update those items. For example, it says lot depth is goal one, but then it says no, not a priority. I do not understand that, since one of our big goals is housing, it seems like it should say yes. Same thing with other dimensional standards, not sure why it says goal one, but no as a priority. So I'd question those two and urban agriculture, I've been wondering about that for some time, since it's been going on for a decade I don't know how long, but it says Assembly goal-no, but then it says priority-yes, so not sure why it says no, and then yes.

Ms. Maclean replied that the Assembly sets its goals and sets priorities with the Planning Commission each year. For instance on lot depth was listed as goal one because it will help housing development, but then lot depth was not identified as a priority that came out of the Joint Assembly Commission meeting in 2020. It is working its way up the list and it supports an Assembly goal, but the Assembly and the Planning Commission did not list it as a priority, it was the result of a variance being denied. Chair Gladziszewski commented that she was not familiar the Assembly and Planning Commission priority document and asked that it be included in the joint COW and Planning Commission meeting at the end of the month. She also asked about mobile homes, listed with three asterisks in the packet. Ms. Maclean commented that should have been just one asterisk. Chair Gladziszewski asked about tiny homes. Ms. Maclean replied that the City allow tiny homes in Juneau it does not matter which zoning district unless it is industrial because it is considered a residence. There are some requirements that are more to do with the building code and actually even more so to do with the fire code and less to do with actual zoning. Minimum lot size would stand, however we have adopted alternative residential subdivisions, which does allow you to play with the minimum lot size. Chair Gladziszewski commented this list is a good start but it does not reflect urban agriculture, which has been sitting for a few years. She asked if this list is ordered by priority. Ms. Maclean replied that it is a little out of order with Auke Bay and floodplain put on top because they are completed. Downtown parking is a top priority, with staff working on the new zoning districts and landscaping vegetative cover. There is also the Downtown and Douglas ADOD, and streamside is an ordinance that has been a priority of the development community. The list is in somewhat of an order of priority, with the recognition that housing and development have been the goals. Chair Gladziszewski commented that the Assembly-PC priorities would be good to bring to the meeting and would like to see something to find ways to change the code to foster development.

Mr. Bryson asked for a list at the next meeting with how many issues with Title 49 that fall under director discretion and what is that decision record on those, what is or is not being approved. Is this an area that we could take pressure off Ms. Maclean, are there things that maybe do not need to be under director's discretion. Mr. Bryson also wanted some of the decisions that have happened over the last year that could provide insight on what is happening with Title 49. Chair Gladziszewski commented when Ms. Maclean talked about the TPU, that is a way to foster development. There are always developers who have issue with our code, some of their issues are probably legit and some not, the Planning Commission and Title 49 could work through this. The table is complicated, but you could start with chunks of it.

## **B. Tourism Marketing Strategy**

Liz Perry from Travel Juneau was at this meeting and Assemblymember Jones to answer questions about the ordinance and the proposed mechanism. Chair Gladyszewski commented that the Assembly is looking at the agreement with Travel Juneau, it has not been very specific about what we are asking them to do, and it says they should solicit state, regional and national visitors. If we want to narrow the bucket, we could amend the agreement and go out for a RFP.

Mr. Bryson asked Ms. Perry if she could describe how marketing would work with people from a community versus a strategy that an outside, non-city based, entity would have to employ and what are some of the challenges would be from trying to market Juneau from inside or outside of the community. If this goes to an RFP, it would come down to the lowest bidder. We would not have a choice on where the marketing firm would be located. It would be likely that the marketing firm would not be located in Juneau and was looking at Ms. Perry to speak to some of the challenges of a marketing firm that is not in Juneau versus what Travel Juneau does. Chair Gladyszewski noted that Ms. Perry was briefly dropped from the zoom meeting and asked that she review a copy of this meeting and questions proposed.

Mr. Smith asked about accountability with Travel Juneau, it receives over \$600,000 of public money, collected from hotel bed tax. It is interesting that CBJ gives JEDC over \$400,000 and appoints their board members, what do other DMOs do to ensure that there is a good link between the public, public money, the organization, and direction of the DMO. Another area he is curious about is if we are satisfied with the branding of Juneau and if Travel Juneau's efforts are paying off in areas the City wants.

Chair Gladyszewski commented on the contract, we are not very specific about what we are asking. There is nomenclature that we are not even talking about the same thing, I keep talking about independent travelers and find out that in the industry, independent just means you booked it yourself. Referring to destination the Chair is relates that to non-cruise people who don't come here on a cruise. Travel Juneau should be focusing on the descriptive words and data. We need to decide what we want a travel marketing firm to do, then we can decide how we would get one and if Travel Juneau is good, this proposal is going to RFP, but even before we did that we still have to decide what we wanted so.

Ms. Hughes- Skandijs agrees with previous comments and has accountability questions. Considering the amount of public money, we put in and the lack of control, this may be how other DMOs are set up, that is still just something that she would like us to continue to discuss. Defining who that ideal traveler is and then work backwards. One way you could address that is to define who is a non-cruise person. Some of the tourism industry businesses in town, the Pack Creek bear viewing comes to mind, did not suffer because they are looking at a different kind of client. Maybe it is someone like that that we are trying to increase numbers, with the understanding that not everybody here in Juneau is set up to serve that kind of customer. Some of the data Travel Juneau has provided outlines how many conventions are being brought in by this contract, and how much energy and dollars are being put towards seeking conventions to come to here. Is that realistic, that in the packet it says something about a niche convention industry market but knowing that Juneau is hard to get to perhaps we're never going to be that kind of city and so just really working backwards from who that customer would be.

Mr. Bryson asked how we know marketing works, or if any marketing works. Costs and expenses to market are from 2% to 10% of the total organizational budget. In the past few years, we have had nothing but growth in our community. The same way that I had to address people when they complain about our mask mandate, when we were strict we had very low case numbers they could not argue with. We put mask on masks, counts went down, we took the masks away, cases went up and everybody says that is not correlated. Therefore, we could argue that same kind of thing, saying their

marketing does not work. We have had record visitor after record visitor. We have the Iron Man competition coming to Juneau because of Travel Juneau; we have the Alaska Broadcasters Association coming to Juneau because of Travel Juneau. Travel Juneau is the marketing part of Juneau's organizations. We can go out with an RFP and you can always save a couple of nickels, but we will never get the results that Travel Juneau does for Juneau. Their marketing professionals are our arm of marketing and our direct connection to customers. There is not one organization outside of Juneau that will ever be able to provide us as good results and frankly, I apologize to Travel Juneau that we have this out here, because they have done a phenomenal job. You can say that they have not provided any matrix, but with 1.5 million visitors before the pandemic shut us down, the biggest problem we were facing was that we had too many visitors. That tells me that Travel Juneau has done everything that they are supposed to do, they have marketed successfully.

Chair Gladziszewski noted that for the small amount of money we give to Travel Juneau she does not expect them to get cruise passengers here. The cruise lines are spending many times more to market Alaska. This is not what Travel Juneau should be doing; they should be trying to get non-cruise passengers in the winter. They should market Juneau as a year round destination for people that are not on cruise ships, because cruise ships do their own marketing. As to the RFP, that is secondary, first we should learn about Travel Juneau. The Assembly gets one presentation, a year from Travel Juneau during the budget, and it is just not long enough because we are trying to do the budget. This is an opportunity to understand what Travel Juneau does, and is it doing what we would like it to do. We have not been very specific in the past about what we would like it to do and this is an opportunity to be more specific, if it is not clear to all of us what they do, specifically, whom they market to.

Ms. Perry noted she could address the questions asked at this meeting and have that information turned around in a short order. She also guaranteed that they do not market to the cruise lines. They focus on independent travel and define independent travelers as those who either find their own way up here the crew via a small ship, plane, or ferry. The crucial part is that they have to spend time in our hotels, so that that is a very important benchmark for Travel Juneau. Chair Gladziszewski asked about the number of non-cruise/independent travelers that did not come to Juneau on a cruise ship over the years.

Mr. Jones commented that it is his understanding that the DMOs in SE got a considerable amount of money from the State for marketing. The amount from Southeast Conference for Travel Juneau and the rest of Southeast was close to a million dollars and he would like to know how much of that came to Travel Juneau. The marketing campaign that was the fund was developed in Anchorage and he would like to know how much input destination marketing in Juneau had on that campaign.

## **VII. STANDING COMMITTEE TOPICS**

### **A. Status of Title 49 Updates (verbal)**

Ms. Maclean's discussion was incorporated in Agenda Topic A (above).

### **B. Status of Housing Initiatives (verbal) – No update.**

## **VIII. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

No comments or questions.

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Gladziszewski adjourned the meeting at 5:57 PM. Next meeting Monday, August 30, 2021.