

DRAFT Minutes
Assembly Lands Committee
Monday, August 20, 2012, 5:00 p.m.
Assembly Chambers

I. Call to Order

Chair Becker called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mary Becker, Johan Dybdahl (telephonic), Jesse Kiehl, Carlton Smith (5:20 p.m.).

Members Absent: None.

Liaisons Present: Jeff Wilson, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee; Nathan Bishop, Planning Commission.

Liaisons Absent: Mike Williams, Docks and Harbors.

Staff Present: Heather Marlow, Lands & Resources Manager; Rob Steedle, Deputy City Manager; Brent Fischer, Parks and Recreation Director, Greg Chaney, CDD Planning Manager; Carl Uchytel, Port Director; Gary Gillette, Port Engineer; Laurie Sica, Municipal Clerk.

II. Agenda Changes

Ms. Marlow distributed a memo dated August 17, 2012, to the Lands Committee from Brent Fischer, Parks and Recreation Director, regarding the Whale Project – Preferred Location.

III. Approval of minutes

Hearing no objection, the minutes of July 23, 2012 were approved.

IV. Public Participation – non-agenda items. – None.

V. Action Items

A. Juneau Maritime Center and Bridge Park

Ms. Marlow said Mr. Gillette would discuss port office programming, and Brent Fischer would make a report on the PRAC meeting discussions.

Mr. Gillette said this discussion focused on the former public works maintenance shop site near the Douglas Bridge. Docks and Harbors proposed to build a maritime center that would house a maritime interpretive center, public restrooms,

public meeting room/incident command center, Port Director's offices and offices of the Marine Exchange of Alaska. The site also served as northern terminus of seawalk, featured an open park area, and was recently identified as the favorite site for whale sculpture. The property was identified in the Long Range Waterfront Plan for redevelopment. The public works maintenance shop was investigated for reuse but was determined that it would not be financially feasible to bring it to code and the building was demolished.

The Maritime Center would bring a physical presence to the area for around the clock safety as the Marine Exchange operated 24/7, and other uses would provide a lot of activity in the area. It would be an attractive feature for the northern terminus of the seawalk and develop and underutilized site. The plans had been under discussion for two years and most planning was done prior to the whale being sited in the area. Site Plan Concept E was the preferred option and included the building, the park, parking, a direct sales area for fishermen. He showed a picture of the whale sculpture being added to the site. He showed a picture of the building concept and how it would look next to the bridge.

Docks and Harbors would like to secure the northern piece of the park with the building site and designate the rest of the area for the park, and have a joint use parking area. They worked with Parks and Recreation and Engineering for some time on this, and were looking for Assembly direction to move forward.

Mr. Kiehl suggested that if the restrooms in the Maritime Center were to be available for park patrons, access should be from the outside for after hour use. Mr. Gillette said the plan was to make them accessible from both outside and inside and managed similarly to the restrooms in the Transit Center. Neither entity had funding might come first, but if the park was first, restrooms might be incorporated into the area designated for a park shelter.

Mr. Kiehl asked about the Marine Exchange. MR. Gillette said the business operated 24 hours a day and was staffed with shift workers. The facility was modeled on the current space used by the users with some room for future expansion.

Mr. Wilson said the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) and Docks and Harbors (D&H) had worked on this closely. There would be many activities in a small area. The site would be managed by Parks and Recreation until a building was built. Mr. Gillette said he did not believe a decision had been made on that yet, as the area had not been designated as an official park. There may need to be official steps taken and it was an issue to be determined.

Mr. Wilson said there was no funding for a park now.

Mr. Gillette said the Public Works Department planned to use the site for winter snow storage until a new snow storage location was established.

Mr. Smith said a broad question for him was how the city entertained building a building for its own use, and he asked if there was something official that laid out the project. Ms. Marlow said it would be a CIP project that was reviewed through the Public Works committee, and adopted by ordinance of the Assembly.

Mr. Smith asked how would other uses, such as building a new city hall, be evaluated. Ms. Marlow said CBJ needed to do strategic planning for CIPs, as she had also heard discussions about a new city hall and a new elementary school. CBJ did not have a strategic plan that showed all of the wants and needs.

Mr. Wilson said it was possible that this would not be a CBJ building - it could be a Marine Exchange building. This was not a D&H top priority but part of a longer plan, as the D&H currently paid rent and was on a month-to-month tenancy, and the owners were selling the building. Marine Exchange needed more space, so there were two potential tenants. At this point, it was open for all ideas, loans, grants, and ownership options.

Ms. Marlow said that whenever a grant was pursued, it was best to be able to demonstrate an adopted plan.

Ms. Becker asked about the visual connections up and down the channel and how they would be affected by the proposed uses in the areas. She did not want to see views blocked. Mr. Gillette said the bridge blocked some views and the whale will would not block all views as people could look around it. Those were things that would be adjusted through the planning stages.

Ms Becker asked about shore side fishing facilities. Mr. Gillette said the plan showed a viewing platform that could possibly be a fishing platform and there could be something similar to the DIPAC fishing facility, but that was the PRAC's area of expertise.

Mr. Wilson said there was a grant available for application through Fish and Game when plans were further along and a location was identified.

Mr. Bishop asked about possible commercial or retail uses of the area and said he liked the site layout but did not see the anchor that would hold people to the space and few mixed uses. He asked about public use of the Maritime Center.

Mr. Gillette said the waterfront plan anticipated reuse of the PW building as restaurants, artist's lofts, etc. They did not do a marketing study to see what could go there. D&H had proposed these ideas for use of the site. At the same time, the Marine Exchange of Alaska made its office needs known. Mr. Gillette said the mixed uses covered the entire area from the Bridge and Egan to the water, including the hotels and offices, not just the park. Mr. Bishop asked for an example of a marine park with an office building. Mr. Gillette said there are some

places in Seattle with even more uses in a park. He did not think it was inappropriate to have the offices there, and with the 24-hour presence, it would provide for safety.

Mr. Bishop asked if there was any interaction with the Juneau group interested in a ship museum and Mr. Gillette said there had not been.

Ms. Becker asked about a motion to forward to the Assembly and Mr. Gillette said the Preferred Site Plan identified in the packet that included the Whale Sculpture location would allow D&H and PRAC to move forward with planning. Mr. Kiehl identified the site plan referenced on Page 19 of the packet.

Ms. Marlow said on July 10 the PRAC held a discussion with the whale statue committee and at August 7 meeting of the PRAC there was follow up and reference to the preferred site plan. PRAC recommended moving this issue to the Lands Committee.

Brent Fischer said this topic would be an action item at the PRAC's next meeting and it would be working side by side with the D&H Board. PRAC agreed with the comments made at this meeting.

Mr. Wilson said at the last PRAC meeting, one member wanted the tower feature of the Maritime Center to look like a lighthouse and the issue of height and if this was an appropriate site for a building. They were coordinating planning efforts with D&H.

Ms. Becker asked if a motion to approve the concept of the division of uses of the land on the site was in order.

Mr. Kiehl said a recommendation of the Lands Committee seemed premature and he did not want to jump ahead of the PRAC

Mr. Wilson said both groups had divvied up the area to allow for a 3500 square foot building site, they liked the restrooms, some maritime themed draw beyond the whale, and even with a diminished park site, they were happy with the site plan.

Hearing no objection, the Lands Committee supported the proposed plan identified as "Programming for a proposed Maritime Center."

VI. Liaison Reports

Mr. Bishop said the last meeting of the Planning Commission had two contentious issues on the agenda, 1) a new cell tower on Montana Creek Road on Coogan's

site, and there was a push to put a moratorium on this development. One of the issues people objected to was radiation from towers, but that was not something that could be regulated by a local government. It was regulated by the federal government. The Planning Commission looked forward to developing an ordinance on cell towers.

Berner's Avenue improvements were on-going with pedestrian improvements, travel calming and the Planning Commission was reviewing a new driveway from Professional Plaza on to Berner's Avenue. Staff said this had been reviewed numerous times and was not appropriate. The Planning Commission's recommendation was that the driveway be an exit only from the Professional Plaza and not an entrance to the property.

The Planning Commission was interested and waiting to hear the decision of the Assembly regarding the proposed ordinance about the guiding or regulatory nature of the Comprehensive Plan maps.

Mr. Wilson said the last PRAC meeting action items included identifying a site for the whale sculpture at the Bridge Park, and the "Empty Chair" project at Capital Park. PRAC would like to designate the area by the bridge as an official park. There was further discussion about Off Highway Vehicles (OHV). PRAC was updating a 15-year old trail plan.

VII. Next meeting

The September 10 meeting was cancelled due to staff absences. Ms. Marlow noted that Dan Bleidorn's position had been filled and Cynthia Johnson would retire on August 31. October 15 was set as the next meeting date.

VIII. Adjournment – 5:53 p.m.

Submitted by
Laurie Sica, MMC
Municipal Clerk