

THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA
HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE
January 21, 2022 – *DRAFT* Meeting Minutes

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Housing and Development Task Force (HDTF) was held in the CDD Conference Room as well as via Zoom Webinar, and was called to order by Ex-Officio Chair Loren Jones at 12:04p.m.

Members Present: Ex-Officio Chair Loren Jones, Assemblymember Michelle Hale, Planning Commissioner Nathaniel Dye, Planning Commissioner Paul Voelkers, Architect Wayne Jensen, and Developer Dave Hanna, Developer William (Bill) Heumann.

Members Absent: Assemblymember Maria Gladziszewski

Staff Present: Community Development Director Jill Maclean, City Manager Rorie Watt

B. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Hale asked to change Item F to “Update on Assembly Action on the Table of Dimensional Standards”. *Hearing no objections, the agenda was changed as requested.*

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved as amended.

C. Approval of Minutes

a. December 10, 2021 Draft Meeting Minutes

Mr. Jones noted that they did not have the minutes of the last meeting. He also noted that there was some question related to the December 10, 2021 draft minutes so they were again included in the packet.

Mr. Voelkers noted the same correction to the December 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes that he had previously mentioned and that was on page 3 of 4, under item H, it was state that Mr. Jensen noted that sometimes applications were delayed up to one year and in fact, that comment had been made by Mr. Heumann. Mr. Jensen confirmed that was an accurate correction to the minutes.

Mr. Hanna said that on page 2, paragraph 4, it stated that he mentioned that 30% of Juneau’s ordinances were somehow related to Title 49 and he said that if he remembered it correctly, it should state that 80% of variances were related to Title 49 and specifically setbacks.

Mr. Jones said that 100% of the variances relate to Title 49 but he thinks that maybe the numbers had to do with the numbers that go to the Assembly. Mr. Jones noted that we will review the recording to check the accuracy of the minutes.

D. Comments About Last Meeting

None.

E. Title 49 Updates

a. Discussion of the Items Contained in Mr. Heumann's Two Emails with Concerns

Mr. Jones referenced the comments given at the last HDTF meeting, and noted that many of the grievances were issues related to miscommunication that could not be addressed through changes or amendments to Title 49.

He asked the committee if they had any follow-up comments or changes to Title 49.

Mr. Voelkers asked Mr. Heumann to provide some clarification on zero lot lines.

Mr. Heumann explained that he had reviewed several sample subdivisions throughout the country, and found that zero lot lines are typically not connected to each other. He mentioned that during the late 1990s, one of his projects was almost denied bank financing due to the zero lot lines being connected.

Mr. Hanna noted that the charge of this committee was primarily focused on Title 49, but he asked the sense of the committee about the overall situation they are addressing and that perhaps the HDTF charge should have been made a little broader. He said that affordable housing is supposedly one of the biggest concerns of the Assembly and it should be. There is a dearth of housing to buy and there is a dearth of housing to rent. He brought up Juneau's critical housing situation, and asked the committee to consider how serious they are about the housing situation and how that translates into support for or against development. He mentioned the Housing Action Plan and some of the cost estimates provided to develop housing as pointed out by the contractor who worked on the plan. Mr. Hanna suggested the committee review the bigger picture by identifying the impediments to development, and if any are associated with CDD's workload and if they should be concentrating on the big picture or more on the minutia such as the recommendations related to the Table of Dimensional Standards.

Mr. Dye addressing Mr. Heumann's comments said that what he was talking about could be achieved through the recently passed Alternative Residential Subdivision Process, which is intended towards smaller lots and already provided for in these recent changes. With respect to Mr. Hanna's comments, his first inclination was to pull up the charging document for the Task Force but he did not have any feedback comments at this time.

Ms. Hale said that appreciated Mr. Hanna's comments and she likes his suggestion but that what he described is beyond the scope of this task force. She said what Mr. Hanna mentioned was a different charge and that charge should come through the Assembly. She noted that there were productive conversations about affordable housing at the Assembly Retreat. The Assembly and staff at CBJ, such as Scott Ciambor, are aware that the approaches they have attempted in the past have not worked. She said that they need to get a lot more creative with possible solutions to

housing. She said that she agrees with Mr. Hanna that they should look at impediments but she also thinks they need to start thinking outside the box in a really big way. She said they have discussed hiring a contractor to work on the Comprehensive Plan rewrite.

Ms. Hale said that one such “thinking out of the box” possibility is to look at possible development of the parcel behind the Allwine trailer park near Auke Bay Elementary School. That would be an opportunity to get really creative and said one idea would be for tiny houses using 3D printing. She said there are some real options to look at out there. Whatever those things are, are beyond this scope of this Task Force but are worth looking at. The Assembly said that they would commit resources towards their goals so if they are serious about looking at affordable housing, they need to commit resources to that but that is beyond the scope of this Task Force and is something for a bigger discussion by the Assembly.

Mr. Voelkers said that he has raised during a couple of meetings similar broad concerns. He gets what Ms. Hale is saying and that Ms. Gladziszewski raised some of the same comments. He said that their task isn't to reinvestigate the housing studies that have been done. He said that one of the things he was wondering about was to possibly hear from Scott Ciambor on high level recap of what has been working and what has not been working. Mr. Voelkers said that some of the granular items the HDTF has been focusing on with Title 49 is useful but, on its own, that is not going to release the floodgates for more housing in Juneau. He added that removing impediments may help ease friction, but would that does not change the underlying economic issues associated with why housing is not being built right now. The economics are tied to land availability, developmental costs, the labor market and a variety of factors that are outside the scope of what CDD can affect. He said that he would be willing to go in either direction – to go more granular and review the Table of Dimensional Standards or if the task force would rather ask the Mayor to expand the scope, he would be willing to look at broader picture topics.

Mr. Watt said that he was trying to digest the situation; there has been a lot going on and a fair amount of tension. He said that structurally the developers group have raised a body of questions that are in the customer service world such as the pre-application process, not knowing where permits were on a list, and how we do business in general. He said those are customer service ideas that they need to wrap their hands around. Secondly, there are some technical ideas such as working on the Table of Dimensional Standards, the Table of Permissible Uses (TPU) and some other pieces. He said that they have never touched on the cost of public infrastructure so he is not sure if that is something that people have any appetite to work on there. He said in thinking about the HDTF's charge and how they proceed with the remaining amount of time available to them, how they can effectively get recommendations back to the Assembly, and then how to implement those recommendations, if passed by the Assembly, to be put into effect.

Mr. Hanna said that to recap what he said, he is happy to do the work on the Table of Dimensional Standards but also that he felt that place for that work does lie within the scope of the Title 49 Committee. He said he'd be happy to help provide input into that process but it would be the place of the HDTF to come up with recommendations and to forward those

recommendations to the Title 49 Committee. He said that hopefully the developers group could have a seat at the table to be able to part of those conversations within the Title 49 structure.

F. Update on Assembly Action on the Table of Dimensional Standards

Mr. Jones said that his understanding is that Ms. Gladziszewski reported back to the Assembly, the motion she made at the last meeting about the Table of Dimensional Standards, and there was no objection from the Assembly so it her contention and Ms. Hale's contention that it has already been to the Assembly and passed. Mr. Jones said that it was his understanding that the Assembly will now forward that to the Planning Commission if they haven't already forwarded it to the Planning Commission. He said that what the HDTF was talking about was the first two emails that Mr. Heumann sent out relating to Title 49 but that the Table of Dimensional Standards, as far as he knows, is information that Mr. Dye, Mr. Voelkers, and Mr. Heumann sent is being forwarded onto the Planning Commission by way of the Assembly.

Ms. Hale confirmed that was a correct synopsis of the action that occurred.

Mr. Heumann said that he doesn't have the charging document in front of him but he feels strongly that there should be a seat at the table for the developers to be a part of the Title 49 Committee. He said that he believes in the charging document, whereby they would continue to be involved as an industry in the decision making process. He said that if that is the case, to say we are just turning this over to Title 49, they are making a foregone conclusion rather than asking this HDTF to look at that charge. He also stated that the comments he made that the Director made responses to are part of Title 49. He listed off a list of topics that he raised that pertain to Title 49 and they do not fall outside the scope of the HDTF.

Additional discussion took place about the previous discussion regarding members of the Chamber of Commerce attending the Title 49 Committee meetings and that the idea was not to be exclusive but inclusive. They also expressed concern that this HDTF will run out of time to take on some of those larger topics.

Mr. Dye agreed with asking the Title 49 Committee to work on additional objectives, but he noted the practicality of being able to accomplish the amount of work in conjunction with the workload before CDD staff and Law Department staff. He also noted the inclusiveness of a developer and architect on the Planning Commission as well as involvement at the meetings.

Mr. Hanna and Mr. Heumann stressed the importance of the developers group being part of the conversation. He also spoke to the challenges of CDD's workload and how they might be able to streamline it and what can be eliminated from their workload to get things done. He said that would require an in depth look at what they do and what can resolve. Mr. Dye mentioned the chicken and egg circular conversation that keeps happening but he thinks it is likely all going to boil down to the allocation of resources and time to be available to dedicate to this issue.

Mr. Jones provided a synopsis of the division of duties between the Assembly Lands, Housing and Economic Development, the Housing Action Plan and the work on that alongside the dollars that the Assembly is appropriating related to the implementation of that plan. He spoke to the fact that Mr. Hanna noted that the Housing Action Plan consultant suggested that it would take \$35,000 in CBJ funding in order to get affordable housing going within our community.

Mr. Hanna said that the \$35,000 didn't necessarily need to be in the form of cash but could also be in the form of land grants or other non-monetary incentives. He said that the single biggest impediment to developers providing affordable housing is the going through the machinations to bringing a development online.

Mr. Heumann echoed Mr. Hanna's concerns, stating that 50% of his time and effort in his development process is spent towards acquiring permits. The remainder of his time is focused on construction. He described the permitting process as a costly element of the development industry.

Mr. Jones said that he will talk to the Mayor about the overall scope on the development process. He also clarified that CDD staff provided an in-depth overview of their workload during one of the first HDTF meetings, and the committee has since moved on from that.

Ms. Hale noted that the Assembly Lands, Housing & Economic Development Committee also has a role to play on this and her preference would be to wrap up the work of this HDTF and then either reform a new group with a new charge or that the LHED Committee would work on this further.

Mr. Hanna said that the CDD overview detailed the various things that the department handled, but it did not show how much staff time was dedicated to each task. He felt that it was critical to know how their time is spent, and decide if that is the best use of staff time.

Mr. Watt said that he can work with Ms. Maclean and try to pull something together that will be useful and to bring a list of ideas/work plan that includes proposals that are responsive to the concerns of the committee, but also come back with information that also includes the current CDD workload. If the committee wants to make recommendations about that workload allocation, they can provide that to the Assembly in a manner similar to what is typically done with the Assembly and Planning Commission meets together to discuss the priorities and workloads.

Mr. Dye said that it seems like there is a format within this HDTF for the development group to provide feedback and he was looking forward to having a conversation on the Table of Dimensional Standards before it got passed through right to the Title 49 Committee. He said that is a capable group and staff is able to work through the minutia but it is sometimes helpful to have an outside point of view or direct comments from the development community on any new ideas or suggestions they might have. Secondly, he is leery of feedback from the Assembly in

regards to the joint meetings with the Assembly and Planning Commission (PC). He noted at the last joint meeting, one of the Planning Commissioners asked the Assembly what they wanted the PC to do because the PC can't do everything that they had discussed. The feedback from the Assembly was to just do everything and that is part of the circular argument that he is concerned about.

Mr. Jensen said he has listened to all the conversations and the Assembly keeps asking what can be done to incentivize more housing and while that is a great goal, this HDTF needs to look at the small steps that they have been able to accomplish so far. He said those are all important steps to encourage some development. It may be one house at a time and not a 50 unit development but they are indicative that progress is being made.

Mr. Heumann said he was very encouraged to see a mutual consensus towards amending the Table of Dimensional Standards, and he said that they may not all have the same ideas as to what those changes need to be, they all agree that changes need to be made. His question was how to go about doing that. He suggested setting up a smaller working group made up of the three members who had submitted comments and that in 2-3 hours, they could work through those details.

Mr. Dye responded that the Title 49 Committee that type of small group that can work through those issues.

Ms. Hale said that Ms. Gladziszewski has been keen to move things out of this committee and to get moving on those items that the Assembly can act upon, the Assembly is eager to do that.

Additional discussion took place regarding where to go from here. Mr. Hanna thanked Mr. Voelkers and suggested having a work session with a few developers and the Title 49 Committee could accomplish what they were trying to do in this HDTF.

Ms. Hale asked Mr. Watt, when he provides the information that he noted, if he could also identify what additional resources that the Assembly might be able to provide.

G. Suggestions for Next Agenda

Mr. Jones reminded the committee that the next HDTF meeting is scheduled to be held on February 11. The agenda of the next meeting will feature the City Manager's list of proposals, and a list of possible resources per Ms. Hale's request.

Mr. Hanna asked Mr. Jones if Mr. Palmer still intends to provide an explanation on how to actual timeframes for responses on permit applications. Mr. Jones said that the Law Department gave him an initial broad overview, but he has not yet gotten back to them. He will bring that to the next meeting.

Mr. Jones also mentioned his research on the comparatively extensive application process for developers in Canby, OR in Clackamas County and that everything was done online and he spoke to the inspection fees, and the massive infrastructure in their online process.

Mr. Hanna spoke to his parents' experience a few years back for purchasing property in Sequim, WA and their very informal planning/permit process. He recounted a very different end of the spectrum between Canby, OR and Sequim and that Juneau should be somewhere in the middle of that spectrum.

H. Public Comment

None.

I. Next Meeting – February 11, 2022 at Noon.

J. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the committee, the Housing and Development Task Force meeting adjourned at 1:03p.m.