

Planning Commission
Auke Bay Implementation Ad Hoc Committee

Wednesday, July 11, 2019, 12:00 PM

UAS Rec Center, Room 116

Call to order 12:03 pm.

I. Roll Call

Planning Commission:

Paul Voelckers (Chair)

Dan Hickok

Nathaniel Dye

Shannon Crossley

Staff:

Allison Eddins, Planner II, CDD

Laurel Christian, Planner, CDD

Alexandra Pierce, Planning Manager, CDD (telephonically)

Chelsea Wallace, Administrative Assistant, CDD

II. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Voelckers gave a general welcome to the staff and members of the public that were present. He stated that no public testimony had been taken at previous meetings, but the Committee wanted to adjust the agenda to offer members of the public a chance to voice any concerns that they had at this time. He stated that this is not typical practice, but since much interest has been shown regarding this plan, the Committee was willing to let each patron have two minutes to show his or her observations.

Mike Allen, Juneau

Mr. Allen expressed concerns with how the bonus points are given and noted that it seems the plan has a seasonal focus to it, focusing on development that would prosper in the summer time, but wouldn't do well in the wintertime. He is concerned that developers will add features that may be good for summertime, but could cause hazards in the wintertime. For example, canopies are good in the summer, but they create sheets of ice on them that could fall and injure someone. Mr. Allen also expressed concerns with parking, noting that options are sparse and he would like to see more options. He also noted that the Docks & Harbors Department does not seem very receptive to letting people park in the Statter Harbor lot.

Mr. Hickok commented that Statter Harbor is very full throughout the week, as it is a well-used harbor. He believes it would be hard to see that changing, so it is unlikely that Docks & Harbors will be willing to give up some of their Statter Harbor lot.

Mr. Voelckers stated that the Commission understands Mr. Allen's points and knows that there are many perspectives that need to be considered and the Commission needs to make pedestrian amenities work in both the summertime and the wintertime.

Bruce Conant, Juneau

Mr. Conant spoke in favor of an Auke Bay bypass road and expressed support for developers working together when building within Auke Bay and developing together instead of on an individual basis.

Maryann Dierckman, Juneau

Ms. Dierckman expressed concerns with a lack of infrastructure... She thought that a bypass route may give more shop opportunities that other options don't generate. Ms. Dierckman felt that it doesn't seem like all the development being proposed can actually fit and work in Auke Bay and noted that tourism isn't always going to involve people hiking. Ms. Dierckman also spoke in favor of better handicap access for those who need it.

Lisa Greenough, Juneau

Ms. Greenough expressed concerns with not having all Committee members at each of the meetings, as Commissioner Hickok was not present at the previous meeting. She felt that the removal of some language regarding the protection of the Auke Bay area and views in the draft ordinance was not beneficial and should be returned. Ms. Greenough also expressed concerns with the bonus points and the use of the terminology of "gaming" and felt no language should be passed that gives developers a way to "game" the zoning laws or anything else within the plan.

Mr. Voelckers thanked the members of the public for their comments and suggestions. He then directed attention to the updated draft ordinance and asked Ms. Eddins for a brief recap from the previous meeting.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. April 17, 2019 Draft Minutes

No motion was made.

B. June 27, 2019 Draft Minutes

No motion was made.

IV. Agenda Topics

I. **Public concerns on proposed density increases and ways to address it**

Ms. Eddins gave a brief recap of the previous meeting, the information that was taken from that meeting, and how the draft ordinance had been updated with that information. She noted that Staff wanted to make sure that the proposed language for public benefits and bonus points is inherently obvious and what the intent is to anyone who reads it. Ms. Eddins stated that she and other CDD staff had gamed through a couple examples to see how a developer could earn bonus points and what they would have to give back, in order to earn these points, and some of these examples were up on the board for the Commissioners to see.

Mr. Voelckers thanked Ms. Eddins and, for the public's benefit, noted that the language in the ordinance regarding protection of Auke Bay and its views was not taken out of the draft. Everyone is on the same page with wanting to protect Auke Bay and its views and the Committee plans to keep it that way. Mr. Voelckers directed attention to the graphic of the Neighborhood Commercial (NC) district on page 2 of the draft ordinance. He observed that the boundary formed a partial donut around the central core of Auke Bay and it was pushed out more aggressively to form a bigger boundary and create a buffer. This boundary now includes part of the University of Alaska (UAS) campus, as well. Mr. Voelckers did not recall much conversation on the current developing possibilities in the NC zone and asked for an explanation of the graphic.

Mr. Dye stated that everyone wanted the UAS Rec Center included, because it was originally bypassed. The NC district is not much different from the current D10 district, so there is a large range of what can be developed in there. Mr. Dye believes the UAS Rec Center should be included and suggested the consideration in including the rest of the campus, as well, and part of the uphill side of Glacier Highway.

Mr. Hickok stated that some had tried to promote commercial property in these areas, so the buffer was proposed as a way to safeguard this.

Mr. Dye noted that this was a follow-up from the Auke Bay neighborhood plan and was revitalized due to contradictory problems. The language around the NC district made it sound like it was like the Light Commercial districts, but they are not the same thing. The Committee is here to think about and assess the long-term impacts of development and what it will be like down the road.

Mr. Voelckers felt the Committee should take more time to look at the graphic and how all the zoning areas work, but this could be discussed more at a later time. He then directed attention to page 3, noting a typo that needed to be corrected, then to the Table of Dimensional Standards. Mr. Voelckers felt that the numbers for the Accessory Use Maximum Height in the NC and Mixed Use 3 (MU3) zones are too high and suggested reducing them by 10 feet each.

Ms. Eddins stated that Mr. Voelckers was correct and those numbers were meant to reflect the change he suggested.

Mr. Voelckers then directed attention to line 73 on page 4 of the draft ordinance, believing it would be beneficial to clarify between the NC district and the MU3 district and state it directly. He went on to lines 75-78, recalling that this language had been discussed previously, but stated that he would like more information on why it is applicable. Mr. Voelckers noted that façade continuity is being encouraged and wondered how this language fit in with that.

Mr. Dye stated that side streets could be the future streets with structures build now, bench roads put in, and the orientation of the building might change as development proceeds.

Ms. Eddins stated that the hope is that there will be new right-of-ways and buildings sitting on corner lots and everyone wants to maintain that continuity.

Mr. Voelckers suggested marking this area for a later discussion, noting that no one wants language that works against the overall picture. He then directed attention to line 87 on page 5 of the draft ordinance. Mr. Voelckers thought the outer boundary of the NC district was mitigating and thought adding the MU3 district should be considered. He noted that the NC was created to develop a buffer that transitions to lower residential, but felt the language needed some adjustment. He suggested removing the MU3 district and replacing it with NC.

Mr. Dye, to a point, agreed with Mr. Voelckers, but felt that the MU3 district should remain as proposed. He noted that

Mr. Voelckers agreed and suggested leaving this topic with Staff to make adjustments and clarify information.

Ms. Eddins replied that there may have been a misunderstanding at the last meeting and adjustments could be made to help clarify things. She noted that a sliding scale for NC could be used, as well.

Mr. Dye asked if the intent is to supersede that concept, and if so that needs to be clarified.

Ms. Eddins agreed.

Mr. Voelckers then directed attention to the map on page 6 of the draft ordinance to discuss the Overlay district bonus points. He noted that the core of MU3, NC, and Waterfront Commercial (WC) were discussed previously and there was some debate on

what areas should be included in the Overlay district boundary. Mr. Voelckers suggested that line 98 could have language that shows more applicableness for the bonus points.

Mr. Dye suggested that the upper half of the hillside property, including the UAS campus, should be added to the Overlay district boundary.

Mr. Voelckers also thought it would be good to add the hillside area to the boundary and then if they go above that, then include the UAS campus, as well. He noted that in the Comprehensive Plan, the boundary is more of a saw-tooth shape, but not in the other plans, and this would be a better boundary line.

Mr. Dye felt there was no reason not to include the UAS campus in the boundary, noting that it would make sense with the addition of the surrounding lots, as well.

Ms. Crossley thought there was a neighborhood that didn't want to be included in the boundary.

Mr. Dye stated that there are six lots out of 25 that did not want to be included in the boundary. However, he didn't know if excluding six lots would be a good justification to compromising the plan and noted that the Overlay district was what was currently being looked at, not rezoning.

Keeping time in mind, Mr. Voelckers asked that Staff take some time to consider any negative impacts that could be associated with adding all of the lots to the boundary and the Committee and Staff could discuss them at the following meeting.

Mr. Dye agreed and stated that the lots added would also benefit from the height bonuses.

Ms. Pierce asked if it would be helpful to see a few different boundary options at the next meeting.

Mr. Voelckers said this would be helpful, so the Committee would like to see the boundary options along with the potential negative impacts.

Mr. Dye noted that the Committee may also need to consider if this is in the Committee's scope of work or if this is consideration for the future Comprehensive Plan. He was also curious as to the reasoning in the UAS campus currently being zoned D5.

Ms. Crossley recalled interest at the previous meeting in possibly rezoning the areas being discussed and noted that the boundaries are hemming in development. She asked how the Committee may be able to look at future aspects and find a way to make adjustments as more changes develop.

Mr. Voelckers thought it may be best to speak with someone from the UAS campus and ask their opinion on being included in the Overlay district and what that might mean to them.

Ms. Pierce agreed with Mr. Voelckers and felt this could be reassessed at a later meeting, after Staff has a chance to speak with UAS.

Ms. Eddins agreed with Mr. Voelckers and Ms. Pierce. To address Mr. Dye's curiosity, she noted that the UAS campus is currently zoned D5, because a lot of the Borough was zoned D5 in the 1980s, as that made sense at the time. However, rezoning of this area is being worked on.

Mr. Dye felt that the campus being government-owned property resulted in the zoning change being a low priority and not being taken care of sooner.

Mr. Voelckers agreed and noted that when the most recent building was constructed on the UAS campus, it had to get three variances to make the project possible.

Mr. Dye stated that, that is something a university should not have had to do.

Mr. Voelckers agreed. He then directed attention to page 7 of the draft ordinance, noting that from the start of page 6 through page 7 showed a lot of new, good language that explains the intent of the bonuses and mechanisms to achieve the goals of the plan.

Mr. Dye stated that things may seem "fluffy" in the summertime, but the intent of the sliding scale is to encourage development that is good year-round and development that works year-round is truly what is being sought after.

Mr. Voelckers hoped that the language being used makes that clear to everyone. He noted some necessary grammar edits for line 110 and then went on to lines 118-121, asking if minor vs. major development had been defined for this and how the application processes will be differentiated.

The Committee and Staff decided that this would be looked at more and more information would be discussed at a later meeting.

Mr. Voelckers noted a grammatical error in line 123, then directed attention to page 8 of the draft ordinance. He stated that there had been questions and concerns from the public about parking options. The language in the draft ordinance has the intent of encouraging people to provide public parking and the Committee is working with Staff to make sure that the public parking goals of the plan are achieved. He felt the new language for parking fees was fair. Mr. Voelckers noted that the Committee had not

made edits to the draft ordinance past this point, but had briefly discussed the different areas where bonus points could be received. He felt that the residential/commercial floor area ratios seemed undervalued.

Ms. Eddins directed attention to some tables she had put together with other staff to give the Committee and the public an idea of how to earn bonus points and what could be done with them. She stated that Staff had brainstormed a number of ways to earn points. They considered some options that could help create the village-type setting the Auke Bay community is hoping for. Staff felt that platting right-of-ways, public parking, mixed use, pedestrian walkways, canopies, and protecting views were the most important aspects to consider. While everything is important, money can limit development and the most important aspects should be considered. Staff realized that where money is being spent is where platting or giving away development occurs, so they took some time to see how much land would be given up.

Mr. Dye stated that it would not be good to use the square footage listed for parking spaces, because this number does not take into account the amount of square footage needed for access driveways and circulation aisles.

Ms. Eddins agreed and stated that this is why they included this. A developer would have to get rid of land, but would be able to charge for public parking.

Mr. Voelckers asked for thoughts on those items being the central issues.

Ms. Crossley asked if there was any way a developer might be able to create a very unusual, unhelpful right-of-way in order to get bonus points.

Mr. Voelckers stated that the development would need to be approved by the Planning Commission, so it would be very unlikely that this could happen.

Mr. Dye asked if a property owner would be required to develop the platted right-of-way in order to receive the bonus points.

Ms. Eddins replied that it depends if the property already had access onto a publically maintained right-of-way. The goal is to eventually have a local street grid that would be adopted and maintained by the CBJ.

Mr. Dye asked if bonus points could be received just for designating the right-of-way.

Ms. Eddins replies that in order for a developer to make a plan work, they have to have frontage on one right-of-way and don't need another. A connected street grid could change this.

Ms. Crossley asked if a developer platted a right-of-way, would the City pave it?

Mr. Voelckers replied that the City would pave it.

Mr. Dye thought this would fall into the category of LIDs.

Mr. Voelckers did not completely agree with Mr. Dye, noting that the City has been very specific if they invest in something.

Mr. Dye noted that the Assembly in five years may look very different than it currently does, so it's pertinent to determine if the items deemed important are as important as they are thought to be. For the most part, Mr. Dye believes developers will lend themselves to developing in other ways and play towards each other in some ways.

Mr. Voelckers agreed with Mr. Dye. Mr. Voelckers mentioned that category 12 includes upper story setbacks, as well, which would keep upper-hill property views protected. He believed these were good and the doubling of the bonuses, as well.

Mr. Dye noted that the numbers for platting right-of-ways and public parking didn't add up correctly and driveways and turn radiuses should be added. The point is that in order to create 12 parking spaces, a developer would have to give up 3,600 square feet and would only receive one bonus point. He asked if that would incentivize fairness for everything.

Mr. Voelckers stated that this topic could be discussed more later on. He felt that doubling the bonus points for the first table was important and noted that the center of Auke Bay doesn't have any alternative street. The whole plan is premised on creating walkable that are not the highway. Mr. Voelckers felt the first table was most important, but the mixed-use table and table 12 were also very important. However, he felt indifferent on table 2.

Mr. Dye felt that the public parking table could use more work, as parking is a community-wide issue and it will need to be charged for, with calculations being adjusted, as needed.

Mr. Voelckers noted that parking tends to become the focus of everything, but it is important to have the correct number of parking options, and not too many.

Mr. Dye stated that it would be hard to adjust the numbers until they are played with more. He noted that a lot of bonus points can be received for giving up 5,000 square feet and with 32 bonus points, a developer could max out density or put 24 points into the second maximum density, then take the rest and reduce parking. The developer

would then need more points for height, so mixed-use at a ratio of 2:1 could be sought and they would maximize their points.

Mr. Voelckers felt the Committee should take a step back and thought, at a minimum, it may not be best to fully double the bonus points for everything.

Mr. Dye suggested giving six bonus points for every 25 feet of platted right-of-way.

The Committee and Staff agreed with Mr. Dye.

Mr. Voelckers suggested adjusting the bonus points for parking from 0.5 to 0.4, or possibly giving one point for every one parking space. He also suggested leaving this topic for now and coming back to it at a later meeting.

Mr. Hickok thought it would be best to leave the topic of parking all together, believing that fishermen will use the parking, so they don't have to pay for parking in the harbor, and the public won't be able to use it.

Mr. Voelckers stated that the public parking will be charged for, as well, so this should alleviate fishermen taking up the majority of spaces.

Mr. Hickok expressed concerns with the potential in maximizing the density opportunities and taking away parking.

Mr. Voelckers noted that the Committee is attempting to add more parking options and take away from other areas.

Ms. Eddins stated that each individual use will have to provide their own parking.

Mr. Voelckers noted that this will add parking to the central core. He then directed attention to the table for mixed-use and spoke in favor of doubling the bonus points.

Mr. Dye asked if the 4:1 ratio is the best ratio.

Ms. Eddins replied that it is the best ratio and the intent is to provide enough residential space above. With the height limit set for NC, they would want to give the maximum number of bonus points.

Mr. Voelckers noted that this made sense, because development would not be able to reach that in the NC district, because there would not be enough floors. Mr. Voelckers asked if everyone was okay with this table, table 3.

Mr. Dye replied that he was okay with it, but the only suggestion would be to change the number of points given for the 4:1 ratio.

Mr. Voelckers suggested giving 24 or 26 points.

Mr. Dye agreed and thought giving more points was a good idea.

Mr. Voelckers agreed. He then directed attention to the Building Design Standards on page 8 of the draft ordinance. Mr. Voelckers thought that the 25% of transparency requirement should be lowered for the number of points given and suggested that the requirement be dropped to 20%.

The Committee and Staff agreed with Mr. Voelckers.

Ms. Eddins suggested that the ground level entrances not have a maximum amount of bonus points that can be earned.

Mr. Voelckers felt that, at some point, it becomes more about smart design, and it would be best to think about it more before making a decision.

Mr. Dye noted that this came from the intent in making doors swing out, but not block walkways. He felt that the original intent was slightly lost, so it should go back to Staff for some further working.

Mr. Voelckers agreed and noted that they did not want to create a pedestrian nuisance.

Mr. Dye pointed out that recessed doors, like many of the ones seen downtown, tend to take up a lot of interior space. For this reason, the Committee would like to see them flushed with the outside wall and give developers more opportunities.

Mr. Voelckers suggested discussing this more later on. He then directed attention to the bonus points that could be earned for adding canopies to designs and suggested giving more points for canopies.

Mr. Dye suggested giving points for every 25 feet of canopy, rather than giving points for whole canopies.

Ms. Eddins noted that financial aspects may make this harder.

Mr. Voelckers felt that a few extra points for canopies would be beneficial, but many more points would not be necessary, because canopies, glass, and entryways tend to become mutually supportive. He thought it would be beneficial to adjust the number of

bonus points for covered bike racks and suggested adjusting the points to reflect how many bikes are served by the bike rack.

Ms. Eddins stated that the plan currently requires bike racks to serve at least four bikes.

Mr. Voelckers felt more detailed language could be used for this item. He then directed attention to Screening on page 10 of the draft ordinance, believing that too many points were being offered for screening. He also suggested combining the last two categories. For example, if a developer put up a fence, they would get one point.

Ms. Crossley noted the wording in this section and asked about the reasoning behind half of an object being screened vs. screening of the whole object.

Ms. Eddins stated that this is important when it comes to parking lots. Staff doesn't want to see giant trees, or something similar, around parking lots due to safety issues, but adjustments could be made.

Mr. Voelckers suggested adding a footnote with more details on this item.

Mr. Dye felt the footnote wouldn't have to be 100% screening, either.

Mr. Hickok mentioned that trees could potentially take away views in the future, as well.

Mr. Voelckers noted that it would be important to assess the size and shape of trees being sought. He felt this isn't something Staff could solve right now, but it is important to have a way to control it. Mr. Voelckers then moved on to Protecting Views of Auke Bay and Statter Harbor on page 10 of the draft ordinance. He felt that the bonus points for lot coverage worked against the frontage the Committee is trying to encourage. He asked for thoughts on leaving the percent covered.

Mr. Dye thought the lot coverage only took the ground floor into effect, but it might be better if it were for two stories and higher.

Mr. Voelckers believes the setbacks should be driven hard.

Mr. Hickok asked if this was already being addressed.

Mr. Voelckers replied that it was and pointed out that what is going to preserve this, is the upper half, but noted that it works against canopies.

Mr. Dye suggested that the wording for 10-foot story setbacks be adjusted.

Mr. Voelckers asked if a percentage would apply for stories two and above.

Mr. Dye replied that it would and suggested imagining it to be like a tiered wedding cake.

Ms. Crossley spoke in favor of this.

Mr. Voelckers agreed and found this to be clever.

Ms. Eddins asked Mr. Dye to draw an example for everyone.

Mr. Dye drew a picture and described what he was suggesting.

Ms. Eddins spoke in favor of this, as well, and suggested earning points for a smaller second story and asked if it would be okay to earn points for a smaller third story, too.

Mr. Dye agreed with this and suggested earning 4 points for 10 feet, or using a percentage system. He also thought lot coverage of an entire lot may be a better way to begin, as well.

Mr. Voelckers added a new drawing and suggestion.

Mr. Dye felt it would be best if it were based on percentage of the lot for building reduction and it was more about the reduction of the lot.

Ms. Eddins stated that Staff could work the language to show this intent.

Ms. Crossley stated that she could see both sides, but felt that parking should not be involved with preserving views.

Mr. Voelckers suggested striking lot coverage and incentivizing.

Mr. Dye further clarified what he had meant.

Ms. Crossley asked if this was being struck and new language was being created.

Mr. Dye replied yes.

Mr. Voelckers agreed with Mr. Dye, but noted that it would not be finished today, but the new one would need to receive a lot of points and a running percentage, or something similar, may be the best way to give points.

Ms. Crossley suggested looking at this in more depth at the next meeting.

Mr. Voelckers agreed. He then noted that the bonus points for density had been doubled, like the Committee asked for, and was happy with that.

Mr. Dye felt the ratio of points was not a good way to look at it.

Mr. Voelckers felt that the density increase was too cheap before, and this was a better fit for this item.

Ms. Crossley shifted the topic to parking and reduction in parking, expressing concerns with being able to reduce parking by 30%. She felt this was too much of a reduction.

Mr. Dye used the Marine View Building as an example, pointing out that most parking provided for this structure is for the people working in the building.

Ms. Crossley felt this was not equitable.

Mr. Voelckers pointed out the disagreements with this item, noting that Ms. Eddins had suggested making it harder to reduce parking, but the Committee could make it even harder. He suggested that, in order to get a 30% reduction, a developer would be required to have some outstanding designs.

Ms. Crossley agreed and suggested that 32 points be required to earn a 30% parking reduction.

Mr. Dye pointed out that you have to do both – you have to pick and choose what to do with the different points. He felt that parking may not be as big of a concern as everyone believes it will be and noted that Juneau tends to have more parking than what is actually needed, most days.

Mr. Voelckers agreed with Mr. Dye, to a point. He noted that there are many studies showing over-conservation with parking and strategies and most walkable communities are seen to be where parking is more suppressed. Auke Bay has made it clear that they don't want to end up like downtown Juneau, especially in regards to parking situations.

Mr. Hickok noted that in Auke Bay people aren't close to the amenities, like they are downtown.

Mr. Dye pointed out that the population center of Juneau is the valley and not all who work downtown live downtown. He believes the Committee should not be worrying about people parking in new parking areas, instead of paying for parking elsewhere.

Mr. Voelckers stated that the Committee has some thinking to do in regards to parking, but everyone needs to understand that there are strategies for this type of development and they need to be considered.

Mr. Hickok expressed concerns with increasing density while decreasing parking and felt this could create some big problems.

Mr. Voelckers stated that it needed to be looked at more and the points needed to be gamed in order to find the right solution.

Ms. Eddins noted that a member of the public did point out that everyone may be getting worked up about parking for nothing, due to overanalyzing the situation.

Mr. Hickok agreed, noting that the broad view was being looked at, but everyone was digging too deep.

Ms. Crossley suggested applying parking reductions to what a developer would need it for.

Ms. Pierce felt there was some merit to that and thought applying traditional thoughts toward public parking would be beneficial.

The Committee and Staff agreed to continue this discussion at the following meeting on July 24, 2019.

II. Public concerns on proposed height increase and ways to address it

V. Committee Member Comments and Questions

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35pm.