

MINUTES
Planning Commission
Committee of the Whole
CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU
Ben Haight, Chairman
October 25, 2016

I. ROLL CALL

Ben Haight, Chairman, called the Committee of the Whole meeting of the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Planning Commission (PC), held in the Assembly Chambers of the Municipal Building, to order at 5:26 p.m.

Commissioners present: Ben Haight, Chairman, Paul Voelckers, Vice Chairman; Bill Peters, Michael LeVine, Nathaniel Dye, Matthew Bell, Kirsten Shelton-Walker, Carl Greene

Commissioners absent: Percy Frisby

Staff present: Rob Steedle, CDD Director; Beth McKibben, Planning Manager; Laura Boyce, Senior Planner; Jonathan Lange, Planner II; Tim Felstead, Planner II

Assembly members: Loren Jones, Debbie White

II. REGULAR AGENDA

A. CSP2016 0010: Planning Commission Review for Proposals to go on the FY2018 CIP

Mr. Lange told the Commission that this is a discussion of the CIP (Capital Improvement Projects) which will be before the Commission at its next regular meeting in November (November 10, 2016).

Mr. Lange explained that each year the City and Borough of Juneau prepares a revised six-year Capital Improvements Program plan. The CIP guides the investment of public funds for maintenance, repair, construction and acquisition of public infrastructure, facilities and equipment, said Mr. Lange.

This is presented to the Assembly in February, and the Commission will have a chance to respond to those proposals at that time, said Mr. Lange.

This plan focuses on how the community wants to utilize its funds in the future, said Mr. Lange. The criteria for projects on the CIP includes:

- Does it have community support
- Is it consistent with CBJ plans and policies
- Does it improve the health and safety of the community
- Does it maintain or repair existing property
- Is it a local match for a federal or state grant
- Is there a maintenance impact
- Does it stimulate the economic development of the community
- Is there a need or anticipated need for the project
- Is it a recreational need or use for the community
- Other funding alternatives for the project

The Engineering and Public Works Department solicits projects from different CBJ agencies and departments which are due back to the department on November 14, said Mr. Lange. The Planning Department has received comments from the Commission on Sustainability, said Mr. Lange. The Engineering and Public Works Department will then compile the CIP list, said Mr. Lange, and it will attach funding amounts to the projects list. The City Manager will then take that list to the Public Works and Facilities Committee in January, said Mr. Lange. The Assembly Finance Committee will review that list in the February through April time frame, said Mr. Lange. The budget becomes effective July 1, said Mr. Lange.

Sidewalk and street repairs have made it to the 2017 CIP list, said Mr. Lange, which was on the previous list of Planning Commission priorities. The sub-area plans for Lemon Creek are now in the process of being developed, said Mr. Lange. That was listed as a priority by the Planning Commission, he noted. On its previous list the Commission had expressed continued support for North Douglas Road expansion and for a second crossing, he said.

On last year's list the Planning Commission stated that it wanted to continue with the existing list which it had submitted and it also added a few items to that list, said Mr. Lange. Four of those items are on the list under the Manager's office list for the 2017 CIP list, he noted. Each of those projects are listed for future funding so there is no date attached to that list. On that list was the Willoughby parking structure, a new study for a landslide and avalanche mass wasting area, a composting feasibility study and the way-finding and gateway signage in Auke Bay was listed for future funding, said Mr. Lange.

The Planning Commission also recommended some items to implement the Auke Bay Area Plan including a pedestrian crossing on the Back Loop Road near the UAS campus, and by the harbor in Auke Bay, with pedestrian-friendly lighting for the sidewalks through the Auke Bay center, said Mr. Lange.

The Juneau Commission on Sustainability wants to continue with full funding for a compost feasibility study, and also energy efficiency improvements for Juneau's wastewater, said Mr. Lange. The Juneau Commission on Sustainability has additional projects it would like to see included on the CIP which include:

- Adding LED replacements for area wide street lighting
- Implement a Juneau waste water conservation and efficiency program to reduce CBJ energy costs,
- a feasibility analysis and engineering alternatives for the cost benefit of shore power at public and private cruise ship berths
- Initiate the transition to electric vehicles for a CBJ vehicle fleet
- Transition to electric CBJ buses,
- Energy resource tracking software to save CBJ energy costs ,
- Install electric vehicle charging stations to be included with Street maintenance projects

The projects proposed by the Juneau Commission on Sustainability all have the singular goal to promote energy efficiency and sustainability in all projects, said Mr. Lange.

Commission Comments and Questions

Mr. LeVine asked where the list for future funding was located. He added that the only list in their packet was for 2017 which they have no ability to comment upon at this time.

Mr. Voelckers said the Planning Commission is to help lead the City's charge on issues under its jurisdiction. In the past the list has been presented to the Commission too late for it to offer meaningful input, said Mr. Voelckers. Mr. Voelckers said in his opinion the Commission role is still not clearly defined. He said it is difficult for the Commission to step in on a short time frame with meaningful input for the CIP. Mr. Voelckers said he does not think the Commission has yet worked out a way to be effective on its task of providing knowledgeable input on City projects.

Mr. Voelckers said it was his opinion that the Commission needs an ad hoc committee to meet several times to review the list and come up with informed input for the CIP. Mr. Voelckers added it may be helpful to invite some of the key department heads within the City to participate in these meetings. For example, said Mr. Voelckers, there was \$15 million in the CIP to develop a Willoughby parking garage which has been reduced to zero. Without the Commission being informed as to how these projects are manifested it is difficult for it to offer meaningful input, said Mr. Voelckers.

Concurring with Mr. Voelckers, Mr. LeVine acknowledged that this is a very difficult process to participate in without being fully informed. This actually provides the Commission with the opportunity to proactively influence the development of projects, said Mr. LeVine. He said a short term committee seemed like a good idea to him.

Mr. Steedle acknowledged that it is difficult. Using the parking garage as an example, Mr. Steedle noted that it seemed to be imminent a couple of years ago. With study money available from the state, the CBJ hired a consultant to review the options available for the project. It has now been moved to a back burner and on the six year plan it does not even exist, said Mr. Steedle. Mr. Steedle said he honestly did not know how the Commission's deliberations are going to influence that process. While acknowledging that it is important for the Commission to provide its input, Mr. Steedle said in the final analysis it is the projects that are closest to implementation that are going to nudge the other projects aside. Willoughby parking will continue to develop in importance, said Mr. Steedle, as the Willoughby area continues to grow. It is possible that parking may be provided without a structure such as working out an agreement with the state for the use of its parking garages, he added.

Mr. Voelckers said they are currently operating with small parcels of information and expected to weigh in on the CIP.

In order to revitalize downtown the funds will be required, said Mr. Steedle. They are considering disposing of the North Franklin parking lot, he noted, which he said is somewhat controversial. Steps for community development are being taken, said Mr. Steedle. He asked Mr. Voelckers if his vision was something beyond that.

Mr. Voelckers said his point is that there are not steps being made, but that the Planning Commission is not, for the most part, part of that conversation. The role of the Planning Commission has been reacting to projects once they have emerged, said Mr. Voelckers. However the role of the Planning Commission in helping to come up and formulate projects has been limited, he said.

Mr. LeVine said he agreed with Mr. Voelckers. The Planning Commission is going to be asked to make its recommendations on the CIP, said Mr. LeVine. If the Planning Commission does not understand how this list was formulated, it makes it very difficult to do that, he said. If it really is true that the Planning Commission has no input into the CIP process then the rules should be changed so the CIP never comes before the Commission, said Mr. LeVine.

Mr. Steedle said at the last Committee of the Whole in September that Mr. Healy suggested that the Planning Commission think about programs rather than individual projects. Using the enhancement of the core downtown area as an example, Mr. Steedle said using this approach the enhancement of downtown is the program.

Chairman Haight said that would create a different list. The list they have been presented with in the past for review are projects.

Mr. Voelckers asked if it would be possible to set up a two meeting schedule for an ad hoc committee from the Planning Commission to meet with department heads to discuss the CIP.

Mr. Voelckers said he agreed with Mr. Steedle that they could approach this addressing the programs rather than the specific projects. He said he felt it may assist the Planning Commission in giving more meaningful feedback on the CIP list.

Mr. Steedle said he would see if he could arrange those meetings.

Chairman Haight said he was aware they were operating under a tight timeline.

Mr. Voelckers asked if these small committee meetings would need to be publicly noticed.

Mr. Steedle said they would have enough time to provide the proper notice for the committee meetings but that he would have to ascertain if department heads would be available to participate in those meetings as well.

Chairman Haight appointed Mr. Voelckers, Mr. Peters, Mr. LeVine, Mr. Bell and Ms. Shelton-Walker to the committee. He said they would like to meet with department heads from the Department of Public Works and Engineering, the Lands Committee, and the Parks and Recreation Department, to name a few. They were not that focused on meeting with departments with clear cut budgets, such as the hospital and the airport, he said.

Mr. Lange said the Department of Public Works and Engineering had requested that the CIP list come back to them with Commission input by November 14.

Mr. Steedle said he would contact the five committee members once he had communicated with the department heads about their availability.

The Commission on Sustainability will also attend those ad hoc committee meetings.

**B. Presentation of the Draft Energy Plan by the Juneau Commission on Sustainability
([JCOS](#))**

Mr. Felstead said that he is the staff liaison for the Commission on Sustainability, which has been developing a community energy plan. They also had funding from the Manager's office to hire a consultant to assist during this process, said Mr. Felstead.

Stephen Behnke ([Chair of JCOS](#)) said the energy plan was one of the recommendations in the 2011 Juneau Climate Action Plan. The specific focus for the energy plan was to look at opportunities for energy efficiency and renewable energy in the community, said Mr. Behnke.

Mr. Felstead said they have been meeting with a number of groups within the community. They've also been involved with the Juneau Economic Development Council's (JEDC) renewable energy cluster, said Mr. Felstead. They have also been running a series of energy information

events. They call them sustainability sessions, said Mr. Felstead, and they talk about some of the topics that they discuss in the energy plan.

The big question from the public is why Juneau needs to respond to energy needs at this moment, said Mr. Felstead. There are greenhouse gas issues, said Mr. Felstead, ~~and Juneau has~~ [in particular recent announcements that global GHG levels have](#) exceeded all desirable levels ~~of carbon dioxide~~. As a community we import a very large amount of fuel, he said. The consultant estimates that Juneau imports approximately \$140 million of fuel each year, said Mr. Felstead. The community can hopefully save some money and make itself more sustainable and viable as a community into the future, he said.

The energy plan is based around four key questions which are:

- Where are we now
- Where are we going
- Where do we want to go over the next 20 to 35 years
- How can we get there

They worked with a consultant to put together a new baseline, said Mr. Felstead. They have some energy baselines and some greenhouse gas baselines from 2007 and 2010. They wanted to establish a baseline for 2013, said Mr. Felstead, but they found that a lot of the fuel providers in town did not want to provide that information. They were provided with that information in 2007 and in 2010, he said.

Mr. Felstead said that gasoline and diesel are a huge component of Juneau's energy source. Twenty percent of our energy use is for electricity, he said. If Juneau wants to reduce the greenhouse gas effect from its energy sources then it is going to have a big job ahead of it, said Mr. Felstead.

The document tries to provide a lot of background information on where our energy comes from currently, said Mr. Felstead, and where it could come from, and what ~~those the~~ [implications of shifting energy sources](#) might be. The community is currently dependent upon fossil fuels, said Mr. Felstead, thus deeply affected by fuel prices. The cost of electricity over time is reasonably stable compared to the fluctuation of fuel prices, said Mr. Felstead.

One scenario is that Juneau continues its current energy use practices. Another scenario works towards the Climate Action Plan goal for a 25% reduction of greenhouse gases by 2032, said Mr. Felstead. The Climate Action Plan lists a huge amount of actions that could be taken by the City to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions, said Mr. Felstead. The consultant said that a number of the actions that they would normally recommend in a community energy plan are already within the Climate Action Plan document, said Mr. Felstead.

The priority actions garnered from the Climate Action Plan were placed into eight priority strategies, said Mr. Felstead.

Mr. Behnke said under each of these eight strategies there is a large amount of additional information within the Climate Action Plan. In the five years since the Climate Action Plan was adopted there have been changing views in terms of what there is to accomplish to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, said Mr. Behnke. They now have more aggressive and ambitious goals for greenhouse gas reductions, he said.

They proposed a scenario in which these more aggressive goals were enacted, said Mr. Behnke. This would include reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent, for example, and focusing on renewable energy, he said. Juneau is currently highly reliant upon fossil fuels, said Mr. Behnke. That means that Juneau is highly dependent upon the fluctuating fuel prices, he said.

The scenario includes recommendations such as transitioning to electric-based transportation, for example, said Mr. Behnke, and hydro based heating, he added. Juneau does have the advantage that all of its electricity comes from hydropower, said Mr. Behnke.

The plan is still out for public comment, said Mr. Behnke. They will incorporate public comment back into the plan, he said. They will be presenting some form of recommendation to the Assembly within a month or two, he said.

The next step they anticipate taking is to encourage the CBJ to examine this list of priority strategies, said Mr. Felstead. They have had an interesting discussion with the School District which had implemented a model where they had a staff person dedicated to saving energy costs within the School District, he said. They have experienced pretty significant reductions in their energy use, he noted. They were experiencing about \$500,000 of savings a year, said Mr. Felstead.

The Juneau Economic Development Council (JEDC) renewable energy cluster has actually accomplished goals such as the installation of charging stations for electric vehicles, said Mr. Behnke. He said he views this as being one model for how these goals can be accomplished, he said. They will be looking for opportunities to encourage these types of changes, he said. They also want to make recommendations to the CBJ itself on how it could accomplish some renewable energy goals, said Mr. Behnke. There is currently no [easily](#) available data on just how much energy Juneau expends, he said. They would like to find a way to identify how much each [CIP](#) project costs the CBJ in terms of energy use, he said.

They would like to obtain the fuel sales data in the emissions information, said Mr. Felstead. They would like to explore future goals for greenhouse gas and how energy targets are tied together with greenhouse gas reduction.

They would like to incorporate the public comments into the document hopefully before Christmas, said Mr. Felstead.

The energy chapter within the Comprehensive Plan contains many of the goals that have been incorporated into the Climate Action Plan, said Mr. Behnke.

Commission Comments and Questions

Mr. Voelckers asked how it would be possible to track Juneau's energy consumption with three quarters of it being the fuel oil for which there are no recent statistics. He said that he would expect to see fuel consumption trending down with the energy specifications accompanying buildings now.

Mr. Felstead said not having that data is a huge issue.

Mr. Voelckers said looking at the available data from 2007 and 2010 the trend for fuel consumption at that time was downward.

Another goal was to update the building code for commercial buildings and for residential buildings as well, said Mr. Felstead.

Ms. Shelton-Walker asked where the information came from ~~on for~~ the 'waste' ~~line-item~~ and why there would be no current data on that. She said she would also like to hear a little bit more about energy from waste ~~energy~~.

Mr. Felstead said that the waste figure probably would be available for 2013 but they decided not to calculate that based upon the small amount it was actually contributing to the energy profile.

Mr. Behnke said there have been discussions about the possibility of utilizing waste energy conversion.

Mr. LeVine said he felt that reducing energy consumption and/or transitioning to renewable resources makes good economic sense. He said he would be interested in seeing how money could be saved by using different energy sources. He said he would like to encourage the City to be a leader in this. He would like to hear what kinds of things the Planning Commission could do to help implement what should be money-saving options for the community.

Chairman Haight said he knows this group has put forth a lot of very quality research and that a lot of hard work has been put into this document. The Commission will assess in the future how this relates to the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. McKibben said the energy plan and the Climate Action Plan create greater specificity in the evaluation of sustainability and energy use than the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Voelckers asked if there is any economic advantage to utilizing other renewable energy sources such as tide and wind generation.

Mr. Behnke said they did not have the resources to explore these questions too much but that they had identified them as avenues for exploration.

Mr. Peters said he appreciated the fact that a lot of work has gone into this study. He said he served on the School Board when the district hired the energy position. He encouraged them to look at that data to ascertain if there truly is long term savings. Mr. Peters said he recalled from his time on the School Board that the initial impact of that change did not necessarily result in savings. He said he recalled scenarios where the heat was turned down so much that employees were then bringing in individual space heaters and that the colder rooms created additional moisture and mold. It was also creating an unwelcome environment for the staff to work in because it was just too cold all of the time, said Mr. Peters.

They had discussed this topic with representatives from the School District, said Mr. Behnke. It is a complicated analysis, he said. They were given the impression that over the longer term the program did appear to result in savings to the School District, he said. Mr. Behnke said it makes the point that at this time it is not known if these measures would result in savings or not.

III. OTHER BUSINESS - None

IV. REPORT OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES - None

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.