



Haines Borough
Planning Commission Meeting
March 22 2012
MINUTES

DRAFT

1. **CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE TO THE FLAG** – Chairman **Goldberg** called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in Assembly Chambers and led the pledge to the flag.
2. **ROLL CALL** – **Present:** Chairman Rob **Goldberg**, Commissioners, Don **Turner III**, Lee **Heinmiller**, Andy **Hedden**, Danny **Gonce**, Roger **Maynard** and Robert **Venables**.

Staff Present: Julie **Cozzi**/Borough Clerk

Also Present: Mayor Stephanie **Scott** and Bill **Kurz**.

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion: **Venables** moved to “approve the agenda,” and the motion carried unanimously.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion: **Gonce** moved to “approve the 12/8/11, 1/19/12, and 2/9/12 minutes,” and the motion carried unanimously.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None

6. **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Goldberg said Sheinberg plans to provide the next draft of the comprehensive plan by the March 29th work session. She doesn’t believe she needs to be here in person but could attend by phone. She has made a suggestion that each commissioner be assigned a chapter of the comprehensive plan and then chair a small group of citizens for discussion.

7. **STAFF REPORTS**

Cozzi gave an update on the search for a planning & zoning technician III. **Venables** asked who is handling permit applications/land use issues in the mean time. **Cozzi** responded it is currently the clerk’s office, and she took the opportunity to ask the commissioners if they would be willing to make themselves available to assist as needed given their experience and knowledge in these issues. They all agreed.

8. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- A. **Classification of the Former Primary School Lots**

Chairman **Goldberg** opened the public hearing at 6:43pm.

Kurz said because of the condition of the borough’s facilities, it would be a good idea to hold on to the property as a possible site for a municipal complex in the future. He believes it is in the interest of the borough to keep that property for borough use.

Hearing no further comments, **Goldberg** closed the public hearing at 6:44 pm.

Goldberg explained the assembly asked for two public hearings, so there will be another one scheduled for the April meeting. Because of that, no action can yet be taken. **Venables** asked if any work has been done on an artist rendition for use in that space. **Goldberg** mentioned the drawings that were done by MRV, and **Venables** asked if they can be brought back into the assembly chambers for display. **Heinmiller** said some of those areas are major snow storage areas, so that should be considered. Also, parking issues need to be kept in mind. **Turner** does not believe Main Street is appropriate for a municipal

structure. Any significant structure is going to have parking problems, and he believes there are better places. Commercial businesses should be on Main Street, and he believes all or part of the property should be put up for sale. There are plenty of parks around. These lots don't have to be "cheap" and they can be on the market for a while. They can be seeded and look fine while waiting for buyers. **Hedden** agreed. He noted MRV recommended businesses be located in that area, as much as possible---more shopping. **Gonce** agreed with having commercial businesses especially on the frontage to Main Street. It's disjointed having different uses in the downtown core, and more commercial use would help. **Venables** suggested the planning commission could recommend a phased approach even if this were to go into commercial status in the long term. There are a number of options that may be contemplated.

9. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS** - None

10. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Historic District/Building Review** – None

B. **Haines Borough Code Amendments**

1. **Plat Procedure Revision**

Gonce said it seemed Chilkoot Indian Association was making changes all through construction of the Chilkoot Estates Subdivision. **Turner** said there was a 100% preliminary plat, and the commission never saw it again until the final plat that was significantly changed. No one ever identified where or when or who approved the pump station, for one thing. Small changes could be approved by the manager, but any substantial change should be required to come back to the planning commission. **Heinmiller** said one problem is the 100% plat the commission needs to see does not include waste systems, etc. **Venables** supports the proposed code language. He asked if there is any plan to define '*substantial*.' **Turner** said one thing the planning commission struggles with is knowing when a proposed change can go to the manager and when it should come to the commission?

Motion: **Gonce** moved to "recommend the assembly adopt the draft ordinance revising the plat procedures," and **Hedden** seconded it.

Motion to Amend: **Gonce** moved to insert in parentheses '*as determined by the borough manager*' following '*substantial changes*,' and it was seconded by **Turner**. The amendment motion carried unanimously.

Turner said allowing owners of large properties to incrementally subdivide through the short plat process is problematic and makes it difficult to do long term planning. **Heinmiller** noted multiple short plats can cause road problems, as well. **Goldberg** said a lot line adjustment is not in the short plat code, because it was removed. Short plats currently talk about subdivisions.

The main motion, as amended, carried unanimously. **Goldberg** said he will write a memorandum to the assembly explaining the rationale for this recommendation.

C. **Project Updates** – None

D. **Other New Business**

1. **26-Mile Land Use Committee – Document Review**

Goldberg said in drafting this, he tried to be informative to the residents and give them options. He took the wording from the planning commissioners' handbook and included a brief survey. A petition came to the planning commission last year asking for zoning in the 26-mile area, but it was a bit of a moving target with changing boundaries and conditions. There seems to be a lot of interest in rezoning, and he would like to send this survey out to find out how much support and resistance there is out there. **Turner** asked which areas would receive the survey. **Goldberg** wondered if this should be broadened to see

what kind of response is received. Perhaps a clear idea of boundaries will come out of the particular responses that come. **Heinmiller** suggested including the Mosquito Lake and 25-mile areas. **Venables** said the commission is planning to go out the highway to discuss the comprehensive plan, and that would be a great opportunity to generally expose the residents to the idea of rezoning. Then, a survey could go out after that meeting. The message to the residents should also include the commission's intention to include setbacks and building separation requirements in the General Use Zone (GU). **Goldberg** is reluctant to survey residents in a public meeting where a lot of people are reluctant to express their opinions in public. **Venables** clarified his intent was that the commission could use the comprehensive plan meeting out the highway to announce that a survey will be going out. He also said a neighborhood association has standards that the commission can recognize when matters come before them. **Kurz** warned those associations have become extremely regulatory across the country and can have dictatorial powers. **Hedden** liked the idea of a color-coded chart to show what responses were received and from which locations. He wondered how it works with a confidential response. **Goldberg** clarified the individual survey respondents won't be anonymous but won't be public information either. **Hedden** suggested a GU-wide survey. **Goldberg** said there are residents in Excursion Inlet and expense involved in a survey. **Hedden** suggested the survey should go to areas that are experiencing residential growth. **Heinmiller** recommended copies of the surveys be available for those who attend the comprehensive plan meeting. **Scott** suggested avoiding the expense and work of a mailing by just making them available for download from the borough's website. She cautioned them to be careful not to add workload to staff. **Goldberg** said there are many people who still don't use computers and there are volunteers to help prepare the mailings. **Turner** suggested saving this project until after the comprehensive plan meeting(s) so that this topic doesn't override the discussion. The commissioners all agreed that an actual mailing is important. **Hedden** pointed out the comprehensive plan says the intent is to have zoning in the GU as opposed to a reaction to some particular issue or special interest group. **Venables** suggested an updated survey could be kept in the commission's meeting packets so the information is out there for the public.

2. Snow Storage Lots

Turner said he thought the planning commission recommended the Fourth and View property be purchased by the borough. It is one of the private lots that are used for snow storage. If somebody else buys that lot and uses the Right of Way for their access, it will not be usable for snow storage. He wondered if the commission should recommend the purchase again. **Goldberg** asked if the borough is paying the owner for the use of the lot and **Turner** did not believe so. **Heinmiller** said there are a couple of private lots in the Fort area with snow stored on them and if it's not moved, come spring it will become water runoff. **Venables** wondered if there are other lots that might be acquired. **Turner** said the Fourth and View lot was actually up for sale and he believes it still is. The owners of the other storage lots are not interested in selling. **Venables** suggested **Goldberg** and **Turner** have a discussion with the borough manager about identifying lots for storage and those that might be purchased, and they agreed to do that. **Hedden** said it seems specific strategic storage areas could be identified and watched to see if they come up for sale. **Turner** said a lot of them are vacant lots and everything is great as long as no one buys them. Most of the current lots are privately-owned and not for sale. **Heinmiller** suggested some undeveloped Rights of Way might be possibilities for storage, such as across from Deishu. The problem areas seem to be downtown and the Fort.

3. Beach Road – Front Street Intersection

Goldberg said AK-DOT needs to move the Right of Way (ROW) and is interested in a land transfer. They want some ROW on the uphill side and return to the borough some ROW on the water side. **Venables** said he hopes the planning commission will have

another opportunity to look at the plans. **Turner** said the commission made its recommendations but he's not sure they went anywhere. April 12 is when the project is supposed to go out to bid. **Venables** asked what the role of a local planning commission is in state projects. **Goldberg** said they seem to do what they want no matter what, and there is no arguing with them. **Venables** said on some level the state has to have some local concurrence. **Heinmiller** said in the packet sent to the private sector, they indicated they don't need to care what the general public says. **Scott** said she was informed that everyone is getting different amounts for their property as though the owners won't communicate with each other. Regarding the transfer request, **Goldberg** explained that, in total, the state wants to transfer an area about 1 acre in size for 25,000 square feet---a little more than ½ acre. So, the borough would gain in the transfer. The planning commission can assume the borough manager will be mindful of utilities in that area.

Motion: **Turner** moved to "recommend the assembly direct the manager to negotiate a transfer of land with the state," the motion carried unanimously.

4. **Creation of a Heliport near Chilkat State Road – Discussion Item**

Goldberg said this is an idea Assembly Member Schnabel brought up at a Commerce Committee meeting. **Venables** said it's good for the borough not to just be saying "no" but looking for solutions. A good potential for a recreation zone is near the old sawmill in the area of the Takshanuk Mountain Trail. It would be a good buffer between existing industrial and residential zones, and that is a good use for a recreation zone. **Goldberg** said SEABA does not want a borough heliport in the proposed area, and Alaska Heliskiing is interested in developing their own property at 35-mile off the old road. **Venables** said it is important for the commission to go on record identifying corridors for the proper use of activities. **Turner** noted Assembly Member Schnabel is talking about creating a heliport as opposed to creating a recreation zone. **Goldberg** wondered who will pay for it, operate it, and own it. **Heinmiller** said if the bulk of people want the industry to fly out of the airport but the industry wants their own property for their own control, he doesn't understand how the borough would think they could "put this to bed" from a planning standpoint. **Venables** reiterated that land use planners should identify activity corridors.

11. **COMMISSION COMMENTS** - None

12. **COMMUNICATION**

13. **SET MEETING DATES** – The next Regular Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 19th.

14. **ADJOURNMENT**– 8:00 p.m.