

# Haines Borough Planning Commission Meeting

## April 19, 2012 Minutes

### 8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

#### A. Classification of the Former Primary School Lots

Chairman **Goldberg** opened the public hearing at 7:10pm.

**Schnabel** asked the Commission to consider the double "Y" entrance at the north end of the community and how this property on Main Street might affect the traffic patterns. She added that she would like to see main entrance to community come down the highway and then turn into community on Second Avenue for safety, and aesthetic reasons. She also added that MRV and McDowell have noted that the entrance to Main Street from north is problematic.

**Kurz** suggested leaving the property for public use while deciding what its best use is.

**Culbeck** reiterated the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee's letter in packet, also pointed out that there is contaminated soil on two of the lots which is expensive to remediate.

**Olerud** recommended that one block be retained and the other put back into private sector. He said that some of the property on the tax rolls would be a positive outcome.

**Jackson** said he was also on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and suggested that it was premature to do anything at this point pointing out that there was no demand for Main Street property right now.

**Studley** encouraged including parking because it is such a big problem downtown.

**Morphet** pointed out that the question of what to do with these lots prompted the downtown plan and MRV showed these lots as being commercial use.

**Schnabel** asked about the wood heat feasibility study and would that require a large utility structure for storage of wood product or pellets.

**Culbeck** said that the study is looking at pellets and both centralized and decentralized storage, but nothing enormous as pellets are dense.

**Kurz** said that the CIA building will be heated with pellets and that there will be a pellet mill in town within the next year.

**Culbeck** pointed out that the school building is facing a shortage and suggested that the property should be retained for expansion.

**Olerud** said after looking at the plat, recommended not doing anything because the subdivision doesn't make sense.

**O'Riley** said that the architectural firm working on the Community Center RFO encouraged looking at costs to fix and maintain buildings and also that European towns are built with an open space in middle of town with public buildings surrounding. He encouraged consideration of what was wanted in the next 10-20 years, and in 50 years. He said there is a lot of potential to do something grand.

**Kurz** reiterated O'Riley's comments about municipal buildings being in core of town.

**Goldberg** closed the public hearing at 7:30pm.

**Heinmiller** pointed out that the wood heat feasibility study is a separate study from the pellet plant study which CIA is currently working on. He also said that there could potentially be a tribal agreement between Yukon and CIA.

**Motion: Venables** moved to “recommend for classification, Lots 6 & 7 for sale in the near-term, the development of Fourth Avenue and a portion of Lot 8 along with the alley to a sufficient standard to support parking for RV and short-term downtown parking, retention of lot 8 for at least 10 years during which time its use as a “town-square” as envisioned by the Downtown Revitalization Committee and the retention by the borough of lot 5 for public uses, including winter snow storage and/or biomass heat support infrastructure,” and the motion carried 4-3 with **Goldberg, Hedden** and **Heinmiller** opposed.

Main Street lots being sold and put on the tax roll, the Comprehensive Plan’s call for a downtown corridor, long range planning and orderly disposal of borough property, fact that the borough has received over 2,000 acres of land and sold virtually none, the need for RV and other downtown parking, the Downtown Revitalization Committee and Chamber of Commerce recommendations to develop a “Town Square” on Lot 8, the need for snow storage sites, the current inventory of parks, the potential need for additional school classrooms, support for biomass heating opportunities, selling for under value and requiring development within a specific amount of time for downtown revitalization, and traffic patterns were topics discussed.

## **Borough Manager's Report May 8, 2012**

### Disposition of Former Primary School Property

On Thursday, April 19, 2012 the Planning Commission held a second public hearing regarding the future of the lots that contained the former Primary School. By a vote of 4-3, the Planning Commission moved as follows:

**"Recommend to the Assembly to classify Lots 5 & 6 for sale to the private sector in the near term; develop the 4th Avenue side of Lot 8 for public parking; retain lot 8 in Borough ownership for at least 10 years; use Lot 5 for snow storage or activities related to biomass heat."**

I have great respect for the collective decision of the Planning Commission on all matters brought before them; however, on this matter I find myself on the other side of the majority opinion. The arguments both for and against the motion are articulated in the memorandum to the Assembly by Commission Chair Rob Goldberg, and I will not repeat them here. Rather, for me the decision to classify Lots 5 & 6 for sale to the private sector, develop the 4th Avenue side of Lot 8 for public parking; retain lot 8 in Borough ownership for at least 10 years; use Lot 5 for snow storage or activities related to biomass heat is premature.

We are engaged in a Borough Facility Master Plan, which among other things will be examining the best use for locating possible future Borough facilities. One of the potential sites for developing facilities and parks is this property. One of my favorite sayings I have learned here in Haines is: "Plan your work, and work your plan." It is my opinion that we have not yet planned our work. I would therefore respectfully submit that this recommended action can be postponed indefinitely, or at least until the Master Plan has been completed.

## Haines Borough Borough Assembly Meeting #223 May 8, 2012 Minutes

B. Planning Commission - 3/22 *approved minutes & Recommendation reo Old School Lots*

**Motion:** **LAPP** moved to "direct the manager to begin the process of following the planning commission's recommendations for disposal and use of the former school properties," and it was seconded. It carried 4-3 in a tie vote with **WATERMAN**, **VICK**, and **HOFFMAN** opposed and the mayor breaking the tie in the affirmative.

During the discussion, **SCHNABEL** said she was surprised at the level of detail submitted by the commission. She believes their recommendation should be limited to which, if any, lots should be disposed of and/or retained for public use. **VICK** said he, too, was surprised the commission recommended uses for the property, such as snow storage. He agreed with the manager that the borough should get the comprehensive and master facility plans finalized before making these decisions. **WATERMAN** agreed. She's not averse to selling some property, but it needs to be looked at in more depth. **SMITH** would like to see property values and a map. **EARNEST** said the property is not assessed since it is public property but values are available on the properties across the street. **LAPP** said the borough has held off selling the property and it keeps being held off. He said the assembly just heard it again at this meeting---buy the Elks property and then sell this---and it just doesn't ever happen. **HOFFMAN** would like to see a history of the discussion that says the assembly agreed to sell the old school properties to pay for buying the property the new school is built on. It was explained that it does not exist in any official assembly record. There may have been statements made in committee meetings, etc. **SCHNABEL** said the Chilkat Valley News reported on it, so there was certainly public discussion at some point. There are a number of people in the community who remember this type of promise. She moved to amend the motion to acknowledge the planning commission's recommendations but ask staff to communicate the manager's and assembly's concerns to them with a request to hone it down to a simpler recommendation, but the motion failed with **Smith**, **Hoffman**, **Vick**, and **Schnabel** opposed. **HOFFMAN** asked if this needs to be acted on right now, and **SCOTT** said no.

# Haines Borough Borough Assembly Meeting #224 May 29, 2012 Minutes

## 1. Reconsideration of 5/8/12 Motion

**Motion:** **SCHNABEL** moved to "reconsider the motion of 5/8/12 directing the manager to begin the process of implementing the planning commission's recommendations for disposal and use of the former school properties," and it was seconded. The motion carried unanimously, and it was returned to the table for debate.

Following discussion, the original motion failed unanimously.

During discussion, **SCHNABEL** said the assembly's direction to the planning commission was to classify the property and, in her opinion, the assembly's motion went beyond that intention. The public's comments tell her the issue would benefit from more public and assembly discourse.

**HOFFMAN** agreed. **VICK** expressed appreciation for the opportunity to reconsider this matter. It's important to keep the options open for now and it would be good to move forward with consensus in the future. **SMITH** said he too is glad for the opportunity to reconsider this.

**Motion:** **WATERMAN** moved to "place the planning commission's recommendation for classification of the primary school subdivision on the assembly's agenda for the June 26, 2012 meeting, with provision for a public hearing, along with discussion of acquisition of the Elks property, and it was seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

During discussion, **EARNEST** asked if the Elks property can be included in the discussion, and the assembly determined it should be a separate agenda item.

**SCHNABEL** said the original motion was for the planning commission to provide a recommendation to the assembly by 6/30/12, which they certainly did. However, due to the controversy, she wanted to also provide them with time to reconsider if they so desire. She would also like the school board to represent their thoughts on this matter.

# Haines Borough

## Borough Assembly Meeting #226

### June 26, 2012 Minutes

#### A. Classification/Disposition of the Former Primary School Property

Mayor **SCOTT** opened the public hearing at 6:41pm.

**GARLAND** is in favor of borough retaining the property and not designating for sale in the future because future needs are unknown at this time. He said many envision a campus downtown where public functions can be held. He pointed out a danger of selling would subject the property to a speculation buyer purchasing it and holding it undeveloped for a long time or building a large chain store putting local merchants out of business

**KURZ** echoed **GARLAND**'s statements.

**WENNER** said the Planning Commission didn't want to sell immediately.

**PALMIERI** said as a Project Manager for Department of Environmental Conservation she has been working with the borough on petroleum contamination in the soil and is available for questions.

**CULBECK** also spoke in favor of retaining land suggesting that the community could have something there to be proud of in the near future.

**STUART** explained that Lands Department funds were used to purchase the current school property and that there were discussions that this property would be sold to reimburse the Lands budget.

**HIRSCH** added that the property is a great place for a center of town and that many commercial properties are currently unused putting another piece of property out there would be a short sighted decision.

Hearing no further comments, the mayor closed the public hearing at 6:52pm.

**Motion:** **SCHNABEL** moved to "postpone disposition/reclassification indefinitely," and it was seconded. The motion carried 5-1 with **LAPP** opposed.

During the discussion, **SCHNABEL** said as a follow up to the reconsideration motion she felt it was counterproductive to sell and pointed out that postponing indefinitely allowed for the possibility of bringing it back in the future. **VICK** agreed. He said he has heard ideas from the public and past assembly members and would like to see the best use of the property. **HOFFMAN** said the decision should be community driven as the property has been community property, and with input from more stakeholders, the vision for the property can be consolidated. **LAPP** reiterated that purchasing the Schafer property took something off the tax rolls and some property should be put back on the rolls so the tax payers aren't disenfranchised. He suggested property could be sold in Excursion Inlet or Highland Estates.