

**CITY OF UNALASKA
UNALASKA, ALASKA
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Thursday, May 16, 2013
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
7:00 P.M.**

1. Call to Order:

Chair Chris Bobbitt called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Staff Present:

Erin Reinders, AICP, Planning Director
Veronica De Castro, Planning Administrative Assistant
Nancy Peterson, Public Works Director

Roll Call:

Commissioners present:

Vicki Williams
Steven Gregory
Chris Spengler
Chris Bobbitt
Peter Sturdivant

2. Revisions to the Agenda:

Staff noted the need to elect a Chair and Vice Chair. Chair Chris Bobbitt said that the Election of Officers will be addressed in the housekeeping portion.

3. Appearance Requests:

None

4. Announcements:

Ms. Erin Reinders announced that she was able to talk with the American Planning Association representatives regarding the Community Planning Assistance Team when she was in Chicago for the APA national conference. They are now starting to put together some plans and looking at September to have the team here. It will be an intensive visit with a lot of meetings and back and forth but she will keep the Planning Commission updated.

5. Minutes:

Ms. Vicki Williams moved to approve the minutes from the February 21, 2013 meeting. There was a second. Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any questions about the minutes. Hearing none,

Chair Bobbitt called for vote on the minutes and the motion passed by unanimous consensus (5-0). The minutes from the February 21, 2013 meeting were adopted.

SPECIAL ITEM-Election of Officers:

Chair Bobbitt informed fellow commissioners he is not sure how long he will be on the island now that his children had graduated and his wife accepted a job in Washington. He said to keep that in mind when making the nominations. Chair Bobbitt offered be a resource person and collaborate with the next Planning Commission officers.

Chair Bobbitt called for nominations for the position of Chair. Vicki Williams nominated Chris Bobbitt as Chair. Steven Gregory seconded the motion. Chair Bobbit asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, Chair Bobbit called for a vote. The vote was unanimous (4-0) with the Chair abstaining. The motion passed.

Chair Bobbitt called for nominations for the position of Vice Chair. Vicki Williams nominated Steven Gregory as Vice Chair. Chris Spengler seconded the motion. Chair Bobbit asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, Chair Bobbit called for a vote. The vote was unanimous (5-0) and the motion passed.

PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ITEMS:

- 6. Preliminary Plat of Delta Western Subdivision, a 15.24 acre subdivision of Parcel 1-A and Tract B, Ptarmigan Flats, Subdivision, Plat Number 90-5 and Alaska Tideland Survey Number 1353, Plat Number 88-4, Aleutian Island Recording District. (Owner/Applicant: Rick Miller, CEO, Ounalashka Corporation/FDOC, Inc.; Property IDs: 04-03-340, 04-03-345, and 01-10-180)**

Staff Presentation: Chair Bobbitt opened the public hearing and called for any ex parte communication or conflicts of interest to be disclosed. Hearing none, the Chair called for staff presentation.

Staff briefly informed everyone that she has made revisions to Resolution 2013-05 and that the updated copy is on their table. Staff explained that the purpose of this plat is to relocate a few easements, vacate a new easement that is the direct result of construction going on in the area. The resolution addresses the property boundaries adjacent to the tideland because some areas were filled and it impacts the acreage of the property. This adjustment also allows for the building setbacks to be met. The new conditions in the resolution outline the correction that has to be made to the lot number and subdivision name all of which have already been discussed with the applicant.

Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any questions from the commissioners. Peter Sturdivant clarified that the extra acreage from the filling of the tideland was to accommodate the warehouse. Staff confirmed and said that it would add to the buildable area in the property.

Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any other questions from the Commissioners. Hearing none, Chair Bobbitt asked if the applicant or if any from the public who would like to speak on this issue. Hearing none, Chair Bobbitt closed the public hearing opened the Commission discussion by calling for a motion to approve Resolution 2013-05.

Motion: Vicki Williams motioned to approve Resolutions 2013-05. There was a second.

Vote: The vote was unanimous (5-0). The motion carried.

7. **Variance for a Parking Requirement Reduction from 40 parking spaces to 20 parking spaces for the proposed Delta Western Warehouse located at 1617 East Point Road, Tract B Ptarmigan Flats Subdivision, and Plat Number 90-5.** (*Owner: Rick Miller, CEO, Ounalashka Corporation/FDOC, Inc; Applicant: Tim Hunter, Operations Manager, Delta Western; Property ID: 04-03-340*)

Staff Presentation: Chair Bobbitt opened the public hearing and called for any ex parte communication or conflicts of interest to be disclosed. Hearing none, the Chair Bobbitt called for staff presentation.

Staff explained that the applicant is requesting a variance for a reduction of parking requirement of a warehouse which according to code should have one (1) parking space per 1,000 square foot area. The required parking space for this structure is forty (40) that the applicant would like to reduce to twenty (20) parking spaces. Staff explained that in order for a variance to be approved it has to meet the tests of code. Staff found that the test were not met and, with the Development Review Team, did not recommend approval of the variance request. If the Commission chose to grant the variance, staff had Resolution 2013-06 which outlined several conditions of approval. There have also been accommodations made by the Fire Department with regards to the construction of the warehouse just to increase the buildable space. All of these accommodations are listed in detail in the meeting packets.

Chair Bobbitt asked the Commissioners if they have any questions for the staff. Peter Sturdivant inquired if there were any other objections to the reduction of parking other than what is written in the code. Staff sent out public notices to limited landowners within 300 feet of the property but did not receive any feedback.

Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any more questions from the Commissioners. Hearing none, he asked if the applicant would like to testify.

Applicant Testimony: Mr. Tim Hunter, Operations Manager of Delta Western, and applicant of the variance request said there are no office spaces inside the warehouse and they did not anticipate more than three (3) vehicles parked there at any given time. It's used as a warehouse and activities would be moving items in and out and the space for parking could be used as additional buildable space.

Chair Bobbitt asked what the 25-foot by 100-foot area on the south side of the building. Mr. Hunter replied it was the entry bay of the building and it is set back from the road. Chair

Bobbitt asked what the intent and purpose of the space on the left side of the building was. Mr. Hunter said it will be used for storage.

Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any other questions from the Commissioners. Hearing none, Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any further Public Testimony on this issue. Hearing none, Chair Bobbitt closed the public hearing at this point and opened the Commission discussion by calling for a motion to approve 2013-06.

Main Motion: Mr. Sturdivant moved to approve Resolution 2013-06 as stated. There was a second.

Commission Discussion: Mr. Sturdivant asked the applicant that if there will be future problems with parking the vacant space on the north side of the building can be used as additional parking spaces and would they have any objection to that. Mr. Tim Hunter said that they do not have any objections. Staff explained that in Resolution 2013-06 there are conditions spelled out that would help alleviate any safety issues.

Mr. Gregory asked the staff if there is any difference in the requirement for parking space for a 40,000 square foot warehouse to that of a 40,000 square foot apartment building. Chair Bobbitt said there is a difference. Staff explained that parking spaces are broken down in the code depending on the building's uses. Staff cited example that in a building used as a retail office the parking requirement would be one (1) parking space per 200 square foot as compared to one (1) for every 1,000 square foot. for a warehouse considering that people visiting the warehouse would not be as many as that of a retail store.

Chair Bobbitt said that he worries about the instance when the season begins and trucks would be lining up to load and unload. That it would quickly fill up the twenty (20) parking spaces.

Mr. Gregory said that when January comes snow would be piling up and he anticipates traffic in that area.

Mr. Spengler asked if they considered the areas right across the warehouse as additional parking space. Mr. Tim Hunter said that they don't have access to that side. He also said that they are not planning this to be permanent and if they need to work better they will if forty (40) parking spaces is not enough then they will find space for sixty (60) parking spaces.

Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any further discussions on the resolution. Hearing none, he called for a vote by consensus on Resolution 2013-06.

Vote: The vote was (4-1), with Chair Bobbitt voting nay. The motion carried.

8. **Zoning Amendment to Rezone the property located at 271 Biorca Drive, the approximately 10 acre portion of USS 58 (Bldg. #616), from General Commercial to High Density Residential.** (Owner/Applicant: Rick Miller, CEO, Ounalashka Corporation; Property IDs: 04-03-600)

Staff Presentation: Chair Bobbitt opened the public hearing and called for any ex parte communication or conflicts of interest to be disclosed. Hearing none, Chair Bobbitt called for staff presentation.

Staff explained that this is a rezoning request for a property from General Commercial to High Density Residential for a housing project. She stated that this is a site that is familiar to the Planning Commissioners as they have just recently approved a conditional use permit to allow for three (3) residential units. The development that is being considered is just within the existing structure and renovates it into eight (8) residential units. Staff said that there are future housing development plans for this area. The request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and staff recommends approval.

Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any other questions from the Commissioners. Hearing none, Chair Bobbitt asked Mr. Rick Miller if he would like to speak on this issue.

Applicant Testimony: Mr. Miller said that they are excited with the housing development and converting the warehouse into additional housing. He said that they are also exploring additional housing projects.

Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any questions from the Commissioners for Mr. Miller. Hearing none, Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any further Public Testimony on this issue. Hearing none, Chair Bobbitt closed the public hearing at this point and opens the Commission discussion by calling for a motion to approve Resolution 2013-07.

Main Motion: Mr. Gregory moved to approve Resolution 2013-07. There was a second.

Vote: Chair Bobbitt asked if the commissioners would like to discuss the resolution. Hearing none, Chair Bobbitt called for a vote by consensus on the resolution. The vote was unanimous (5-0). The motion carried.

REGULAR MEETING:

No items.

WORK SESSION:

9. General Discussion on Title 8 Requirements: Private access agreements for landlocked lots; Minimum lot width requirement.

Staff explained that these are ideas which may help to encourage housing development that she would like to run by the Planning Commissioners and to get guidance about the next steps. The two issues include the reduction of lot width requirement and the incorporation of Flag Pole lots.

Staff said that a year or so ago the Planning Commission reduced the width of the front yard from 70 feet to 60 feet and that was a direct result of action item identified in the Comprehensive

Plan in hopes of allowing easier subdivision of a property. Staff said she doesn't know where the sixty foot width was based on. The Townsite's lot widths typically range from 40 feet to 70 feet. Monica Henning has lot that is a 100-foot wide lot but couldn't subdivide it without getting a variance although her lot is large enough to subdivide. Perhaps this is one thing Planning Commission might consider to further reduce the width of a lot's frontage to 50 feet, which would still allow for a site to meet other development requirements.

The other issue concerns an individual who owns a property in Haystack Hill and he has a lot that received a variance to be created that has absolutely no direct frontage to a road right-of-way, which code does not allow. Through a private access easement, he was able to create the lot. Staff would not recommend doing that in the future, but that is where we are at right now. The lot is actually wide enough to be cut in half and have buildable space that could be sold. The current owner has requested an additional variance to create this additional lot with no direct access of the right of way, requiring any further owner to use the private access easement. The Planning Commission did not support the request. Private access easements are not public and have the potential to be problematic if a disagreement occurs between the properties owners.

A Flag Pole lot may be useful in this or other situations, allowing a narrow access to a public right of way to create uniquely shaped lots that can be privately owned and sold. The "pole" section of the lot is access owned by the "flag" portion of the lot. Some communities do not like this design because properties end up with houses in what appears to be their backyard. Another matter to consider with flag pole lots is how wide the pole portion should be and how that width might be impacted if it is adjacent to another flag pole lot.

Staff wanted to get these two issues for consideration and if the Planning Commission would like further research on these.

Chair Bobbitt asked what the reduced minimum lot size is now. Staff answered that it is now 6,000 sq. ft. from 10,000 sq. ft. Chair Bobbitt said that if you take in consideration the side yard setbacks you will be left with only a 30-foot area to develop if you reduce the front width to 50 feet then you would be left with a short and narrow house when the purpose was to keep the front of the house long and the side twice as long as the street. Chair Bobbitt said, however, that this was definitely worth considering.

Chair Bobbitt stated that in his opinion the flag pole lot is more viable in community like ours that has a very limited amount of quality lots but where there are a lot of lands that are under developed. If access to these types of lands is made easier we would be able to fulfill the goals of the housing portion of the Comprehensive Plan. He said this option is worth exploring and looking for ways to do it but maybe not as outlined by allowing it in the code especially in existing circumstance but as mediation for a less desirable situation.

Mr. Sturdivant said that per his experience regarding shared driveways, the issue is usually not legal but emotional.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any other business matters that the commissioners would like to discuss. Mr. Chris Spengler announced that he is resigning as Planning Commissioners effective at the end of the session because he is leaving Unalaska. He thanked everyone at the Planning Commission. Chair Bobbitt also thanked Mr. Spengler for his time serving as Commissioner.

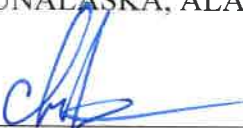
Staff inquired about the Commissioners availability to attend meetings in the coming summer months. Staff said there is likely going to be a Planning Commission meeting in June, but would work with the Commissioner set a date.

Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any other questions from the Commissioners. There were no other businesses to discuss.

11. ADJOURNMENT.

Chair Bobbitt adjourned the meeting at 7:40PM.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 27th DAY OF June 2013 BY THE CITY OF UNALASKA, ALASKA PLANNING COMMISSION.



Chris Bobbitt
Chair

6/27/13

Date



Erin Reinders, AICP
Recording Secretary

6/27/13

Date

Prepared by Veronica De Castro and Erin Reinders, Planning Department