

**CITY OF UNALASKA
UNALASKA, ALASKA
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Thursday, June 27, 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

Roll Call:

Commissioners present:

Vicki Williams

Steven Gregory

Chris Bobbitt

Peter Sturdivant

2. Revisions to the Agenda:

None

3. Appearance Requests:

None

4. Minutes:

Peter Sturdivant moved to approve the minutes from the May 16, 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 (4-0). The minutes from the May 16, 2013 meeting were adopted.

5. Announcements:

Erin Reinders informed everyone that the new Planning Administrator Tony Grande will be starting on July 8, 2013 but he will be flying in on the 4th of July. Mr. Grande has a Master's Degree in Planning, is a GIS whiz and will be a great addition to the Planning Department and the community.

PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ITEMS:

6. Variance for a Lot Width Reduction from 60 feet to 50 feet to allow for the subdivision of Lot 6 of Willow Estates Subdivision, Plat Number 98-27, Aleutian Island Recording District and located on Steward Road.

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 explained that the minimum required lot width is sixty (60) feet and the applicant is requesting a variance to reduce that to fifty (50) to allow her to subdivide her one hundred (100) foot wide lot into two. Staff also brought to the Planning Commissioners' attention the memo that she sent earlier that day explaining the different kinds of variances that is written in Code. One involves Zoning and Development requirements. This is the sort of code they used regarding parking variance in last month's Public Hearing while the current variance request is related to the Subdivision and Platting requirements of Code. Other communities call this type of variance as Modifications of Standards. Although the tests are similar, the purpose of this type of variance is slightly different from the Zoning and Development requirements. A variance for Subdivision and Platting requirements is not only allowed to be granted due to undue hardship, but also when the Planning Commission finds that the outcome is desirable to the public. Staff is recommending the approval of the variance because it meets the test of code and is desirable from staff's standpoint because it accomplishes a documented need of the community for additional housing.

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

Applicant and Public Testimony: Monica Henning said that in most other cities in the U.S., a fifty (50) foot frontage is pretty standard. In retrospect, she wished that when the Planning Commission changed the lot size requirements from 10,000 square feet to 6,000 square feet that the frontage would also have been adjusted further to fifty (50) foot width instead of just sixty (60) from the original seventy (70) foot requirement.

Chair Bobbitt asked Ms. Henning if she knows what the side yard setbacks are for a fifty (50) width lot was and she replied that she did not but she assumed that it would still be a 10-foot setback. She also said that one can easily build a 1,000 to 1,200 square foot house on a fifty (50) foot wide lot.

Peter Sturdivant said that he actually has a number of questions about the fifty (50) feet width variance request. Mr. Sturdivant questions that if the Planning Commission indeed changed the ordinance and allows a fifty (50) feet width lot at what point should the Planning Commission stop. He said that the sixty (60) feet width ordinance is a good starting point as it addressed most topography issues and he was of the opinion that anything lower can be addressed through the variance process. He also mentioned the two-and-a-half rule found in 8.08.090(D) (b) which states that "Normal depth shall not exceed two-and-a-half (2 ½) time's

width...” The lot dimensions being proposed is contrary to this rule because a fifty (50) foot width multiplied by 2.5 would be a hundred and twenty-five (125) feet in length. This lot at the deepest is two hundred & forty-nine (249) feet in length.

Staff reviewed that the Subdivision Design Standards related to a lot’s dimensional requirements, such as lot width and lot length, is all within one section of the code and should be considered together when granting this variance. Basically, if the variance is granted the Planning Commission is granting the variance not only for the fifty (50) foot width but also the length of the lot.

Mr. Sturdivant asked if the applicant was planning to develop the land herself or if she had plans to sell it. Ms. Henning said that she does not know for sure at this point in time. Peter Sturdivant inquired further if she had any possible start dates for construction. She answered that she does not have one yet.

Chair Bobbitt inquired if the housing unit she provided as an attachment to her application a prefab or does she plan to build it herself. Ms. Henning answered that it would either be stick frame or prefabricated. She also said that she included it as an attachment to show the Commission that it is possible to build a house even with a fifty (50) foot width lot.

Steven Gregory asked Ms. Henning if they can build on the lower portion of the lot near the creek. She said that they cannot and most of the property is unusable.

Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any more questions from the Commissioners. Hearing none, he asked if there were any other from the public who would like to testify. Hearing none, Chair Bobbitt closed the public hearing at this point and opened the Commission discussion by calling for a motion to approve 2013-08.

Main Motion: Mr. Gregory motioned to approve Resolutions 2013-08 as stated. There was a second.

Commission Discussion: Mr. Gregory started the discussion and said that he had a feeling when they started reducing the lot size width that they would start seeing this issue crop up. He said that they should consider reducing the front lot width to fifty (50) feet in code otherwise he foresees the same request over and over again. He referred to the Comprehensive Plan and the identified need to encourage housing. Vicki Williams stated that she supported Mr. Gregory’s idea. Mr. Sturdivant said he was of the opinion that it should remain a variance considering the topography of the island that, combined with a reduced lot width, may be difficult to develop and that there are not a lot of requests for variance of this kind yet. However, if this becomes prevalent then the Commission should rethink the ordinance on lot frontage.

Chair Bobbitt mentioned looking at the buildings in the downtown area and the remnants of the military housing and that these were roughly fifteen-by-fifteen (15x15) or fifteen-by-twenty (15x20) feet and it seemed silly to require those type of houses on a 6,000 square foot lot. However, it is also good to have the option to wait and see. At the same time having the

determined need for housing it would be nice to speed the process up so people can develop more quickly. He said he has been tracking how many variance of this kind occurred in the six (6) month period during the building season and maybe revisit the issue based on the numbers and demand. Mr. Gregory agreed with Chair Bobbitt to track the variance requests and believed that an eventual change in code would speed the process up and help people develop their lands more quickly.

Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any further discussions on the resolution. Hearing none, he called for a vote by consensus on Resolution 2013-08.

Vote: The vote was unanimous. The motion carried.

7. Preliminary Plat of Unalaska Tideland Survey 101, a 16-acre subdivision of UTS 101 Tract B, Plat Number 98-28, Aleutian Island Recording District and located on Ballyhoo Road.

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 this is pretty much a straightforward preliminary plat. Currently there is one lot that is owned by the City. The purpose of the preliminary plat is to subdivide Tract B into four leasable tideland lots and one remainder lot for a future road right-of-way in Ballyhoo.

Chair Bobbitt asked the Commissioners if they have any questions for the staff. Mr. Sturdivant asked if the plat is simply clarifying some things that were not clear previously. Staff answered in the affirmative.

Applicant and Public Testimony: Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any more questions from the Commissioners. Hearing none, he noted that the City was the applicant and asked if anyone from the public would like to testify. Hearing none, Chair Bobbitt closed the public hearing and opened the Commission discussion by calling for a motion to approve 2013-09.

Main Motion: Ms. Vicki Williams moved to approve Resolution 2013-09 as stated. There was a second.

Commission Discussion: Mr. Sturdivant stated for the record that the State had granted this tideland to the City and that there were no jurisdiction issues with this tideland. He stated that he also looked at the lease contract and 30 years is a reasonable lease for business purposes. Mr. Sturdivant wanted it to be one record that these issues were brought up, researched and cleared.

Chair Bobbitt asked if there were any further discussions on the resolution. Hearing none, he called for a vote by consensus on Resolution 2013-09.

Vote: The vote was unanimous. The motion carried.

REGULAR MEETING:

No items.

WORK SESSION:

No items.

OTHER BUSINESS

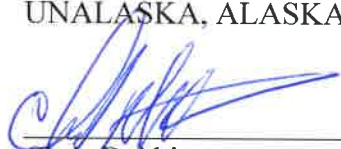
Staff said that there will be a meeting on July and asked if the Commissioners if they will be available on the 18th. It was likely that there will not be a quorum on the 18th; Chair Bobbitt asked if the meeting can be moved earlier on the 11th. Staff said that there is a submittal period for the applicant and moving it up might be challenging for the applicants. Steven Gregory said that 25th might be better. Staff suggested that she will send out an email with the possible dates for the next Planning Commission meeting.

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 7:26 P.M.

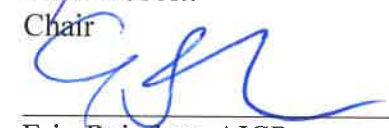
PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 25th DAY OF July 2013 BY THE CITY OF UNALASKA, ALASKA PLANNING COMMISSION.



Chris Bobbitt
Chair

7/25/13

Date



Erin Reinders, AICP
Recording Secretary

7/25/13

Date

Prepared by Veronica De Castro and Erin Reinders, Planning Department