

**PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 9, 2018 AT 6:30 PM  
CORDOVA CENTER COMMUNITY ROOMS A & B  
MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair *Tom McGann* called the Planning Commission Regular Meeting to order at 6:30 PM on January 9, 2018 in Cordova Center Community Rooms A & B.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Present for roll call were Chair *Tom McGann* and Commissioners, *Scott Pegau, John Baenen, Nancy Bird, Chris Bolin,* and *Lee Holter*. *Allen Roemhildt* was absent.

Also present was City Planner *Samantha Greenwood* and Assistant Planner *Leif Stavig*.

15 people were in the audience.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

M/Bird S/Pegau to approve the agenda.

Upon voice vote, motion passed 6-0.

Yea: *McGann, Pegau, Baenen, Bird, Bolin, Holter*

Absent: *Roemhildt*

**4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR**

**a. Minutes of December 12, 2017 Regular Meeting**

**b. Record excused absence for John Baenen from December 12, 2017 Regular Meeting**

M/Pegau S/Bird to approve the consent calendar.

Upon voice vote, motion passed 6-0.

Yea: *McGann, Pegau, Baenen, Bird, Bolin, Holter*

Absent: *Roemhildt*

**5. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

**7. COMMUNICATIONS BY AND PETITIONS FROM VISITORS**

**a. Guest Speakers**

**b. Audience comments regarding agenda items**

*Mary Anne Bishop*, 700 Fourth Street, recommended the commission not dispose of the Breakwater Fill Lot. Except for the South Fill snow dump and recycling area that is currently leased, that lot is the last publicly-owned waterfront lot. It is strategically located at the entrance of the harbor. There are other commercial properties available. Waterfront access is limited in Cordova; the city T dock isn't available. The public has high interest in how the lot should be used, as evidenced by the 500 Cordovans that voted against the proposed commercial development two years ago. The commission has agreed in the past that it is time for a Comprehensive Plan that includes a Waterfront Plan. Until a plan is in place, there should be no consideration of disposing of the lot.

**RJ Kopchak**, said that the Avalanche Zone was a very restrictive area. It was purchased by the city using FEMA funds. There is no way to develop the lots. He thinks they need to be removed as available and should only be considered for seasonal use. The Breakwater Fill Lot is a critical last piece of public land adjacent to the harbor. He is concerned about it being disposed. He doesn't think the property is appropriate for retail as downtown has room to grow. He said that he appreciates the volunteers on the commission.

**Kristin Carpenter**, 507 Fourth Street, does not have a strong recommendation one way or another on the Breakwater Fill Lot. She thinks there should be comprehensive waterfront planning. She would like the city to look at development incentives. The Net Loft is a huge economic asset to the community. It is open all year long and there are workshops that bring people to town. **Widmann's** vision is awesome and she hopes there is an opportunity for her to explain it to the community. The Breakwater Fill Lot is raw land and you don't have to tear a building down to put a new building up.

**Kate McLaughlin**, 818 Woodland Drive, is concerned about how the waterfront is developed. She would like to see the unzoned property go through a planning process. It is important to plan for the future and not just the immediate needs.

**Cecelia Wiese**, 400 Railroad Row, said she was in support of the development of the Breakwater Fill Lot. **Widmann** has a great business that gives a lot to the community. She would like to see more attention to Main Street. The land that is available on the way to Orca Lodge is undevelopable, and there are many other undevelopable areas that are available. The lot below her house is a cliff that she is working on purchasing so that someone else doesn't try to develop it.

**Dotty Widmann**, 245 Eyak Drive, owner of the Net Loft, said she was interested in hearing what people had to say about the lot. She wanted her idea to be considered as not just a retail building, but as a larger teaching and classroom space with public access. She wanted to be a part of any planning for the lot.

**Mark Frohnappfel**, 813 Woodland Drive, said he supported looking into the sale of the Breakwater Fill Lot and the one that **Rob Brown** submitted a letter of interest on in the North Fill. The Breakwater Fill Lot is controversial and before they make a decision, they should hear from those that were vocal the last time, including the Parks and Rec Commission, the Harbor Commission, and the Audubon Society. He supports businesses that want to bring more economy to Cordova. He doesn't feel that city employees should vote on land disposal and that it is a perceived conflict of interest.

**Sue Shellhorn**, 100 Forestry Way, said that the commission should not ignore **Widmann's** letter until hearings are held by different boards. **Widmann** has a business that has contributed a lot to the town. Shellhorn said that she lived through the avalanche and thought that the land at 5 Mile Loop should not be available. The commission needs to be realistic about what developable land they actually have available. **Widmann** has done a lot of research on available property in town, including Main Street. **Widmann's** vision and business does not fit within existing properties. Cordova needs more business and it is hard to develop, and she hopes they take action on **Widmann's** request.

## 8. PLANNER'S REPORT

**Greenwood** said the second read for the marijuana ordinance would be at the February City Council meeting. She said that the Copper River Watershed Project has a grant for fighting invasive weeds that they have taken a look at.

## 9. NEW/MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

### a. Resolution 18-01 – 2018 Land Disposal Maps

**A resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Cordova, Alaska, recommending the City Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska adopt the 2018 Land Disposal Maps**

M/Pegau S/Baenen to approve Resolution 18-01.

**McGann** said they should start with a discussion about changing the designation 'Not Available' to 'City Property.' **Greenwood** said that changing the designation is just a policy and is not in code. Staff has always struggled about whether or not to move forward with letters of interest on property that is 'Not Available.' If property is 'Not Available' there is a reason. **Bird** thought it was kind of confusing to change the name of the designation. **Greenwood** said they could just change the definition of 'Not Available.' There was concurrence from the commission to change the definition so that it was clear that people could submit letters of interest throughout the year for property that was 'Not Available.'

On the New England Cannery Road map, **Bird** verified that the parcel shown as 'Available' directly north of Shelter Cove was the parcel that the Science Center was currently in negotiations for. **McGann** verified that the parcel with the Burn Pile was 'Available.' **Greenwood** said that most of the lots that are 'Available' have many unique considerations that would be dealt with during disposal.

On the Ocean Dock Subdivision map, **McGann** wondered who owned the land that a portion of the state's dock was on. **Greenwood** said that the city may own that land. **Bolin** verified that Copper River Seafoods owned a large portion of tidelands.

On the North Fill Development Park map, **Pegau** said he was torn about the lot that **Brown** submitted a letter of interest for. He acknowledged that there was so little land for the city to use, but he wanted to see more marine businesses in the area. **Baenen** said he would like it to be 'Available' as the lot's current usage is in competition with private enterprise. **Bird** wondered what the Harbor Commission thought about it. **Holter** said that if there were concerns from the Harbor Commission, they should look into it. There was concurrence from the commission to change the designation from 'Not Available' to 'Available.'

On the Tidewater Development Park & Cordova Industrial Park map, **Baenen** said he wanted to make the Breakwater Fill Lot 'Not Available' since people voted against disposing of it, there was no waterfront planning, and the lot is unzoned. **Bird** said that her sense was that they needed a lot more planning in totality across the community, but Cordova needs business. She felt like it was unfair that it was out there as 'Available,' since it is like they are pulling the rug out from underneath people. She thought that it should be 'Not Available,' but that the city should work with the Net Loft to find another piece of property and to look at possible incentives. **Holter** agreed that it should be 'Not Available' until they do more waterfront planning. **McGann** said that even though it was shown as 'Available,' they make their decisions on a case-by-case basis. He thought it would be nice to see the conversation about waterfront planning happen soon, and that it would probably occur during a Comprehensive Planning effort which will require funding. There was concurrence from the commission to change the designation from 'Available' to 'Not Available.'

On the Old Town map, **Bolin** verified that someone had a Lease with Option to Purchase on a lot above the water tank.

On the Odiak Slough map, **Baenen** verified that the landowners adjacent to the lots on Chase Avenue were still in negotiations to purchase portions of those lots. **Bird** thought that the commission had decided to make the five small lots along Chase Avenue 'Not Available.' She said there were concerns about those lots being disposed of and development negatively impacting the uphill properties. **Holter** verified that the area in front of the lots was a right of way that the city uses. There was concurrence from the commission to change the designation of the five lots from 'Available' to 'Not Available.'

On the Whitshed Road map, **Greenwood** explained that the parcel up by the reservoir was designated 'Not Available,' because it was surveyed as a watershed protection area. The 'Available' area up by the reservoir is a perfect example of property that if someone wants to build a subdivision, for example, there are a lot of things that would have to be considered. **Greenwood** said that the reason they don't delineate out specific areas in the large parcels that are 'Available,' is that they are not surveyed and you end up creating delineations that don't legally exist. For example, the cemetery out Power Creek is shown as 'Available,' because it is part of a much larger parcel. **Pegau** verified that the reason the parcel next to Eagle Contracting

is 'Not Available' is because there had been conversations about the Police and Fire Department relocating there.

On the Odiak Park map, **McGann** verified that Fish and Game leased the lot designated as 'Leased.' **Greenwood** explained that the two lots designated 'Not Available' between Center Drive and the highway were used as a snow dump and there was an anadromous stream.

On the Power Creek Road map, **Bolin** verified that there were small lots located in front of the three lots near Skater's Cabin.

On the Eyak Lake map, **Pegau** said that the city property in Mt. Eccles Estates was originally a city park that had been removed after it was destroyed.

On the Five Mile Loop map, **Greenwood** explained that the avalanche lots were 'Available' in case someone was interested in the seasonal use of the lots. There are FEMA deed restrictions on the lots that are very restrictive. **Holter** said he understood the deed restrictions were conditions on the property. **Bird** suggested that they explain in the maps that even when lots are 'Available,' there may be conditions or special criteria on them. There was concurrence from the commission to clarify this within the designations.

Upon voice vote, resolution passed 6-0.

Yea: **McGann, Pegau, Baenen, Bird, Bolin, Holter**

Absent: **Roemhildt**

**b. Disposal of Lot 3, Block 5, North Fill Development Park**

M/**Baenen S/Bolin** to recommend to City Council to dispose of Lot 3, Block 5, North Fill Development Park as outlined in Cordova Municipal Code 5.22.060 B by negotiating an agreement with Robert Brown DBA Saddle Point Machine L.L.C. to lease or purchase the property.

**Brown** said that his business was already active and that he serves the fishermen. He thinks the advantages for the boat fleet of having his business there outweigh the loss of boat parking. He is currently limited by only having a garage. **Pegau** verified that the intent was having a marine shop that serves vessels. **Brown** said that he has been working with Aquaharmonics since they started and that he helped them build their prototype. He said there was additional work that would be better suited if he had more workspace. A larger area would also let him work on boat shafts, which are going to be looked at more closely by the Coast Guard in the future.

Upon voice vote, motion passed 6-0.

Yea: **McGann, Pegau, Baenen, Bird, Bolin, Holter**

Absent: **Roemhildt**

**c. Disposal of Breakwater Fill Lot**

M/**Pegau S/Bird** to recommend to City Council to not sell the lot at this time to get input from the Harbor Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the public for waterfront property planning.

Upon voice vote, motion passed 6-0.

Yea: **McGann, Pegau, Baenen, Bird, Bolin, Holter**

Absent: **Roemhildt**

**d. Chair Election**

**McGann** opened nominations for the office of chair of the Planning Commission. **Baenen** nominated **Pegau**. **Pegau** said he would be traveling a lot, so if he were chair, it would be important to have a strong vice chair. He thought it may be better for him to be vice chair. **Bird** nominated **McGann**.

Upon roll call vote, **McGann** was elected chair 4-2.

For **McGann**: **Pegau, Bird, Bolin, Holter**

For **Pegau**: **McGann, Baenen**

Absent: **Roemhildt**

**e. Vice Chair Election**

**Bird** nominated **Pegau** for vice chair.

M/**Holter** S/**Bird** to cease nominations.

Upon unanimous consent, nominations ceased.

Upon voice vote, **Pegau** was elected vice chair 6-0.

Yea: **McGann, Pegau, Baenen, Bird, Bolin, Holter**

Absent: **Roemhildt**

**10. PENDING CALENDAR**

**11. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

**Wiese** clarified with staff that the letter of interest from **Widmann** would be at the next City Council meeting with the Planning Commission's recommendation. She said she appreciated the commission's time. The Land Disposal Maps were confusing because some lots that are shown as 'Available' aren't and vice versa.

**Carpenter** said that having seen the spirit of collaboration that's coming out of the Science Center's relocation and the support for **Brown's** business, she hopes that the commission brings the same support and creative thinking and energy to help **Widmann**. The Net Loft is a huge asset to Cordova's economy. If they can help **Widmann** find a new home and let it grow, it can benefit everyone.

**Widmann** said that the quality of life in Cordova is important and she thinks the building and project would be more than a retail space and would be a public space that could serve the community. She'd like to give the public the opportunity to listen to her ideas for the Breakwater Fill Lot. The aesthetics of the lot are very unique and that would be taken into consideration.

**12. COMMISSION COMMENTS**

**Bird** expressed appreciation to the public and **Widmann** for staying throughout the meeting and providing their input. She wishes there was a way to make the Land Disposal Maps simpler. They try to do things in a planned way, but they want to leave things flexible enough to allow a business like **Brown's** to come in that would be a great opportunity.

**Holter** thanked the public for their input. He thanked **Stavig** for projecting the map. He wanted to encourage **Widmann** to look at the land at the end of Nicholoff.

**Pegau** thanked everyone for staying as it is nice to have other people in the room. The land disposal decisions are always the hard ones. It will be important to pull together a public process for the Breakwater Fill Lot so they can move forward with it. He thinks it is important for them to consider the Central Business District. They have lost a lot of businesses on First and Second Street.

**Baenen** agreed with **Widmann** that the Breakwater Fill Lot is very beautiful and is important to everyone. In his mind he thinks there needs to be a lot of public support and support with the Harbor Commission and Parks and Recreation.

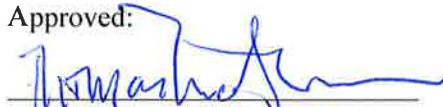
**Bolin** thanked the public for coming. The Breakwater Fill Lot has been hanging out there for a while and he would like everyone to come to agreement on what is the best fit for the lot.

*McGann* said they are all in agreement that they need public input and long-range planning. Maybe they should strategize what they can do in a short-term basis so that they can move forward with waterfront planning. He thought that they could discuss it at the next meeting.

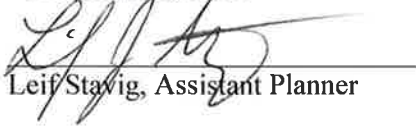
### 13. ADJOURNMENT

M/Pegau S/Baenen to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:18 PM.  
With no objection, the meeting was adjourned.

Approved:



Tom McGann, Chair



Leif Stavig, Assistant Planner