

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on June 22, 2004, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Timothy L. Anderson for the purpose of holding a joint Assembly/Planning Commission meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

- Mr. Bill Allen, Assembly District No. 2
- Mr. Talis J. Colberg, Assembly District No. 3
- Ms. Mary Kvalheim, Assembly District No. 4
- Ms. Jody Simpson, Assembly District No. 5
- Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6 (Deputy Mayor) (*arrived at 6:49 p.m.*)
- Ms. Betty Vehrs, Assembly District No. 7

Assembly members absent and excused were:

- Mr. J. Bruce Bush, Assembly District No. 1

Planning Commission members present and establishing a quorum were:

- Mr. Chris Rose, District No. 1 (Vice-chair)
- Ms. Helga Larson, District No. 2 (Chair)
- Mr. Mark Masteller, District No. 3
- Ms. Faye I. Palin, District No. 4
- Mr. David Webster, District No. 5
- Ms. Rose M. Jenne, District No. 7

Planning Commission members absent were:

- Mr. Gary Wolf, District No. 6

Staff in attendance were:

- Ms. Michelle M. McGehee, CMC, Borough Clerk
- Ms. Teresa S. Williams, Borough Attorney
- Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Borough Clerk's Secretary
- Mr. Ron Swanson, Community Development Director
- Ms. Susan Dickinson, Planning and Land Use Director
- Mr. Mark Jaqua, Planner II

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Anderson inquired if there were any objections to addressing item B before item A under joint items of business.

There were no objections noted.

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda as amended was approved without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Helga Larson.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was no one present who wished to speak.

VI. ASSEMBLY ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Resolution Serial No. 04-105: A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING GOVERNOR MURKOWSKI'S PERCENT OF MARKET VALUE (POMV) AND COMMUNITY DIVIDEND PROPOSAL. (*Sponsors: Mayor Anderson and Assemblymember Allen*)

(1) IM No. 04-194

MOTION: Assemblymember Allen moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 04-105.

Assemblymember Allen

- requested that Mayor Anderson speak on the topic due to the fact he had been more involved in the Conference of Mayors as president and has worked closely with the President of the Alaska Municipal League;
- stated the Governor's proposal would provide financial stability for Alaskans; and
- added that the Governor's proposal is a good start in developing a fiscal plan for the state of Alaska.

Mayor Anderson:

- spoke regarding the Conference of Mayors ;
- addressed the Governors support of items that are important to the borough; including education funding and the community dividend;
- requested that the resolution be adopted so the borough can relay its position on the proposal to the Legislature;
- addressed the Governor's proposal of guaranteeing the dividend for individuals; and
- opined that the proposal is a reasonable answer to the fiscal problem that the state has encountered.

MOTION: Assemblymember Kvalheim requested that in the second “whereas” clause to strike the words “reduced” and “affecting” and replaced with “affected” and “to” respectively to read as follows: Whereas, the state’s budget has already been significantly affected with reductions to local governments, senior citizens, and education.

VOTE: The primary amendment passed unanimously.

VOTE: The motion as amended passed without objection.

VII. JOINT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Commuter Rail Between Mat-Su and Anchorage (*Requested by: Commissioner Rose*)

Commissioner Rose:

- stated that the commuter rail has been on agenda of the Citizens Advocacy Committee for a couple of years;
- spoke to the need to move the commuter rail project to another level;
- mentioned that the Citizens Advocacy Committee is working to get funds to hire staff to have a presence on the commuter rail issue;
- noted that Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich is interested in seeing the commuter rail progress and that he would like to work toward getting it on the agenda for the next Regional Transportation Planning Organizations meeting;
- spoke to rail stations being built at the fairgrounds and airport;
- addressed the Wilbur Smith Study completed in 2001;
- spoke to the cost of building commuter rails compared to highways/interchanges;
- mentioned that the Alaska Railroad suggested that the Borough put aside some corridors for future commuter rails; and
- noted that the railroad wants to educate the public on this issue.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- funding issues;
- public interest on the project;
- the railroad’s opinion on the issue; and
- commuters from the Valley to Anchorage.

Commission Rose exited the meeting at 6:35 pm

B. Presentation from Great Land Trust on Farmland Protection (*Requested by: Assemblymember Kvalheim*)

Ron Swanson introduced Katie Knight, Conservation Director at Great Land Trust.

Ms. Knight:

- advised that Great Land Trust works with private land owners who want to do conservation on their land;
- noted that they have interest from Borough residents on agricultural easements and farmland protection;
- advised that they are just starting to visit the farmland issue;
- spoke to matching funds for federal grants;
- spoke to the history of Great Land Trust;
- advised that the land owner retains title to the land; however, Great Land Trust holds the conservation easement forever; and
- noted that they monitor the properties to make sure the conservation values are protected.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- real estate tax implications;
- grants available for purchasing development rights;
- how operating funds are acquired;
- conservation easements in Borough code; and
- watershed protection issues.

C. Reserving Borough-owned Land for Schools and Other Public Facilities; 20-year Plan
(Requested by: Commissioner Larson)

Commissioner Larson:

- addressed the school site selection process and the problem with finding Borough-owned land to build schools on;
- suggested that there should be a long-term plan to reserve Borough-owned lands; and
- inquired about a twenty-year plan for schools and public facilities.

Mr. Duffy:

- responded that there is a Public Facilities Plan;
- advised that the plan was adopted in 1985 and needs to be updated;
- noted that the Community Development department is working on this issue in the asset management plan; and
- spoke to the size standards for parcels set aside for schools.

Assemblymember Simpson:

- spoke to the twenty-year plan that the school district presented to the Assembly at the last joint meeting; and
- requested that the Planning Commission receive a copy.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- updating the twenty-year plan;
- conveyance of state lands; and
- land classifications.

D. Site Condos (*Requested by: Assemblymember Colver*)

Assemblymember Colver:

- spoke to broadening the definition of site condos to include multiplexes;
- noted would like to mitigate impacts to water aquifers; and
- spoke to problems with the sewer system at Lake Lucille.

VIII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, PLANNING COMMISSION, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Williams advised that the borough was served with a lawsuit regarding the denial of the initiative petition for a tax cap.

Mayor Anderson asked Ms. Dickinson to give an update on the status of items the Planning Commission is working on.

Susan Dickinson:

- informed that they have been busy with conditional use permits; and
- addressed the comprehensive plans and special use districts they are currently working on.

Ms. McGehee spoke to the agenda items for the Assembly meeting on June 29, 2004.

Mayor Anderson:

- spoke to attending the dedication of the new landfill cell; and
- addressed the briefing they received on how the cell works.

Assemblymember Vehrs:

- spoke to attending the dedication of the expansion of the Princess Lodge in Talkeetna;
- addressed how the tourists can reach the lodge; and
- noted that the lodge has 225 workers during the summer.

Discussion ensued on the Princess Lodge Expansion.

Assemblymember Colver:

- addressed the need for incentives to get people to recycle; and
- noted that the landfill wouldn't fill up so fast.

Commission Webster:

- advised that he is interested in the land trust; and
- noted how the land trust helped in Vermont when farmland was disappearing.

Commission Jenne:

- spoke to the effect of tourism in Talkeetna;
- commented on the need for more accommodations in Talkeetna; and
- spoke to the need to have more businesses opened in the Talkeetna area during the winter season.

Commissioner Palin:

- addressed the commuter rail issue;
- supports a long-range plan for conserving land for schools sites; and
- spoke to the balance and diversity on the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Larson commented that the commuter rail provides a service for everyone.

Assemblymember Kvalheim thanked the Planning Commission members for attending the meeting.

Assemblymember Vehrs agreed that the twenty-year plan is a good idea.

Assemblymember Allen:

- spoke to the construction industry in the Borough;
- addressed the Senate Appropriations Committee visiting the valley on July 28, 2004; and
- inquired if the assembly would like to hold a reception for the members of the Committee.

Assemblymember Colver:

- opined that it would be a good opportunity to let the Senate Appropriations Committee know what is going on in the Borough;
- spoke to the traffic impact of the box stores on the highways;
- addressed putting the commuter rail on the federal priority list; and
- commented on the transfer fee and the need to hold to the commitment to support education.

Mayor Anderson:

- asked Mr. Duffy to look into holding a presentation regarding Borough projects for the Senate Appropriations Committee;
- welcomed Commissioner Masteller to the Planning Commission;
- commented that there is a lot of working coming to the Planning Commission; and
- asked the Planning Commission to stay on task with their pending projects and to keep the plans moving forward for implementation.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

/s/

TIMOTHY L. ANDERSON, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/

MICHELLE M. MCGEHEE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: July 20, 2004