

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on June 28, 2005, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 4:15 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:

Ms. Lynne Woods, Assembly District No. 1
Mr. Talis J. Colberg, Assembly District No. 3 (*arrived at 4:55 p.m.*)
Ms. Jody Simpson, Assembly District No. 5
Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6 (*Deputy Mayor*)
Ms. Betty Vehrs, Assembly District No. 7

Assembly members absent and excused were:

Mr. Bill Allen, Assembly District No. 2
Ms. Mary Kvalheim, Assembly District No. 4

Planning Commission members present and establishing a quorum were:

Ms. Bridgette Lively, District No. 1
Mr. Mark Masteller, District No. 3 (*Chair*)
Ms. Faye I. Palin, District No. 4
Mr. David Webster, District No. 5
Vacant, District No. 6
Ms. Rose M. Jenne, District No. 7

Planning Commission members absent and excused were:

Ms. Helga Larson, District No. 2

Staff in attendance were:

Ms. Michelle M. McGehee, CMC, Borough Clerk
Mr. John Duffy, Borough Manager
Ms. Teresa Williams, Borough Attorney
Ms. Janice A. Case, Deputy Borough Clerk
Ms. Marian Romano, Assistant Borough Manager
Mr. Murph O'Brien, Planning and Land Use Director
Mr. Ron Swanson, Community Development Director
Mr. Sev Jones, Chief of Planning
Ms. Susan Lee, Planner II

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Anderson inquired if there were any changes to the agenda.

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

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ms. Helen Munoz, a member Senior Citizen's Advisory Board.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person spoke in objection to any proposal to deposit treated sewage effluent in Reedy Lake, or any other location within the boundary of the Palmer Hayflats State Game Refuge: Ms. Marianne Elliot, Knik-Fairview Community Council, and Ms. Kris Abshire, Knik-Fairview Community Council.

The following persons spoke to the need for a better septic treatment facility in the Borough: Ms. Helen Munoz, Mr. Kevin Munoz, and Mr. Tom Munoz.

VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Septic Disposal Facility/Treatment *(Requested by: Commissioner Webster)*

Commissioner Webster:

- stated that the Planning Commission is currently working on multi-family regulations for the Borough; and
- discussed the increased growth in the Borough and the need for a septic disposal facility in the Borough.

Mr. O'Brien stated that the Planning Department invited Archie Giddings, the city of Wasilla Public Works Director, and Helen Munoz as a resource for questions on this issue and what it would take to pursue this type of venture.

Mr. O'Brien noted that the Assembly has appropriated funds to take a look at the need for a septic treatment facility.

Assemblymember Woods inquired regarding the status of the Houston facility.

Assemblymember Vehrs noted that the Houston facility was deeded to the city of Houston and is currently being used as their Animal Control facility.

Commissioner Masteller:

- advised that he had a meeting with the cities of Palmer and Wasilla engineering staff, Borough engineering staff, and the Munozs' to present a technology that converts septic waste to drinking water;
- discussed the septic treatment facility being planned for the city of Haines;
- noted that Cook Inlet is a non-flushing inlet; and
- spoke in support of encouraging this type of facility within the Borough, preferably within the private sector.

Assemblymember Simpson:

- asked Mr. Giddings to provide an update on the city's plan; and
- inquired if Mr. O'Brien is aware of any plans to locate this type of facility within the Borough at this time.

Mr. O'Brien:

- replied that he is not aware of any plans; and
- noted that the Borough has recognized the need to address wastewater and septic and groundwater issues; and
- stated that these issues are part of the plan that the Public Works Department will be issuing.

Assemblymember Simpson inquired regarding the timeline for that plan.

Mr. O'Brien stated that a draft request for proposals (RFP) is currently being circulated.

Assemblymember Vehrs:

- stated that she would like to be kept informed of the progress being made on this project; and
- noted that she would also like to work with Commissioner Masteller and attend the meeting he discussed.

Mr. Giddings, Wasilla City Public Works Director:

- stated that the city of Wasilla has researched the possibility for treatment of sewage effluent in Reedy Lake;
- noted that the plan is not feasible;
- noted that they are currently working on a new plan that will remain within the boundaries of the city limits;
- noted that the water wells and creeks near the current septic facility do meet drinking water standards; and
- discussed possible future need for another facility.

(Assemblymember Colberg arrived at this time.)

B. Coastal Management Plan Amendment Presentation *(Requested by Planning Department)*

Mr. O'Brien:

- reviewed the program benefits of the Coastal Management Plan;
- stated that in July and August the Planning Department will be doing public outreach to inform the residents of the plan;
- stated that the Planning Commission will address the plan in October and that it should be introduced to the Assembly in October or November;
- stated that the draft document approved by the Assembly will then be forwarded to the State; and
- referred to the standard timeline provided by the State.

Assemblymember Simpson inquired if the citizen advisory council is still meeting.

Mr. O'Brien stated that the council still exists and will be used to a certain extent.

Commissioner Lively asked if there are local concerns that would need to be addressed.

Mr. O'Brien:

- replied that the a local concern cannot be something that is redundant to State or Federal law; and
- noted that they are concerns that are either in code or one of the enforceable standards being proposed.

Discussion ensued regarding the Coastal Management Plan.

C. Presentation by Michelle Schuman, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) on Agricultural Land Preservation *(Requested by Assemblymember Woods)*

Mr. Rob Wells, Palmer District Conservationist, discussed the importance of preserving agricultural land in the Borough.

Ms. Michelle Schuman, United States Department of Agriculture/NRCS – Palmer District Conservationist, provided a presentation on agricultural land preservation.

Commissioner Lively:

- thanked Ms. Shoeman for bringing this issue to their attention; and
- stated that preserving agricultural lands is very important for the future of the state of Alaska.

Commissioner Masteller:

- thanked Ms. Schuman for her presentation;
- noted that this is one of the first years that the United States will be a net food importer;
- noted that 98 percent of foods are imported into the state of Alaska; and
- spoke in support of the community providing their own open space.

Assemblymember Colver inquired if anyone within the Borough had used the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP).

Ms. Schuman stated that they did have an applicant last year, who unfortunately was unable to provide the match needed for the program.

Discussion ensued regarding the FRPP plan.

Mr. Wells:

- requested that the Assembly set funds aside to provide matches in order to preserve these lands;
- discussed the importance of preserving these lands before they are lost; and
- suggested utilizing the Land Management Fund or putting a bond proposal on the October ballot to create the matching funds.

D. Mandatory Development Permits Update *(Requested by Assemblymember Woods)*

Mr. Sev Jones:

- provided an update on the mandatory development permits, now known as land use certificates;
- noted that currently only about 15 to 20 percent of developers are using the voluntary process, which compromises other planning efforts;
- stated that with high levels of non-compliant developments, the Borough is wasting a lot of time and money on rectifying the problems;
- stated that the Planning Department is proposing a policy transition to amend the voluntary process to require mandatory compliance;
- explained the land use certificate process; and
- noted that the proposed introduction of this legislation will be in October with a public hearing scheduled in November.

Assemblymember Vehrs stated that one of the reasons they have had trouble assessing in the Borough is the lack of knowledge of development in the Borough.

Mayor Anderson inquired why they are proposing a land use certificate and not a building permit.

Mr. Jones replied that the Borough currently does not have the resources for the kind of analysis that would be necessary for a building permit.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed land use certificates.

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

Commissioner Palin stated that a septic disposal facility should be a number one priority.

Commissioner Lively:

- stated that septic treatment is one of the most important topics for quality of life;
- stated that farm land preservation is also important for quality of life; and
- encouraged the Assembly to pursue these topics.

Commissioner Webster agreed that a septic treatment facility is a number one priority and that water quality is important.

Commissioner Masteller spoke to septic treatment facilities with technologies that can yield drinking water quality.

Assemblymember Simpson stated that a septic treatment facility is needed, but the hard part will be determining where it will be located.

Assemblymember Vehrs:

- stated that a septic treatment facility is a component in responsible development; and
- stated that she hopes that NRCS will be working with the Borough on preservation of the agricultural land in this area.

Assemblymember Woods stated that she hopes that the Borough can work towards creating the match for the agricultural land preservation.

Assemblymember Colver voiced concern regarding high-density development and the impacts to our groundwater and on-site septic systems.

Mayor Anderson:

- thanked the members of the Planning Commission for attending the meeting and for all of their hard work;
- welcomed Commissioner Lively to the Planning Commission; and
- noted that one of the items that need to be completed on the priority list is the core area comprehensive plan update.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

/S/

TIMOTHY L. ANDERSON, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

MICHELLE M. M **/S/** EE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 07/19/05