

MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU
Michael Satre, Chair

REGULAR MEETING
July 10, 2012

I. ROLL CALL

Acting Chair, Dennis Watson, called the regular meeting of the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Planning Commission (PC), held in the Assembly Chambers of the Municipal Building, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners present: Jerry Medina, Karen Lawfer, Dan Miller, Dennis Watson, Nicole Grewe, Marsha Bennett, Nathan Bishop

Commissioners absent: Michael Satre, Benjamin Haight,

A quorum was present.

Staff present: Greg Chaney, CBJ Community Development Department (CDD) Acting Director; Nicole Jones, CDD Planner; Benjamin Lyman, CDD Planner

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- June 12, 2012—Regular Planning Commission meeting.
- June 19, 2012—Committee of the Whole Planning Commission meeting.

MOTION: By Mr. Miller to approve the June 12 and 19, 2012 PC minutes, with corrections.

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There being no objection, it was so ordered.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

IV. PLANNING COMMISSION LIAISON REPORT

Assemblyman, Carlton Smith, asked the Planning Commission if there was any type of update from the Department of Law concerning the rezoning ordinance (Ord. 2012-31). Mr. Bishop said that he and John Hartle have not yet connected and had no new information. More information is pending, which Mr. Smith will follow up on.

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Mr. Smith also noted that with regard to the CBJ Comprehensive Plan's involvement with JEDC, he suggests that when the CBJ Assembly receives the change recommendations, that the Planning Commission focus on the benefits of the changes when brought forward to the Assembly. He noted that they must quantify why changes to the Comprehensive Plan are recommended. Economic opportunities should be specifically suggested for the community, as Juneau is at a critical junction and we must move forward with new efficiency.

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V. RECONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

Acting chairman, Watson, adjourned the Planning Commission and reconvened as the Board of Adjustment. He announced that there was one Variance on the Consent Agenda and inquired if there was public comment on the item. No one from the public had comments, and no one from the Board had questions.

***MOTION:** by Mr. Miller that the Board of Adjustment approves the Consent agenda, as presented.*

There being no objection, it was so ordered and VAR2012.0012 was approved as presented.

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VAR2012 0012 A Variance request to reduce the front yard setback from 20 feet to 16.43 feet for an existing garage.

Applicant: Joseph P. Carlson

Location: 3140 Douglas Highway

Staff recommendation: that the Board of Adjustment adopt the Director's analysis and findings and approve the requested Variance, VAR2012.0012. The Variance permit would allow for the newly constructed garage to remain as it was constructed 16.43 feet and with eaves no closer than 14.43 feet from the front property line.

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Chairman Watson adjourned the Board of Adjustment and reconvened as the Planning Commission.

VII. CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

AME2012 0006 A Text Amendment of Title 49 and of the Comprehensive Plan for the 2012 Update.
• Chapter 5: Economic Development

Senior Planner, Ben Lyman, presented amendments to Chapter 5 of the CBJ Comprehensive Plan with more information regarding economic development in Juneau. Chair Watson asked the Planning Commission to avoid word-smithing in order to make the meeting more efficient. Minor wording changes could be made by phone call or electronic mail to Mr. Lyman separate from this meeting.

Regarding changes for pages 40-42, Ms. Lawfer noted that Juneau's economic development notoriety should also include the federal government and UAS entities. UAS is an important entity, however there is also a collective educational aspect to the economic development in all of Juneau. The support of the federal government economies should be mentioned after the State Capital section. Mr. Lyman said he had no problem with continuing to refer to them throughout the Plan. Regarding education in Juneau, he will figure out how to relate it to the education from UAS, avoiding repetitive language in the Plan.

Mr. Lyman made a special request regarding references to the Comprehensive Plan; he would appreciate it if Commissioners could refer to section numbers rather than page numbers, as his continual edits make it such that page numbers do not match up.

Regarding page 43-44, Commissioner Bennett noted the first paragraph and suggested rewording it to make it more robust. She complimented Mr. Lyman on the Comprehensive Plan quality.

Regarding page 42, Ms. Grewe noted that there should be a statement about current conditions in economic growth in Juneau. Juneau's history should be noted as having been an important juncture. The population of the state as a whole has shifted toward a concentration in south central Alaska, which greatly impacts the southeastern area. We also see an increase in diversification locally, and she believes that there could be a few sentences about a shift in the economic eras. Ms. Grewe would forward some language to Mr. Lyman to clarify. Mr. Lyman does not recall "juncture" jargon anywhere else in the Comprehensive Plan. In general, Comprehensive Plans should not be so detailed regarding Juneau's background history, as it should be more like an appendix type item. The Comprehensive Plan should be a fairly concise list of what the vision is and what the policies are. Overall this plan is turning out to be larger than its legal weight ought to be.

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Ms. Grewe acknowledged Mr. Lyman's last comment and suggested noting, on the side, her issues described above and keep it for later on. Chairman Watson said that on the final review Ms. Grewe's statement could be made strongly toward the end as an overall context of the plan.

Regarding page 45, Mr. Miller noted that the last COW meeting, he mentioned that the United States Coast Guard (USCG) should have their own place in the comprehensive plan. They are a special part of the federal government and their presence in Juneau is felt throughout southeast and all of Alaska. Mr. Lyman noted that page 57 includes information on the USCG, and it stated their role as a government agency. Mr. Miller noted that he wanted them to be pointed out as an overall strong economic factor in Juneau.

Mr. Bishop said that the Comprehensive Plan is a document that is currently overloaded with material. As such, he would move more in the direction of implementing more right now. He encouraged rational planning that links CIP planning with the comprehensive plan and economic development. Mr. Lyman noted 5.13 and read the policy. Mr. Bishop suggested incorporating an additional implementing action to incorporate decision making in the CIP based upon implementing actions for economic development.

Ms. Grewe noted a disjuncture between the CIP and the Comprehensive Plan. There is no solid Juneau economic development plan. Mr. Watson noted that JEDC has no economic development plan and he recommended that the Planning Commission bring that to the attention of the Assembly. Mr. Bishop encouraged everyone to look online at The Lincoln Institute for guidance in the economic development matter.

Regarding pages 46-48, Ms. Bennett noted 7.3 IA2 and suggested cutting it out or adding “and other topics of relevance to the area and its residents” to keep it from sounding too specific. Mr. Watson noted a technology workshop in the 1990’s in Juneau that was a success.

Ms. Lawfer noted that a major movement of people to Seattle could have a large impact on the economy of Juneau. She suggested changing the word “symposium” to “medical topics and services.” Grewe believes that Juneau regionally serves as the medical hub before Seattle or Anchorage. Mr. Lyman noted that the healthcare needs will be a huge part of America’s economics. Symposia catered to Alaska’s needs should be considered.

Regarding page 48-50, Mr. Watson asked if historic structures mentioned in this section are only with the nationally registered or locally-esteemed historical districts. Mr. Lyman explained the difference between the locally adopted historic district and the federally adopted historic district. The federal government might not allow certain areas to maintain its historic designation due to certain changes made.

Mr. Watson noted the Gross Building that was remodeled and there was concern for available retail and housing space in downtown. Mr. Lyman noted that the building is still within the historic district. The changes were minimal and included the fee in lieu of parking.

Regarding pages 51-52, Ms. Lawfer said that the section appeared to be too wordy and could be pared down. Mr. Lyman noted updated language in the Cruise Ship Passenger section and the removal of the old information, which came from JEDC’s data.

Regarding page 52, Convention and Business Travelers, Mr. Watson suggested sentence rearrangements in order to make the beginning section more robust.

Regarding pages 53-54, Ms. Bennett noted that page 53 should be cut back some. Mr. Lyman stated that the ski/snow industry is a multibillion-dollar industry worldwide, and is growing in Juneau. It is an industry that should be mentioned in detail. Ms. Bennett noted the difference between the lack of data mentioned in the seafood/commercial fishing industry in the comprehensive plan and the length of ski/snow sport detail in the comprehensive plan. Mr. Lyman said that the ski/snow industry section does not contain data, as that type of detailed information should go in the appendix. If a document requires updating every six months, it would not comply with the mission of the comprehensive plan.

Mr. Watson suggested word changes toward Eaglecrest Ski Resort’s efforts. Ms. Grewe suggested word changes that go beyond only Eaglecrest’s operation in Juneau. Mr. Lyman agreed and noted that sometimes the local weather is a necessary factor to recognize in year-round tourism.

Regarding pages 55-56, Ms. Lawfer noted the port facilities section should tie in with the docks and harbors plans. Mr. Lyman said that the Docks & Harbors Department did not provide any input on this comprehensive plan update.

Mr. Watson asked about including Docks & Harbors Department in 5.5.IA3. Mr. Lyman said that they are part of the CBJ and the document would be just as binding for the Docks & Harbors Department later.

Mr. Lyman noted “bsl20” comment and the changes made in the language. Ms. Bennett stated that she is fine with the changes Mr. Lyman made to the wording regarding the unique blend of the port, access to wild lands, and proximity to the small urban setting.

Regarding pages 57-58, Ms. Bennett would like to give the fishing industry more weight to Juneau’s economy. The fishing industry feels underappreciated and she would like to add more emphasis to the importance of the fishing economy. Vessel value and population would not change much year to year, and some measure of the significance to Juneau’s economy is overdue. Mr. Lyman clarified that the information mentioned on Page 62 was not adequate for Ms. Bennett. Ms. Bennett said she was referencing the port development issue. She will mention more later on.

Mr. Medina said that in southeast Alaska, Hoonah has a 220-ton vessel lift with over four acres uplands. Since the comprehensive plan encourages supporting other southeast communities, he regrets to infringe on a community that already has a project in place. Mr. Bishop noted the convenience involved with the work needed for vessel lifts in Juneau. Mr. Miller said Hoonah’s fishing industry, with its vessel lift, has an opportunity to provide competition with Juneau, economically. He believes that Juneau ought to move forward with the vessel lift plan if possible.

Regarding pages 59-60, Ms. Lawfer stated that she does not know that those four items listed should be placed and addressed there. Perhaps they would be better off placed in a different location within the plan.

Mr. Medina wondered why accounting firms were specifically mentioned in the area that mentions commercial or industrial leakage. Mr. Lyman said that the JEDC came up with some general types of business, and he was willing to change the language if necessary.

Mr. Miller noted that 5.7 asked if something could be mentioned regarding CBJ Docks & Harbors continuing to work closely with the commercial fishing industry to meet their needs. He noted the current seafood businesses who have worked closely with the city and he would like to see that continue on. Mr. Lyman acknowledged Mr. Miller’s request.

Mr. Bishop would like to see the first three paragraphs in Commercial and Industrial Development consolidated into a policy. Leakage should not be described in too much detail, as it is a small portion of a problem with the development. A short policy should be made with Implementing Actions and SOP’s.

Ms. Grewe noted that 5.9 does not include recruitment. Perhaps some private sector research on alternative products could be marketed down south, and she suggested some more forward recommendations on additional language to include recruitment. Mr. Watson agreed with Ms. Grewe and said Juneau should have its own economic development plan for the community. Ms. Grewe would provide Mr. Lyman with language for the recruitment item.

Ms. Lawfer noted IA 5.9, which has the goal to expand or develop businesses in Juneau, a goal that is similar to what Ms. Grewe is speaking of. Ms. Grewe agreed and mentioned adding language such as, “develop, expand, or relocate to Juneau” in order to meet her request.

Ms. Grewe recommended an implementing action #5 regarding encouraging business endeavors in Juneau, to help retain what is here already. Mr. Lyman said the four bullets on page 59 had a lot to do with the certain land constraints in Juneau and the commercial leakage into an industrial area. The industrial uses have property that is too expensive to operate. This section was widely supported by the community during the last update and there are still the same issues that suggest that the language should not be changed in any way.

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Regarding pages 61-62, Ms. Bennett emphasized the dollar value or the number of people employed within the seafood industry boat activity. She would provide language later.

Mr. Lyman stated that the suggested language for 5.10 DG1 on page 62, he believes that the enforcement statement by the director and attorney seems redundant. Permits do not go to the Law Department unless there is a problem. Consulting and coordinating the permits are different than enforcement and should remain there.

Mr. Bishop asked about 5.9.DG2 and stated that we should promote local over non-local promotion regardless of medical benefit. He recommended removing the medical benefits section. Mr. Miller noted that the non-local issue goes contrary to the recruiting item previously discussed. Ms. Grewe agreed that the medical benefits issue may be overstepping the boundaries especially with the federal healthcare changes.

Mr. Chaney said that if there is a choice between the local and the non-local item, it could just be easy enough to accept the local choice when two industries are equivalent.

Ms. Grewe asked where the medical benefits issue originated. She sees how it would be a value in a community with competing commercial/industrial development; however, that is not the case in Juneau. Mr. Watson said it was from the vote during the previous Planning Commission update.

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Regarding page 63-64, Ms. Lawfer, asked if something could be mentioned about providing affordable costs along with reducing housing, medical, and transportation costs in Juneau. Mr. Watson said that this was not germane to one part of the housing in the community. Mr. Lyman said that the JEDC’s weekly indicator was included; money spent to pay their medical bills does

not work toward economic development in Juneau. It was an attempt to tie different parts of the plan. Ms. Lawfer suggested compiling each item to “reduce cost of living,” rather than looking at affordability.

Ms. Bennett suggested 6th IA on pg 63 to read, “support education programs and safety programs which are targeted to fish industry participants.” She also suggested language for a 7th IA to read, “maintain and enhance local rivers and streams to support vitality of the fish populations.” Mr. Lyman will insert it into an implementing action. Mr. Miller said that JEDC came out with another comparison with cost of local government per capita for Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau, with Juneau being the most costly.

Regarding pages 65-66, Ms. Lawfer spoke about 5.13. will present draft wording for a new standard operating procedure. Because we are identifying health care costs, which are a municipal investment, she would like to have a SOP for health care costs, as the hospital is a huge municipal investment.

Ms. Grewe commented that section 5.13 has strong language and she would like to include language that involves the CBJ to consider investing in an economic development plan. Mr. Watson said he would like the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to the CBJ Assembly that we need an Economic Development Plan. Ms. Grewe believed that there is more to investment than the four items listed in 5.13 SOP. Mr. Medina and Ms. Bennet agreed with Ms. Grewe’s statement.

Mr. Bishop believes that all of the plans work together and to have an economic development plan should be a priority for the city. Making it an implementing action could be a good start to the process. Mr. Lyman suggested it being a SOP to maintain future updates in the plan.

Mr. Watson asked Lyman to clarify the last paragraph on page 65. Mr. Lyman said that JEDC sees Capital Transit as an important component toward the economic development in Juneau. Capital Transit has a major economic impact on Juneau. It does not consist of only ride-dependent residents. Reducing conveniences of Capital Transit impacts all of Juneau.

Regarding pages 67-69, Ms. Lawfer assumes that all the information here comes from the recommendations of the JEDC. Mr. Lyman confirmed that it did.

Mr. Chaney commented that there is nothing in the comprehensive plan that includes the film industry in Juneau. Mr. Miller said that maybe there could be a list of unmentioned trades or opportunities for Juneau. Diving in the winter is another unmentioned trade, but maybe there should be something included that there are a lot of trades. Ms. Bennett noted the wood pellet industry in Juneau and said that perhaps some potential industries could be mentioned in the comprehensive plan. Mr. Chaney [commented that CDD staff](#) could provide some eloquent language to consider later on.

Ms. Grewe noted pages 67-68, regarding entrepreneurship and innovation, she is not sure if the SOPs would entail, as it is a very forward-thinking section compared to the others. JEDC is

already undertaking these issues. Mr. Watson called on Assemblyman, Smith, to provide some input regarding recruitment.

Mr. Smith noted the potential to adding the creation of an entity that would recruit companies to come to Juneau. There are projects to bring in a new car dealership to Juneau. He had the opportunity to call on businesses that work in smaller cities and they are into corporate relocation. Companies are looking for new locations to move their employees to and we should market ourselves and communicate that this is where they should come to. "Corporate relocation" could be done through a simple Implementing Action.

Ms. Grewe suggested language which includes a new economic development as a SOP. In addition to the chapter on economic development, the Planning commission should forward a letter to the Assembly in support of an economic development plan. She said that there are many progressive communities that are similar to Juneau with environmental amenities, socioeconomic demographics, quality of life, and they are marketing their communities to corporations who are looking to relocate with a high quality workforce such as Juneau.

Mr. Miller suggested an IA to create a marketing team to bring well educated workforce to Juneau under the SOP recommending the creation of an economic plan. Ms. Grewe thinks that there are a lot of other economic development ideas that should be considered as well.

Mr. Lyman noted that the COW meetings coming up and the chapter schedules. Ordinance 2012-21 regarding language in Title 49 will be considered on the September 3rd Assembly meeting. The housing or land use maps will not be considered until later, so the need for a COW meeting next week is up to the PC. It was decided by the PC that they will continue with the COW meeting on July 17th at 5:30PM.

Mr. Watson said that the Planning Commission should recommend in a letter to the Assembly that the city undertakes an Economic Development Plan that is provided by a body outside of the Planning Commission, preferably the JEDC.

Mr. Bishop suggested including JEDC in this letter specifically, perhaps in a joint letter between the Planning Commission and the JEDC. Mr. Watson felt that it should specifically come from the PC only. Mr. Miller is not sure that a simple letter will have much of an impact on moving the process forward; he is uncertain that the Assembly will follow through. He believes that a jointly drafted letter would convince the Assembly why an economic development plan (EDP) is needed.

Mr. Bishop said an EDP requires structural changes to how the city operates and may go beyond what could be put in a letter. There should be a better idea of what is involved with creating an EDP. Ms. Grewe thinks that the strategy is that the Planning Commission drafts a letter acknowledging that the JEDC is the borough-appointed economic development committee to undertake the activities.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS- None

IX. REGULAR AGENDA- None

X. BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT- None

XI. OTHER BUSINESS - None

XII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Chaney introduced ANNIE ([who is awesome](#)), the Planning Commission secretary who has stepped in to cover the Planning Commission minutes while a new contract secretary is permanently figured out. Annie comes with a lot of Community Development Department experience and will do an amazing job with the minutes.

Hal Hart has been appointed as the new CDD director and will begin working in Juneau on August 20th. He comes from Bothell, Washington and has never been to Juneau until his job interview last month. He plans to take CDD into a new direction.

The Auke Bay Plan will be started and it is unclear how DOT will allow the CBJ to get involved. More information will be available after that.

CIP Project Proposals could be viewed by the Planning Commission at any time. We are not required to wait until the Engineering Department comes up with the list, and it might be a good idea to look ahead before a deadline for ideas and review is applied.

XIII. REPORT OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES- None

XIV. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Lawfer noted the letter from Roy Schneider regarding parking fees. Mr. Lyman said that the current Managers are working on creating a committee for the parking in Juneau. Ms. Lawfer asked the letter to be forwarded to the City Manager's office.

Ms. Grewe asked about a blue folder item from Leslie Lyman. She had concerns about the communications towers and Ms. Grewe asked about the ordinance status regarding cell phone towers. Mr. Chaney stated that the ordinance is with the Law Department right now and no new update is available.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: *by Mr. Bishop to adjourn the meeting.*

With no objection, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.