

MINUTES

**Planning Commission**  
CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU  
**Mike Satre, Chairman**

Special Planning Commission Meeting  
Auke Bay Area Plan

December 16, 2014

**I. ROLL CALL**

Mike Satre, Chairman, called the Special Planning Commission Meeting of the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Planning Commission (PC), held in the Assembly Chambers of the Municipal Building, to order at 7:05 pm.

**Commissioners present:** Mike Satre, Chairman; Dennis Watson, Vice Chairman; Bill Peters, Karen Lawfer, Ben Haight, Nicole Grewe, Dan Miller, Paul Voelckers

**Commissioners absent:** Gordon Jackson

**Staff present:** Hal Hart, Planning Director; Beth McKibben, Senior Planner; Eric Feldt, Planner II; Tim Felstead, Planner I

**I. REGULAR AGENDA**

AME2013 0012: A presentation and discussion of the Draft Auke Bay Area Plan by the Auke Bay Steering Committee to the Planning Commission.  
Applicant: City and Borough of Juneau  
Location: Borough-wide

Mr. Hart introduced the Auke Bay Area Plan to the Commission stating that it is a working document and not a final product. He said they are implementing at least the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. He said that goal is very important: "To create a marine, mixed use transit and pedestrian-oriented village at Auke Bay." The Auke Bay Area Plan is the community's interpretation of that mandate, said Mr. Hart.

There has been a lot of change in Auke Bay since 2012, said Mr. Hart, including the construction of the roundabout, which cost about \$5 million. Within the next year infrastructure connecting the Brotherhood Bridge to Auke Bay for pedestrians will be under

construction, said Mr. Hart.

A thirteen unit condominium complex is nearing completion, with a small apartment complex approved in the post office building still to be constructed, said Mr. Hart. Home construction and remodels have a big economic impact in the area, he noted.

Mr. Feldt said a primary goal for the Committee was how to make the area more attractive to private investors and thus attract private funding, especially in the face of a shortage of public funds. One tool is to change the zoning district to create a small town center, said Mr. Feldt. The zoning district should complement the creation of a miniature downtown feel, said Mr. Feldt.

As has already been mentioned, said Mr. Feldt, the plan is a living document and is not meant to simply sit on the shelf and collect dust. It will evolve over time with the groups that meet every year with the City to manage it, as the needs of the community evolve, said Mr. Feldt.

It is important to keep communication open between private landowners in the Auke Bay area and the public entities such as the University of Alaska Southeast, Docks and Harbors, and the Department of Transportation (DOT), because they all have their own projects going on at different times, explained Mr. Feldt.

Gerald Gotschall, Auke Bay Steering Committee Chair, said this evening he will be acting as the voice of the Steering Committee. Over the past 12 months the Auke Bay Steering Committee has heard from all of the various entities such as the University, Docks and Harbors, DOT and the Native community regarding the activities going on in the Auke Bay area, said Mr. Gotschall. This provided the Steering Committee with the background as to what is currently happening within the community, he said.

From there the Steering Committee could go on and develop its vision statement, he said. The design charrette added transportation and built priorities to the vision for the community, said Mr. Gotschall. They then moved on to the key concepts of the town center, said Mr. Gotschall, which involved the higher density zoning with support for businesses and marine-related activities. As the focus moved closer to the town center the zoning became more dense and as it moved out the density lessened, said Mr. Gotschall. They stayed away from tweaking with any residential zoning, said Mr. Gotschall.

Mr. Hart said they had meaningful input on the historic and heritage component of the plan from the Douglas Island Indian Association, and extremely helpful and significant support from the Áak'w K'wáan Tribe which has resided in Auke Bay for thousands of years.

#### *Public Comment*

Steering Committee Member Joann Lott said the Steering Committee was a great working group with many opportunities for exchange of discussion and ideas. She said that in her opinion the Auke Bay Area Plan is a good representation of what the area residents would like to see transpire for the community.

Fritz Cove Road resident Karla Allwine said the CDD staff provided excellent guidance to the Steering Committee, but that in her opinion the document before the Commission was truly the

result of the community at large and the people who were involved in the process. She said her concern was that the zoning as it stands at this time does not complement what the vision for the Auke Bay community is.

Steering Committee member Alice Taff said the Steering Committee has been well directed and well supported by professional staff. Ms. Taff said she wanted to emphasize that the people who live and work in Auke Bay want to see that its' beauty and special characteristics be maintained, while a stronger community is forged in the process. They want to maintain the quality of the water, the views, the integrity of the landscapes and the safety of the wildlife as the community grows, said Ms. Taff.

Pat Carroll, a Fritz Cove Road resident and the DOT liaison to the Committee, told the Commission that Fritz Cove road will be repaved and widened about one foot on each side this coming summer, and that the Brotherhood Bridge project is underway. This involves construction of a 10 foot wide multi-use pedestrian/bike path on the uphill side of the road from Brotherhood Bridge to Engineers Cutoff. They expect that project to be completed in October (2015), said Mr. Carroll. At about \$25 million, that is only half of the path, said Mr. Carroll. The portion of the bike path that will traverse Engineers Cutoff to Auke Lake is currently under bid, he said. They expect that portion of the project to be completed in the spring of 2016, he said.

The Fritz Cove road to Seaview project will not be completed until the summer of 2016, said Mr. Carroll. That project will involve 8 foot shoulders and 6 foot sidewalks the full length of the road from Fritz Cove Road to Seaview, he said.

#### *Commission Questions and Comments*

Chairman Satre said one of the main concerns has always been the amount of traffic going through the area. He asked if there was any work towards the Auke Bay bypass slated with the state for any time in the near future.

It is on the needs list, said Mr. Carroll. But that is estimated as a \$60 million to \$70 million effort, he said. There is no funding for the project, he said.

Mr. Voelckers asked for an explanation of how speed will be controlled in the Auke Bay core area, and if the design itself may contain speed-calming measures.

They do use calculations based upon the speed of existing traffic to determine the speed that traffic should travel through the corridor, said Mr. Carroll. He said he believes the roundabout has already had a speed calming effect in the area. Pedestrian refuge islands will be installed in the area which should also have an effect of reducing traffic speed, said Mr. Carroll.

Mr. Feldt said the Committee met just last week and established the goal of a speed not over 30 mph in the core zone in the Auke Bay area. He said that goal will be in the most recent draft of the Plan.

Mr. Voelckers said if there is a perception of an active public risk then the Department of Transportation still has control over setting the speed limit, such as in school zones, for example.

Mr. Watson asked how secure the funding was for the DOT projects mentioned by Mr. Carroll.

The project that has yet to be funded is the Fritz Cove road to Seaview project, said Mr. Carroll.

Mr. Watson asked if there will be a turn lane designated specifically for Auke Bay school.

There will be a left turn lane available for those vehicles going to Auke Bay school from out the road, said Mr. Carroll.

Mr. Haight asked how snow removal could be accomplished in the area without putting snow on the pedestrian paths.

Mr. Carroll said he is not aware of any change in the basic snow removal plans for the area.

Ms. Grewe said she felt that getting the speeds down is critical to realizing the vision of the Plan. She asked how it would be possible to get the DOT to lower the speed limit to 30 mph. She asked also what the disadvantages would be if the speed limit was lowered to 30 mph.

The drivers set the speed limit and what the speed limit should be, said Mr. Carroll. He said the policy is empirical and that it is driven by safety. He said holding up a sign with the speed limit on it is not effective.

Ms. Lawfer suggested that the Plan specifically recommends maintaining bus routes to the University and maintaining Auke Bay as a hub for bus service out the road and onto the Back Loop road.

Mr. Miller said he felt that a long-term goal of 30 mph could be met with enough natural traffic slowing occurrences such as the roundabout and increased pedestrian activity, but that to expect traffic to respond to 30 mph signs now would be unrealistic.

Mr. Voelckers said he had concerns about how the Plan would be carried forward and that it not simply be aspirational in nature. For example, said Mr. Voelckers, what are the actual Title 49 pieces that need to be changed to fulfill this vision for the Auke Bay community. It needs to be a plan with some teeth, that really guides how development needs to happen, said Mr. Voelckers. One of the main drivers of the development would be Docks and Harbors, said Mr. Voelckers, and he said he did not see them represented in the current Plan.

Chairman Satre asked if there are recommendations from the staff as a result of this Plan on rezones for the core area which would add teeth to the recommendations.

Mr. Hart said they could make recommendations to the Commission on a specific approach. He said he would like to suggest that they keep the core Auke Bay committee together for another eight to ten weeks and that he would bring back to the Commission specific recommendations. He said he felt it was more important that they implement the Plan as it stands rather than postpone it while they wait for specific zoning recommendations.

Mr. Miller asked if they have examined the mechanics of the rezone process.

Mr. Hart said this Plan is an amendment of the Comprehensive Plan, and that he has explored

some of the process over the past year with the City Attorney.

Mr. Watson voiced his concern that as plans for rezoning the core area of Auke Bay were underway, that property owners be consulted and that it not simply be an exercise done on paper.

Mr. Haight said he is impressed by the report and how polished it is considering it has been largely put together by community members. This is a document which will be honored and respected by the community more than a document which has been put together by outside consultants, said Mr. Haight.

Ms. Grewe stated she thought it would be good to add in the introduction a specific paragraph stating specific goals the community would like to accomplish over the next 10 years regarding its evolution.

II. **BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT** – None

III. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.