



PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, January 17, 2024, at 6:00 PM

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, January 17, at the Dillingham City Council Chambers and via video conferencing, in Dillingham, Alaska. Commissioner Westfall called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commission members present and establishing a quorum (a quorum being four):

Kaleb Westfall Gregg Marxmiller Susan Isaacs/zoom Elizabeth Clark
Michael Bennett

Commission members excused absence

Jennifer Evridge Bert Luckhurst

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of November 8, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting

MOTION: Commissioner Marxmiller moved approve minutes with amended typos and repeated sentence as noted. Commissioner Bennett seconded the motion to approve the November 8, 2023, regular Planning Commission minutes with amendments as noted.

VOTING Yea: Commissioner Westfall, Commissioner Marxmiller, Commissioner Isaacs, Commissioner Clark,

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Bennett moves to approve January 17, 2024, agenda, seconded by Commissioner Clark.

VOTING Yea: Commissioner Westfall, Commissioner Marxmiller, Commissioner Isaacs, Commissioner Clark, Commissioner Bennett.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Heather from Agnew: Beck consulting gave a brief update on **Dillingham Comprehensive plan on community input**. January we will complete contextual research, analysis and prepare for public workshop late February or mid-March do to time conflicts (Beaver Round-up, Fur Rondy and Iditarod). Agnew:Beck is aiming to complete full draft update of the Comprehensive plan with public review and approvals process. Kaleb Westfall Commissioner chair asked out of all 74 response what was population of the public, from in town or out the road residents? Heather stated that there were not any demographic questions on forms. Kaleb asked if it was possible to read the comments to see if the committee could get a better understanding of where they are coming from.

Dillingham Comprehensive Community Input summary form was distributed to the community mid-October until December 1, 2023. The form asked respondents to provide open-ended comments about which comprehensive topics should be prioritized for the next 10-20 years. The residents who participated contained approximately 417 public comments, 66 respondents stated **Affordable Housing/land** was the top concern for most, which also impacts community wellness and education, economic development, public facilities and services. Respondents felt that the City could help by incentivizing housing project through property tax reductions or city land sales at reduced prices, earmarked for housing developments, and increase collaborative efforts with other agencies such as (BBHA, BBAHC, BBNA, and the School District), land managers, banks and contractors to create holistic solutions. There is a sense that housing challenges are partially to blame for outmigration, with the high cost of living in Dillingham. Gregg stated that some of the building requirements are State implemented and not city. Community **Wellness and Education** 49 respondents commented on the need for a multi-purpose building for adult and youth activities, fitness options, meeting and event space as well. More options for families with eldercare and childcare. They also suggested increasing education and training opportunities for trades to support/increase the local workforce. **Economic development** 60 respondents generally agreed that the cost of living in Dillingham is a major barrier to growing the economy though many believed that there was little that could be done to improve it. Consensus that taxes are needed to fund and improve Dillingham's infrastructure, but no consensus about precisely which taxes should be increased or created. It was also stated that in the comments it's a hindrance to smaller businesses. There was community support for an expanded tourism/eco tourism sector to diversify the economy since the city is a hub, encourage beautification of the city, protect the environment improve the quality of life for the residence. Some respondents support finding ways to keep the workforce local, such as using the Local workforce to build housing and providing training opportunities for trades. Respondents expressed **Transportation** is a need for Dillingham residents such as shuttle or transit services for elders, teachers, university students, seasonal employees, visitors, etc.. Respondents praised the city for providing more infrastructure for multimodal transportation, like bike paths and sidewalks which are used frequently. Maintaining and extending active transportation infrastructure was requested. **Waterfront** had 18 respondents who expressed erosion was a top concern. Mitigation measures like building seawalls, were suggested. Improving harbor facilities and management were recommended, utilizing Bingeman's property as a Seafood innovation center or a multi-use retail space. Moving food vendors away from busy driveway, more operating boat launch ramps, parking, waste management, running ice machine, bringing water and electricity to the south end of the harbor. Respondents recognized that the community is heavily reliant on diesel **Energy** for operational support. Some suggested incentives for expanding renewable, sustainable energy infrastructure. The respondents are in support off Nushagak Electric and Telephone Cooperative's initiatives to develop hydro power and expanded fiber optics for the region. Some noted that expanding fiber Optics may benefit economic development by allowing more remote workers to live in Dillingham. **Public Facilities and Services** within the city, respondents expressed dissatisfaction and perceive that the city has a negative view of the City. Respondents suggested that the city should: find solutions, collaborate with keystone organizations, Tribal entities, educators, contractors, and neighborhoods. Dillingham has the potential to be a great little city again, to be a place where people want to live and stay.

The Comprehensive Planning Process public engagement ideas, content, process, vision for the future, accomplishments, what people love about Dillingham.

Gregg: Possible to work with the kids at school in a Civics class on a Mini Comp Plan.

Sue: Good job and interesting comments, a lot of it we talked about 30 year ago somethings change and some don't. Thanks for you.

Elizabeth: Interesting to dive into the summery data, mirror what sue said, a lot of what we have been talking about a long time and its nice to see the numbers saying the same thing and not just the PC.

We could use this information while looking at our new comp plan to leverage funding, grants and what not to make things happen.

Michael: No a lot of work thanks

Kaleb: A lot of people feel the vision of the future, like this little, tiny sentence "Make this town alive again.

Michael: "It's the place that's always been."

PLANNER'S REPORT: Patty Thanks the Public Works Department for the continual hard work in keeping the streets clear and bike/paths clear. During City Manager Kimberly Johnson's absence, I was appointed as Acting City Manager for most part of December. During this period, I worked closely with the other Department Managers/Supervisors, thank you for the opportunity. Currently I'm enrolled in the High-Performance Leadership online course and expected to run through the middle of April 2024. I have been working on several projects that have not been completed by previous staff. This includes communicating with the State of Ak, DOT, and Public Facilities with closing downtown street Rehabilitation Project, this is ongoing. The right-of-way plat has been recorded with Department of Natural Resources, we are still waiting for the As-Builts, Quit Claim Deed, and a final letter of completion. Th Deadline for the hard deadline for project completion for this August 2024sp the above missing items may not be available until the deadline. I completed a full closure of a project that started in 2009-2012 with the downtown area, and finding was utilized from this for a \$15,000.00-dollar bond payment through a restricted Native Allotment and was primarily handled through BBNA. After working with BBNA land Management and Original Surveyor for over a year, this has been completed and project and funding is officially closed. The money that was received is restricted to be used for sewer issues only. I will be continuing to work towards the previous goals of future funding for the CIP list of projects. Most issues that I have encountered so far is the general misconception that no planning or permitting is needed within the City of Dillingham. I'm attempting to work on additional public Servies announcements or future workshops for the community members. Any questions?

Gregg asked where this sewer main was located at? Patty stated that it's on the way to Hud and has a Road Closed sign.

Michael, is there any real estate that can fill our housing crises right now? Kaleb, City owned or any? Michael, Generic? Patty, When City Manager Robert Mawson was here, he asked me to look for housing. So, over a year I've been looking for potential housing to help the city free up renting. The city is currently renting 3 apartments for staff. In my search I found one housing unit, that is willing to sell to the City of Dillingham. I passed that information to Robert than he left, it was also passed on to Lori Goodell City Clerk at the time Acting City Manager. Just recently I pass on this information to City Manager Kimberly Johnson. It would be a private individual's property but, will eliminate a easement issue since I started. Gregg is there any other property that can be developed for housing? Not necessarily I recommended to City Manager Kimberly to hire a third-party title company come in to square up all our 14c properties. Because all our 14c records are spotty and are difficult to research. It's been brought to the council members attention that we need to do a title search for only the 14c properties, and I believe it was approved. Michael so is that just a purchase for the city or any potential subdivision division? Patty today no! The subdivision idea must be put aside until a whole Title search has been completed to be developed. The property that Choggiung gifted does not match up, it is different from what they have. Patty emphasized that her and Mark from Choggiung, talked about it will probably take at least five years to piece together. Gregg while your working on that, is there a possibility that once the title problem is taken care of can we address it like workshops or educate on so, we can be ready to take action on this. Believes there are resources whether public or private entities that we can utilize to put together information for developing subdivisions. So, we can be ready to move on this. Michael would second that so, we can hit the ground running. Kaleb, do we have any

roads, like from Tucker point to Libby's and behind Kallstrom shop that is the cities or private that have possibilities to build on? Patty, the 1949 downtown streets map is problematic because this US 27-32 A B 1949 parcel were sold with the intention to build those roads. I'm currently working with a private surveyor to work with code and evaluate the roads that will never be built in Dillingham. The dock area has three public access roads and should have zero. They need to be eliminated from the mapping system because they will never be built Gregg, Mr. Chair can we call those platted roads because they cannot exist. Lis with these roads that are platted, if a road was built would it access land use for development? Patty the ones I want to eliminate are all marsh. Lis is it impossible to build on marsh? No Kaleb, It depends on where you're looking at cause of how far the marsh goes down, for instance behind the airport goes 30' down and the tundra by Bristol Alliance the marsh does down to a lake. Patty reiterated on what Mayor Alice Rudy said in her presentation in the previous meeting about looking into the Peat scale where we are considering the New Fire Hall, Choggiung looked at that land before and went down 30' and we don't know if we could build there and would take a lot of research to figure out.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA. None

PUBLIC HEARINGS- NONE

UNFINISHED BUSINESS-NONE

NEW BUSINES:

Mr. Chair Westfall, welcome back Sue Issacs for seat E three-year term 2023-2026, thanks for another 3 years

We also would like to welcome back Jennifer Evridge for seat B for another three-year term 2023-2026.

Kaleb, I will read the recommended actions for Officer Elections. You can nominate yourself or a fellow Planning Commissioner for either of the planning Commissioner Officers, Chair or Deputy Chair. This will be a one-year term for each officer. Please only complete one seat election prior to starting the next seat election, starting with the Planning Commission Chair first.

Michael, Mr. Chair would you like to be nominated as the Chair? Kaleb will accept if you guys want me.

Elizabeth nominated Gregg as Deputy Chair. Gregg declined. Liz would like to nominate Michael for the Deputy Chair position. Michael accepted. Gregg moves to close nominations. Liz seconds.

Gregg makes a motion to vote for Chair.

Patty, Sue-yes, Gregg-yes yes Michael-yes Kaleb-yes, Elizabeth-yes

Kaleb Westfall, motion passes unanimously. Is there a motion to vote on Deputy Chair

Elizabeth-makes a motion to vote on Commissioner Michael Bennett as Deputy Chair

Gregg Marxmiller, seconded.

Patty ask Commissioners Sue-yes, Michael -yes , Gregg-yes , Kaleb-yes, Elizabeth-yes

Kaleb, motion passes unanimously.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Isaacs: No, it was a good year. Congratulations Kaleb you done a good job this year and will continue to the next year, Michael congratulations you done a good job as commissioner and will as Deputy Chair, I look forward to working with you and the rest of the commissioners the next three years.

Commissioner Clark: Patty thanks for your hard work, I was very impressed with Agnew: Beck data collection so far. Congratulations to Chair and Deputy Chair. Quick note thanks for the past few years, I've been honored and very privileged to work as your Deputy Chair. My work life is hectic right now and Deputy Chair deserve more attention and Congratulations Michael on Deputy Chair. Thanks

Commissioner Marxmiller: Congratulations Kaleb and Michael. Thank you! Patty thanks for all your work!

Commissioner Westfall, I am grateful for Agnew Becks report a lot of information and look forward to next workshops. I thought maybe we were doing something during Beaver Roud-up

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Westfall adjourned the meeting at 7:20p.m.

Commissioner Kaleb Westfall

ATTEST:

Patty Buholm, Planning Director

Approval Date: _____

02/07/2024

Abigail Flynn
Acting City clerk