

Agenda
Planning Commission
Committee of the Whole
CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU
Ben Haight, Chairman
September 26, 2017

I. ROLL CALL

Ben Haight, Chairman, called the Committee of the Whole meeting of the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Planning Commission (PC), held in the Assembly Chambers of the Municipal Building, to order at 5:36 p.m.

Commissioners present: Ben Haight, Chairman; Paul Voelckers, Vice Chairman; Nathaniel Dye, Dan Hickok, Dan Miller, Carl Greene, Kirsten Shelton

Commissioners absent: Michael LeVine, Percy Frisby

Staff present: Rob Steedle, CDD Director; Beth McKibben, Planning Manager; Jill Maclean, Senior Planner; Allison Eddins, Planner I

Assembly members: Loren Jones, Debbie White

II. REGULAR AGENDA

AME2016 0016: A Text Amendment to adopt the Lemon Creek Area Plan as part of the CBJ Comprehensive Plan

Lemon Creek Steering Committee Members		
Stephen Johnson, Chair	Wayne Coogan	Mark Pusich
Michael Lukshin, Vice Chair	Sandra Coon	Patrick Quigley
Tom Chard	Susan Erben	Michael Short
Daniel Collison	Dave Hanna	Paul Voelckers (P.C. Liaison)

Ms. Maclean told the Commission that the Comprehensive Plan identifies the need for area plans throughout the borough. She said that Lemon Creek and Switzer Creek are identified as one area. The plan itself focuses predominantly on Lemon Creek and Switzer Creek, she told the Commission. This plan is a step in the Borough strategy to introduce change in this area, she said. This plan identifies the projects and vision to move this forward, she said.

In 2015, the Assembly tasked the Community Development Department (CDD) with undertaking the Lemon Creek Area Plan, said Ms. Maclean. In 2016 the Planning Commission endorsed guidelines for the development or update of community-based neighborhood plans, said Ms. Maclean. The CDD staff solicited interest from the community, and provided information on the planning process, she noted. In April of 2016 the Planning Commission appointed the steering committee which included residents, property owners, and business owners, said Ms. Maclean. This was preceded by an open house held in March to solicit interest from the community, provide information on the planning process, and request applications for interested people to serve on the steering committee, said Ms. Maclean. Subsequently the Commission appointed 12 people to the Steering Committee, she added.

Throughout the month of June, 2016, CDD conducted six focus group meetings including: infrastructure and transportation, natural resources and recreation, business and economic development, human services, history and cultural resources. In September, 2016, the Steering Committee began holding regularly scheduled public meetings, said Ms. Maclean. The Steering Committee was presented with background information on the Comprehensive Plan and other relevant CBJ plans, zoning and land use, housing needs, and feedback received from the open house and focus groups, she said.

This information combined with chapters drafted by CDD planners and other relevant CBJ staff allowed the Steering Committee to formulate informed goals and actions for each chapter of the plan, explained Ms. Maclean. Public testimony was also taken at each Steering Committee meeting, and considered as decisions were voted upon, she said. The Steering Committee approved each goal and action through a consensus-building process resulting in a majority vote of the committee, she explained.

The boundaries for this area plan include parts of Switzer Creek, but does not include Salmon Creek, said Ms. Maclean. It is south around the Pioneer Home and Tamarack condominiums, going all the way to Hidden Valley and north past Fred Meyer, she noted. They wanted the boundary to extend past Fred Meyer so that the shopping center closest to the residents would be included in the plan, she noted, for the purpose of transportation and shopping needs being met for the community.

The area combines two Comprehensive Plan area use maps, noted Ms. Maclean. The draft Lemon Creek Area Plan makes several rezoning recommendations in Sub-Area Five, and these recommendations are compliant with the Land Use Designations of Map G, said Ms. Maclean. Public testimony was welcome at each public meeting as they developed the chapters, she said. Upon the completion of a chapter, the Steering Committee would vote on the chapter before they moved forward to the next, she said. They approved each goal and the actions by consensus, not necessarily always unanimous, said Ms. Maclean.

A public design workshop was conducted on February 4, (2017) with MRV Architects and other CBJ staff from the Engineering Department, said Ms. Maclean. This was held to seek public input primarily on recreation and bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout Lemon Creek, she said. MRV Architects created an illustration which they are calling the Area Plan Design Goals, said Ms. Maclean. This is an overarching design concept accepting the input from four different tables that participated in this workshop with about 30 people present, she noted. They ranked the concepts according to how often they occurred amongst the groups participating, said Ms. Maclean. The goals illustrate the community's vision of how the area should develop over the next 20 years, she explained. The features include the preservation of the Switzer Creek area, paths connecting the Lemon Creek area to the other areas within the community, trails connecting to the Mendenhall State Game Refuge and potential new streets in the commercial and industrial areas.

Ms. Maclean noted there has been conversation about how specific the design is. Proposed paths and new streets are in color in contrast to the existing routes, she said. Some proposed new housing is also displayed, she said. This is where the public would like to see some housing development, she said. This is a 20-year plan, noted Ms. Maclean. Some of the proposed new routes and housing are aspirational and to be used as a guide, she added.

The draft plan was submitted for public comment for two weeks in mid-July, said Ms. Maclean. They combined the recommendations coming out of these meetings and provided them to the Steering Committee, said Ms. Maclean. The Steering Committee voted on whether to amend the plan based upon public comments, and to recommend the final draft to the Planning Commission for its consideration, said Mr. Ms. Maclean. The public comments, the staff recommendations and the subsequent action of the Steering Committee are all within the action plan document, said Ms. Maclean.

The Lemon Creek Steering Committee kept its rezone requests to its' area only, said Ms. Maclean. The draft plan is compliant with the land use designations on Map H, which encompasses the majority of the Lemon Creek study area, said Ms. Maclean. The Salmon Creek area is not a part of this planning process, she noted.

Sub-Area Five guidelines and considerations includes fifteen guidelines, said Ms. Maclean. Guideline one is to:

Conduct a neighborhood plan for the Lemon Creek and Switzer Creek areas to (1) address livability concerns for the residential areas, (2) accommodate the land use and transportation needs of commercial and industrial uses, (3) address recreational and natural/conservation area needs, (4) identify transportation improvements, especially pedestrian and bicyclist related safety improvements, such incompatible uses related to air quality

(noise, dust, fumes, odors), public safety and natural resource protection.

The draft Lemon Creek Area Plan makes several rezoning recommendations in Sub-Area Five, and these recommendations are compliant with the Land Use Designation of Map G, noted Ms. Maclean.

If adopted, the Lemon Creek Area Plan would be an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. The Lemon Creek Area Plan provides a 20-year vision to guide growth, protect natural resources, and enhance and maintain amenities for livability, said Ms. Maclean. Where the Lemon Creek Area Plan and the Comprehensive Plan conflict, or where the Lemon Creek Area Plan is more specific, the Lemon Creek Area Plan supersedes the Comprehensive Plan, noted Ms. Maclean.

The staff recommends that the Planning Commission Committee of the Whole review and consider the draft Lemon Creek Area Plan and schedule it for a public hearing before the Planning Commission on October 24, 2017, said Ms. Maclean.

Commission Comments and Questions

Mr. Voelckers said he would like to review the process by which the Commission will review this plan.

Ms. Maclean said she is open to suggestions from the Commission as to how it would like to proceed with its review of the draft plan. She said she felt Chapter 8 would be the most useful to the Commission, which is the implementation chapter, she said. This addresses the goals and actions and is a combination of all of the goals and actions from each chapter, she explained.

Mr. Dye asked if the end result was to have all of the geographic areas of Juneau in some sort of plan. He asked, for example, if the Twin Lakes area would eventually have its own plan.

Ms. McKibben said the Comprehensive Plan specifically addresses Auke Bay, Lemon Creek, downtown Juneau and Douglas. At this point it does not specifically address other areas in Juneau, she said. The Economic Development Plan and the Housing Action Plan address more neighborhoods within the community, she said.

Mr. Dye asked for what examples of potential conflicts between the Lemon Creek Area Plan and the Comprehensive Plan may be.

Ms. Maclean said she has no specific instances of this occurring within the Lemon Creek area, but that this issue has arisen within Auke Bay so this was written within the plan to address any unforeseen conflicts, she said.

Mr. Voelckers suggested that the Commission review the Steering Committee priority actions outlined at the beginning of the report. He said he felt this may be a good approach to provide some context for the plan.

Ms. Maclean said as part of the executive summary they covered some of the major themes heard from the public, via the open house and focus group meetings which were conducted, as well as the Steering Committee meetings:

- Ensure that land use decisions and transportation projects promote neighborhoods and create or enhance buffers between different land uses and/or zoning districts (Chapter 2: History and Community Character).
- Identify an appropriate future location(s) for the landfill or transfer facility (Chapter 3: Land Use).
- Improve Capital Transit bus schedules and routes through Lemon Flats and near anchor businesses that support shift work schedules (Chapter 7: Economic Development).
- Pursue and foster projects that “knit” the Lemon Creek area together such as greenways, pedestrian bridges over Lemon Creek, and the creation of public parks (Chapter 2: History and Community).
- Develop housing targets for the Lemon Creek area, as recommended by the Housing Action Plan, consistent with recommended zone changes identified in this plan (Chapter 4: Neighborhoods and Housing).
- Allow for industrial and commercial growth in strategically located areas (Chapter 3: Land Use).
- Protect resource extraction as a critical industry and educate the public on its benefits to the community, such as lower development costs and flood protection (Chapter 6: Natural Resources and Recreation).
- Pursue making CBJ gravel and organic waste disposal resources in the Lemon Creek area available to the private sector (Chapter 7: Economic Development).
- Advocate for the extension of Glacier Highway to Egan Drive at the McNugget intersection (Chapter 5: Transportation and Infrastructure).
- Preserve, protect, and enhance the Switzer Creek watershed; specifically ensure that Switzer Creek stream buffers remain undisturbed (Chapter 6: Natural Resources and

Recreation).

Mr. Dye asked how the decisions were made in the setting of the area boundaries.

The decisions were made in concert with public input, said Ms. Maclean. They showed the public a map of the general area with no boundaries set. At the open house the majority of the individuals who provided input wanted one of the boundaries set on Glacier Highway past Fred Meyer. Hidden Valley was included for development potential and for natural resources, because whatever development happened in that area would be experienced downstream. Egan Highway and the Mendenhall Wetlands comprise a natural barrier, and that side of the area and mountainside estates was perceived as separate from the general Lemon Creek area, said Ms. Maclean.

Mr. Voelckers said he felt there were one or two issues related to intersections and public safety that helped to drive the extent of the boundaries. He said just about 95 percent of the comments in the specifics of the plan place the boundaries at Switzer Creek or a bit further.

Land Use

Action: Promote mixed-use zoning as a business and neighborhood development tool for underutilized sites i.e. the former Walmart location and Grant's Plaza.

Mr. Voelckers said he was a little confused as to if this mixed-use zoning referred to the term distinguishing Mixed-Use zoning, or if it referred to the general concept of mixed zoning.

Ms. Maclean said she believed it was more a general term about the zoning, not a reference to the specific Mixed-Use zone.

Neighborhoods and Housing

Mr. Voelckers said on page 25 of this chapter that the reference to Housing First need no longer be in the future tense because it has been accomplished. He said as a general comment that on page 25 through pages 27 that it was a little inconsistent in defining the underlying zoning in the housing blocks.

Mr. Hickok asked how directly involved the City and Borough of Juneau would be in the development of some of these Lemon Creek areas. He added that the implementation of some of these ideas takes a large amount of funds.

The Steering Committee with input from the public did discuss tax incentives for economic development and redevelopment within this area, said Ms. Maclean.

Mr. Steedle said there is new state legislation which would enable the CBJ to provide incentives for the economic development of properties. That item will be taken up at some point by the Assembly, he added. The Commission also has its role to utilize in making recommendations for the Capital Improvement Program, (CIP) said Mr. Steedle. The Commission would also have input on any public land or programs, he added.

Mr. Voelckers said on page 31 of the draft under the paragraph called “Housing Mix” the draft stops just short of an implied action or a remedy to the Lemon Creek housing situation. He said it might be advantageous to add what those future options might include.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Mr. Voelckers said on page 46 which is the first page of the goals and action items that he could not recall what the difference was between the first two items.

Action: Enhance pedestrian/recreational linkages connecting the residential neighborhoods to Dzantik'i Heeni Middle School.

Action: Advocate for pedestrian, bicycle, and if warranted, an emergency vehicle access only across Lemon Creek (the water body) connecting the neighborhoods to the commercial uses.

During committee and public hearings, the topic came up often that access was wanted back to the industrial commercial area to help alleviate the traffic along Glacier Highway and Anka Street, which resulted in the first action, said Ms. Maclean. It was an update to the access study and what it evaluated, she said. The second action is focused more on the larger area of industrial and commercial traffic, and the patterns and the uses that occur there, she added.

Mr. Hickok asked if in reference to the transit system if there had been any discussion regarding the addition of shuttles within the area to help alleviate the transportation problems.

This committee did not look at shuttles, said Ms. Maclean. They were more focused on the existing transit opportunities within the routes that they take, especially the snow routes in the winter, when workers have to walk further, and also the timing of the runs. Public transit does not currently run to Home Depot and to Costco, noted Ms. Maclean.

Mr. Voelckers said the Committee wanted it stipulated in the plan that there is a large, currently unserved need for public transit to various areas within Lemon Creek.

Chairman Haight said it appeared to him that this was tied to the economic development of the area. Limitations to transportation lead to limitations for economic development, he added.

Natural Resources and Recreation

Mr. Voelckers said on page 51 within this section that Parks and Recreation is implementing a borough-wide Parks and Recreation plan. They made it clear there would be quite a bit of value placed upon the results of this study, he said. He said he thought there was a perception that perhaps Lemon Creek has been a little under-served compared to other communities within Juneau with recreational amenities.

Economic Development

Mr. Voelckers commented that the goal to action within this section might be expanded a bit. He said there was a lot of conversation and concern expressed about commercial creep in industrial zones and weighing the value of industrial and the value of commercial vitality.

Ms. Eddins stated this was also addressed in the History and Community Character chapter. It addressed knitting communities together and enhancing buffers where they were needed.

Mr. Voelckers asked if the portion of the chapter addressing uses specifically allowed in Industrial zones was to promote greater flexibility within Industrial zones or if it was to rein in how the zone was being used.

Ms. Maclean said she thought it was to rein in how the zone was currently being used. She added that it was felt that our industrially zoned land has a lot of what could be considered general commercial use within the industrial zones. Home Depot and Costco are already located on industrially zoned land and it was felt there was the need to protect the amount of industrially zoned land that is available, she said.

Mr. Dye asked if the uses were tightened what would happen to the businesses that would then be in nonconformance.

Ms. Maclean said it could also be used to look at the development of the land on the north side of Home Depot that is owned by the CBJ and is still vacant. There could be the emphasis placed that the land be used for industrial purposes, she added. Moving into Hidden Valley they could work to make sure that land was used for industrial purposes with no commercial businesses creeping into it, she said.

Chairman Haight asked how much of this action promoted rezoning certain parcels within the area, to how it is actually being used.

Ms. Maclean said she felt they were careful in their wording to state that they would review and update this portion of the plan, and that it was not a blanket statement to address the entire area that is currently zoned Industrial. It will need careful review in the future, she said. She said she would also shy away from implementing changes based upon what exists today since this plan looks 20 years into the future. She said the Comprehensive Plan looked at what was on the ground at that time, but it did not look into the future. Existing zoning may not be of the best use, and existing owners may wish their land be zoned differently, she added. If zone changes to the area are recommended, it would be important to bring in the existing property owners, said Ms. Maclean.

Mr. Dye said he could understand the process better if rezoning of any areas was requested by the property owners themselves.

Ms. Maclean said she was not sure how they could change the wording to make it more open.

Mr. Voelckers asked if the expectation was that as the Planning Commission made recommendations at the regular meeting concerning this draft, if the draft would go back to the committee, or come back to the Commission and then be forwarded to the Assembly.

Mr. Steedle said this would stay at the Planning Commission level. The Steering Committee has made its recommendations, he said. The Planning Commission will be making its recommendation to the Assembly, he added.

Implementation

Ms. Maclean explained that the idea of this chapter was that it could be more of a work plan that could be relied upon rather than have having to review the entire plan each time. This portion is to identify the goals and actions, identify the lead party, the potential advocates, with the short mid-and long-term actions, said Ms. Maclean. It was also thought that this could feed into the CIP process as well, she added. This condenses all of the chapters into one section of the plan, said Ms. Maclean.

There are actions that are repeated in different chapters, said Ms. Maclean. These actions were repeated purposefully so that they would not be missed, said Ms. Maclean.

Mr. Voelckers asked that the action on page 80 be explained further under “Neighborhoods and Housing” which reads, “Action: Consider rezoning Churchill Mobile Park to D-10-SF, which would be more compatible with the D-5 zoning of the adjacent Pinewood Park subdivision. “

Ms. Maclean said in general she feels like those in the Lemon Creek area feel that they carry a lot of the affordable housing for the community. They would like to see more of an equitable distribution throughout the community of affordable housing. They discussed Churchill Mobile Park which had been commented upon with concern about it being zoned specifically D-10 SF, said Ms. Maclean. In the plan it does say that rezoning could be considered, said Ms. Maclean. Churchill Park would be conforming; they would not do anything which would make it nonconforming, she added. Potential rezoning could make that area a good transition area, said Ms. Maclean, to neighboring zones.

Mr. Dye asked if the plan operated under the assumption that the landfill would remain in Lemon Creek.

Ms. Maclean said that it did not operate under that assumption.

Mr. Dye asked if the Lemon Creek plan was going to try to tell the rest of the borough how to deal with its recycling. He asked if this was going outside the boundaries of the plan.

Ms. Maclean said they tried to remain within the boundaries, but that some items had consequences outside of the designated area for the plan.

Mr. Voelckers said that there really is both a factual basis and the perception that Lemon Creek has shouldered more than its share of community operations. You can't get away from methane gas, said Mr. Voelckers. The landfill itself and the secondary issues arising from its existence in the area are placing a shadow over the neighborhood, said Mr. Voelckers. They wanted to go on the record supporting that the City pursue other long range alternatives for the landfill, he added.

Mr. Dye said there are sewage treatment plants in other neighborhoods which will not be moved because their location is permanent. He said it was difficult for him to see where the boundary was in all of the action items if they were not consistently applied.

At the request of Mr. Voelckers, Ms. Maclean said there was discussion about the gravel extraction and the work that is done upstream. It was posited that it may have the beneficial effect of creating a lack of flooding downstream, she said. The committee wanted it mentioned in the report that the gravel extraction was not just a negative for the community, but carried some potential positive effects for the area as well, said Ms. Maclean.

Mr. Voelckers said there was another action item as well encouraging the Borough to focus on a FEMA reassessment in Lemon Creek because there was the thought that there would be substantial insurance premium reductions to reflect the possibility of less flooding, he said.

Mr. Hickok asked if there had been any discussion of recycling the methane gas.

Mr. Voelckers said representatives from the City and Waste Management discussed this topic which was raised. The representative from Waste Management said they are inventing a process in Juneau which

is not used anywhere else in the country because of Juneau's relatively mild climate, said Mr. Voelckers. This results in a super aggressive methane production, he added. They dilute the methane before it is released which reduces the smell, said Mr. Voelckers. However, they said it was not reusable methane, said Mr. Voelckers.

Mr. Dye asked if Goal 4 on page 82 which states, "Action: Reduce impacts of dust on surrounding uses, bicyclists, and pedestrians by requiring and enforcing dust control methods on industrial and commercial vehicles" should be listed under the Planning Commission and Community Development and JPD authority or if it should instead be under the provenance of the Assembly and Manager's Office, since it involved a change outside of Title 49.

Mr. Steedle replied that it would involve a change outside of title 49.

Mr. Dye suggested that they change the lead responsible party for that action.

Mr. Dye also suggested that the abbreviations be identified somewhere within the document in a key so that everyone would know what they meant.

Chairman Haight said he has noticed that he is not hearing much discussion about the corrections facility within the Lemon Creek area. He asked if there had been discussion about the correction facility's impact on the adjacent neighborhoods.

Ms. Maclean said there was some discussion about the shooting range, but that it did not make it to the level of an actionable item. What did make it to an action concerning the correctional facility was the desire to rename it so that Lemon Creek may not have a negative perception because it was associated with the correctional facility.

On page 84 Mr. Dye identified the action: "...mitigate the impacts of resource extraction and eliminate unnecessary water pollution and erosion." He asked if it was not general engineering that reviewed all of the building permits and the storm water protection plans.

Mr. Steedle said that is correct.

Mr. Dye asked if some of these items, therefore, were review of practices the City is already doing.

Ms. Maclean said this is true, but that they could be encouraged to do it better.

Mr. Dye asked if this is the case, should they not identify those items which could be done better.

Chairman Haight said it seemed to him that noting these items in this Lemon Creek Plan helps the City to better promote them in the CIP when it comes before the Commission for review.

Mr. Voelckers said Mr. Dye's exact point did come up during conversation, but that there were items which were not currently being properly addressed, so they wished to highlight some of these items.

Mr. Dye said if the action was to eliminate "unnecessary" water pollution, then they were stating that water pollution was acceptable at some level.

Mr. Voelckers suggested that it could read, "Provide greater scrutiny with compliance of water standards."

Mr. Voelckers said it might be appropriate to have a memo from the Planning Commission accompany the draft Lemon Creek Area Plan as it is passed to the Assembly.

Mr. Steedle said the Lemon Creek Area Plan and the recommendations on the CIP are happening parallel to each other. He said he felt it was entirely appropriate for the Planning Commission to express its views on the Plan as it goes to the Assembly. They will be discussing the Commission's CIP ideas on the same night they will be taking action on this plan, said Mr. Steedle. They should be separate documents with separate comment from the Planning Commission, he said.

Mr. Hickok asked if the Auke Bay Plan has a 20 year forecast as well and asked if CIP projects for Auke Bay would have priority over Lemon Creek projects because the Auke Bay Plan was done first.

Mr. Steedle said that although the Auke Bay plan was developed first, it does not have priority over the Lemon Creek CIP items.

III. **OTHER BUSINESS** - None

IV. **REPORT OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES** - None

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.