

**THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA**  
**HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE**  
November 12, 2021 – Meeting Minutes

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Housing and Development Task Force (HDTF) was held in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room of the Marine View Building, and was called to order by Ex-Officio Chair Loren Jones at 12:03a.m.

**Roll Call**

**Members Present:** Ex-Officio Chair Loren Jones, Vice Chair Maria Gladziszewski, Michelle Hale (via Zoom), Paul Voelkers, Nathaniel Dye (via Zoom), Dave Hanna, Bill Heumann (via Zoom), and Wayne Jensen.

**Members Absent:** None.

**Staff Present:** CDD Director Jill Maclean, City Manager Rorie Watt, Mayor Beth Weldon,

**B. Approval of Agenda**

**MOTION** by Ms. Gladziszewski to include “Review the Ordinance” to the Agenda. Chair Jones added “**b. Ordinance Review**” under Item D.

**MOTION** by Ms. Hale for the committee to discuss Mr. Heumann’s memo. Chair Jones added “**c. Discussion Regarding Mr. Heumann’s Memo**” to the Agenda.

**C. Approval of Minutes**

**A. October 29, 2021 DRAFT Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Jones noted that the October 29, 2021 Meeting Minutes were in need of correction. The minutes were sent back for correction.

**D. Comments About Last Meeting**

**a. Review Memo to Mayor/Assembly**

Mr. Jones explained that Ms. Gladziszewski had provided a memo which included a revised written version of her motion from the previous HDTF meeting.

Mr. Voelkers shared that he appreciated the new motion’s clarity, but noted that it did not mention the “opt-out” ordinance that had been discussed.

Ms. Gladziszewski explained that the “opt-out” ordinance was separate from this motion, as this motion in particular represented the committee’s recommendations to the Assembly’s priority list.

Ms. Hale added that this motion’s intent was to bring forth the HDTF’s recommendations to the Assembly prior to their priority-setting retreat in early December.

Mr. Hanna commented that he approved of the motion.

Mr. Dye suggested that it may be helpful to add clarifying language to the motion, and to reorganize the wholesale rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan to be placed prior to the rewrite of Title 49.

Ms. Gladziszewski disagreed with the suggestion, saying the rewrite of Title 49 should be considered first priority.

There was a discussion about rewriting the Land Use Code, specifically the process of a rewrite resulting in hiring a consultant to go through the Land Use Code.

Mr. Jones agreed that writing the Comprehensive Plan could result in subsequent rewrites further down the line.

Ms. Gladziszewski spoke to the vastness of the Comprehensive Plan, and said that they do not need an update of the Comprehensive Plan to update Title 49.

Ms. Maclean agreed with Mr. Dye's suggestion of writing the Comprehensive Plan prior to rewriting Title 49, and advised the committee to take into consideration the Systemic Racism Review Committee review process of the Comprehensive Plan, particularly zoning issues.

Ms. Maclean further explained that a full review of the Comprehensive Plan with consultants would be a three-year process, during which the committee could implement some changes to Title 49, but not a wholesale rewrite.

Mr. Dye spoke to the Planning Commission's reliance on the Comprehensive Plan to make changes to aspects such as zoning laws, industrial lands, commercial use versus residential use properties, etc. He explained that these changes are made based on the Comprehensive Plan, not based on Title 49.

Mr. Voelkers recommended removing the word "wholesale" from the motion, and to add "and/or partial rewrites". The new language would read as follows: "The HDTF does not have a recommendation at this time regarding how this gets done, but possibilities include: hiring a firm to do a rewrite, selective editing of key sections, or using existing staff in committee processes."

Hearing no further edits, Mr. Jones will work with CDD staff to bring the revised motion to the Assembly.

#### **b. Ordinance Review**

Ms. Maclean reviewed the ordinance and highlighted the lines which contained edits or adjustments.

Mayor Weldon asked for clarification on the difference between a development application and a pre-application.

Ms. Maclean explained that a development application could include variances, sub-applications, Conditional Use Permits, etc. She further clarified that a pre-application is typically required for

most applications, and includes a pre-application conference in which the developer can meet with the Planning Commission, General Engineering, the Building Division, and the Fire Marshal to discuss the application.

Ms. Gladziszewski noticed a typo (“an” instead of “and”) on Line 3, Page 4 of the ordinance.

Mr. Dye had a question about the language (from “required” to “may be required”) regarding sketch plots in the ordinance.

Ms. Gladziszewski noted that this language would make sketch plots optional in the application process.

Mr. Dye explained that sketch plots are required for a major subdivision application.

Ms. Maclean clarified that this language is specifically for a pre-application process; the actual submission of a major subdivision application would still require the inclusion of a sketch plot.

Mr. Watt cautioned that adding more flexibility to the pre-application process could result in potential delays later down the line. He added that he was not advising against this, but was bringing attention to the potential consequences.

Mr. Hanna said that they had discussed the potential consequences at length, and felt that this process could help applicants move their projects along smoothly.

Mr. Heumann echoed Mr. Hanna’s comments, and also understood Mr. Watt’s concerns. He mentioned that there are oftentimes smaller projects in which the pre-application process is not necessary; and the CDD Director has the discretion to strongly suggest the pre-application process to applicants as needed.

Mr. Dye asked if this ordinance would be referred back to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Jones explained that this would be brought to the Law Department and CDD, then will be introduced to the Assembly following standard procedure.

Ms. Gladziszewski noted that it could be forwarded to the Planning Commission following its introduction to the Assembly.

There was further discussion about the pre-application process.

Ms. Maclean described opting out of the pre-application conference as a missed opportunity for applicants to discuss their project with several CBJ departments altogether. She clarified that she was not opposed to this ordinance, but would like for developers to consider the opportunity available to them.

Mr. Hanna suggested CDD produce a handout that would list the negative outcomes that may arise from opting out of the pre-application conference.

Ms. Hale asked when the pre-application conference first became a requirement.

Ms. Maclean said that it may have come into effect following the 2010 rewrite, or after the 2015 rewrite.

Mr. Jensen spoke to the value of the pre-application process, but also felt it would be helpful if the process could be done in a timely manner.

Mr. Dye clarified that the pre-application conference has been in the Code since the 1987 rewrite.

### **c. Discussion Regarding Mr. Heumann's Memo**

Mr. Heumann shared that his memo addressed the industry-wide concern regarding the permitting process; he further explained how streamlining the process could boost productivity and help meet the demands of the housing market.

Mr. Voelkers referenced the line in the memo which stated that developers are unable to obtain permits, and asked Mr. Heumann to clarify if the concerns surrounding the permitting process were a matter of timeliness, or if permits were being denied to developers.

Mr. Heumann clarified that it was more an issue of a timeliness rather than the inability to receive permits.

Mr. Voelkers asked Mr. Heumann if there was a notable difference in the timing or the permitting process compared to previous years.

Mr. Heumann said that the process to obtain a permit had become more difficult in recent years.

There was a discussion about the timing of the permitting process.

Ms. Maclean spoke to the difficulties presented by the Code when developing land, and to the additional difficulties of living, working, and housing in Juneau. She felt that CDD have been producing permits in a reasonable amount of time, especially considering that they are working with limited staff during a pandemic.

There was a discussion about variances. Ms. Maclean explained the challenges associated with issuing multiple variances, often risking the chance of the variance being appealed and going through a lengthy legally involved appeal process.

Mr. Heumann commented on the lack of affordable housing, and the legal and financial resources that could be provided by the City.

Mr. Hanna shared his perspective on the increasing costs for various CBJ projects and utilities throughout town, and recommended the committee discuss cheaper developments at a future meeting.

Mr. Watt noted that every neighborhood in Juneau has benefitted from public funding, and very few neighborhoods have come into being (meeting full dimensional standards) by developers.

There was further discussion regarding the table of dimensional standards and variances.

**E. Discussion of Possible Metrics Related to Workload/Priorities**

Chair Jones addressed that this item is currently in motion, but would not be fully discussed at today's meeting as the committee was running short on time.

**F. Public Comment (10 Minutes)**

None.

**G. Suggestions for Next Agenda**

The next meeting date is scheduled to be held on December 10, 2021.

The agenda items for the next meeting will include dimensional standards, a discussion with the Law Department about variances, and scheduling future meetings for 2022.

**H. ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business to be brought before the committee, the Housing & Development Task Force meeting was adjourned by Chair Jones at 1:15p.m.*