

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on June 24, 2003, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Tim Anderson for the purpose of holding a joint Assembly/Planning Commission/Platting Board meeting.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. J. Bruce Bush, Assembly District No. 1  
Mr. Bill Allen, Assembly District No. 2  
Mr. Talis J. Colberg, Assembly District No. 3  
Ms. Mary Kvalheim, Assembly District No. 4  
Ms. Jody Simpson, Assembly District No. 5  
Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6 (Deputy Mayor)  
Ms. Kelly Ladere, Assembly District No. 7

Planning Commission members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Chris Rose, District No. 1 (Vice-chair)  
Ms. Helga Larson, District No. 2 (Chair)  
Mr. Lee Sharp, District No. 3  
Ms. Faye L. Palin, District No. 4  
Mr. David Webster, District No. 5 (*Arrived at 6:06 p.m.*)  
Ms. Rose M. Jenne, District No. 7

Planning Commission members absent were:

Mr. Gary S. Wolf, District No. 6

Platting Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

Ms. Janet Kincaid, District No. 1 (Chair)  
Mr. Alan L. Larson, District No. 2  
Ms. Janet Whitfield, District No. 3  
Mr. Patrick Johnson, District No. 4  
Mr. William Bruu, District No. 5 (Vice-chair)  
Mr. Roger Anderson, District No. 7

Platting Board members absent were:

Ms. Claudia Roberts, District No. 6

Staff in attendance were:

Ms. Sandra A. Dillon, CMC, Borough Clerk  
Mr. John Duffy, Borough Manager  
Ms. Teresa S. Williams, Borough Attorney  
Mr. David Germer, Assistant Borough Manager  
Ms. Michelle M. McGehee, Deputy Borough Clerk  
Ms. Tammy Clayton, Finance Director  
Mr. Jim Swing, Public Works Director  
Mr. Dan Graham, Engineering Division Manager/Public Works Director  
Mr. Ron Swanson, Community Development Director  
Ms. Susan Dickinson, Interim Planning and Land Use Director  
Mr. Paul Hulbert, Platting Officer

Mayor Anderson welcomed everyone in attendance.

### **III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Anderson inquired if there were any changes to the agenda.

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda was approved as presented.

Mayor Anderson:

- spoke to a request to add items to the agenda that had been received after the publication deadline; and
- noted that the items could not be addressed at the meeting.

### **IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Kathy Wells, a member of the audience.

### **V. ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

A. Presentation by Peter J. Smith and Associates Re: Core Area Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Smith:

- introduced his associate, Mary Kopaskie;
- spoke regarding the update of the core area comprehensive plan and the process that his company followed to conduct their survey;
- informed the members of the Assembly, Planning Commission, and Platting Board that his presentation encompassed a visioning exercise; and
- asked the members to participate in the visioning exercise by answering some questions.

Discussion for the visioning exercise ensued as follows:

- 1) **The core area is experiencing growth. How would you describe your vision for the core area?**
- a. an area with schools located near dense residential development
  - b. pedestrian friendly with bike trails connecting areas and people are able to walk and bike to school
  - c. orderly development of commercial and residential areas
  - d. provisions for parks and playgrounds
  - e. retention of greenbelts, parks, and playgrounds
  - f. small industry/business development with a good tax base
  - g. independence from Anchorage
  - h. a public transportation system with a pick-up spot at a local community center
  - i. one governmental unit
  - j. community clusters, residential communities with mixed-use development
  - k. character of community maintained, regional characteristics
  - l. those impacted – self-governed; vision is part of comprehensive plan
  - m. good road systems to allow development
  - n. arterial roads pushed through; growth in an orderly manner; more roads paved; dust problems minimized
  - o. good jobs for everyone to be able to pay for improvements; local jobs
  - p. series of trails in core area that interconnects the cities, ideally located around lakes; multiple-use trails
  - q. location of schools; development of higher education; attracts outside businesses, new income
  - r. mass transit
  - s. small businesses in residential areas
  - t. higher density residential
  - u. clean air, water, sanitation, parks, greenbelts – available to all residents and well maintained
  - v. heart and soul for core area (Trunk and Palmer/Wasilla) – rather than strip development; town center – identity for neighborhoods
  - w. entertainment opportunities, restaurants
  - x. environmentally sound foundation; natural environment and planned growth capacity
  - y. place where property could be obtained and used without surprises as to the consequences of the use; investment security to both residential and commercial uses
  - z. commercial development in designated nodes off arterials with frontage roads; limited/shared access
  - aa. rational plan coordinated infrastructure plan
  - bb. protection of water table
  - cc. preservation of personal space

2) **What are some of the challenges facing the core area as growth**

**occurs?**

- a. unwillingness of residents to participate in, accept, or consider planned development for our community
- b. traffic leaving subdivisions
- c. potential land use conflicts; everything is mixed
- d. water quality control
- e. space; platting regulations call for minimum 20,000 square foot usable land; community water, septic; can give ¼ acre lots; huge incentive for moving into smaller lots; high densities; could lose characteristics/identity with high density housing
- f. “not in my back yard” mentality
- g. speed of growth; trying to catch up – school and roads
- h. nature of growth is oriented towards actual construction; what happens when construction stops?
- i. freedom vs. rules – how people interact with each other; balance
- j. public safety in valley; challenges, crime, want to grow and expand; protection for personal and property safety; current, perceived, future
- k. transportation congestion; need for municipal water and sewer
- l. maintain orderly development – inability to control
- m. loss of clean water
- n. lack of money; shrinking dollars; more with less
- o. lack of education/understanding of public; why is there a need for planning attitude; public participation
- p. differences of opinion with residents in core area; little room for compromise
- q. infrastructure for schools, hospitals, jobs locally
- r. preservation of agricultural land
- s. road construction not keeping up with growth
- t. air quality
- u. most people attracted to rural lifestyle; increasing debt load puts core area at risk; essential services; finding money is difficult; less support from state resources
- v. do not have buildable or useable right-of-ways; not able to expand roads
- w. open spaces – many subdividers may leave areas;
- x. more laws and restrictions; selected enforcement
- y. roads in private ownership
- z. highways behind in carrying capacity
- aa. existing land use conflicts
- bb. tax burden
- cc. significant migration from rural Alaska to hubs as money tightens; more stresses on resources
- dd. senior housing across state are heavily impacted; fixed incomes; need for place to live
- ee. core area has been disproportionately paying for outlying areas of the borough; cost of services higher outside core area yet all pay for additional expenses

- 3) **What are the greatest assets of the core area?**
- a. people
  - b. physical/natural assets; lake and streams – keeping clean and useable
  - c. location – ideal next to Anchorage with great scenery
  - d. fertile soil; labor sources available; training facilities
  - e. proximity to non-core area; recreation and growth
  - f. can encourage industrial uses
  - g. buildable land
  - h. sense of “ruralness”
  - i. remaining forests
  - j. clean air
  - k. potential for greenbelts
  - l. tourist base and recreational areas
  - m. attractive environment
  - n. center of intermodal transport
  - o. room for highways
  - p. rail and air fields; established community centers
  - q. history
  - r. mildest climate in the state
  - s. borough trying to do things right – mayor accessible
  - t. college – could be expanded upon
  - u. recreational resources
  - v. proximity to rail line
  - w. potential wind energy resources
- 4) **How can the comprehensive plan address these challenges and use the assets?**
- a. more direct approach; zoning; not getting anywhere on subject; discussion with various parties to open communication; consensus building; collective agreement
  - b. tool for visioning out 20 years or so, be proactive; change over time
  - c. education and community – lack of trust in citizens even in process; hope for education and communication in process;
  - d. survey – tells a lot about what people desire; input of all residents needed; noticeable change – need for planning
  - e. wildfire safety; clean air and water; discover and advocate solutions from the people; needs of people – how to pay to provide them
  - f. economic development plan
  - g. advocate land use controls; greater citizen participation; experience of others; learning from mistakes and from others
  - h. will lend ability to stand behind the plan
  - i. testimony from other communities – input (i.e., Talkeetna)
  - j. takes years to build trust and many hours of dedicated work
  - k. other areas/communities are now in planning stages

1. will lend ability to address roads, schools, sewers, landfills

Mr. Smith:

- concluded his presentation by appreciating everyone's candor; and
- stated that his associate, Mary Kopaskie, would be presenting an overview of the survey process.

Ms. Kopaskie:

- stated that four different focus groups were used in the survey representing various aspects of the business community;
- noted that the people surveyed were asked about many Borough issues including: recreation, open space, tourism, and transportation;
- spoke regarding public interactive sessions held, three in April and two in May;
- reported that the consultants also worked with two different classes at Colony High School regarding goal prioritization;
- noted that there were approximately 35 students in each class;
- informed that the consultants used a random community survey method in which 1,037 surveys were distributed and 261 were returned;
- spoke regarding the process of sampling and the results produced from sampling;
- commented that the consultants wanted to make sure the information was representative of core area residents;
- remarked that over 75 percent of the respondents have lived in the core area for six years or more;
- summarized the data collected to date; and
- reviewed the general characteristics of the Borough such as roadways, environmental issues, and economic characteristics.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- land classifications used in the survey data;
- the differences between "landowner" and "homeowner;" and
- classifications used in the survey data based upon information provided by borough assessment data.

Ms. Kopaskie stated that she would provide the members of the Assembly with copies of the existing land use map, from which the classifications were derived.

(The special meeting recessed at 7:46 p.m. and reconvened at 7:58 p.m.)

*(Assemblymember Colver left the meeting at this time.)*

## **VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

The following person spoke regarding being able to file an appeal as an interested party to the Board

of Adjustment and Appeals on a Platting Board decision addressing an action in Williams Subdivision: Byron Williams.

The following person spoke regarding Willow Road Service Area No. 20 and Ordinance Serial No. 03-080 to allow the reduction of the quorum requirement: Jim Norcross.

The following persons spoke regarding the core area comprehensive plan meeting that was held June 23, 2003: Penny Nixon and Jean Woods.

Mayor Anderson closed audience participation at this time.

## **VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, PLANNING COMMISSION, AND PLATTING BOARD COMMENTS**

Members of the Assembly, the Planning Commission, and the Platting Board thanked each other for a good meeting and for each other's candor.

Planner Commission Sharp spoke regarding the parameters of public notice and advertising.

Mayor Anderson:

- reminded the Assembly that Thursday, June 26, 2003, is the retirement party for Public Works Director Jim Swing;
- appreciated the good exchange of ideas at the meeting; and
- thanked everyone for their dedication and hard work.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The special meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

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JIM COLVER, Deputy Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

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MICHELLE M. MCGEHEE, Acting Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: July 15, 2003