

**BOARD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA**

**REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2021
6:00 P.M. - COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

A. CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the City of Palmer Board of Economic Development was called to order by Chair Silva at 6:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

Present and constituting a quorum were Board Members:

Dusty Silva, Chair	Christopher Chappel (via teleconference)
Peter Christopher (via teleconference)	Janet Kincaid
Barbara Hunt (via teleconference)	Ronalee Moses (via teleconference)

Absence(s) excused without objection:

Lorie Koppenberg, Vice Chair

Also present were:

Brad Hanson, Community Development Director
Pam Whitehead, Recording Secretary (via teleconference)

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge was led by Board Member Kincaid.

D. ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD:

1. Election of Chair:

Following nomination and acceptance:

Main Motion: To elect Dusty Silva to serve as Chair for the ensuing term.

Moved by:	Kincaid
Seconded by:	Hunt
Vote:	6 Yes/0 No – Moses, Kincaid, Christopher, Hunt, Chappel, Silva <i>Absent: Koppenberg</i>
Action:	Motion Carried unanimously by roll call vote.

2. Election of Vice Chair:

Following nomination and acceptance:

Main Motion: To elect Ronalee Moses to serve as Vice Chair for the ensuing term.

Moved by:	Kincaid
Seconded by:	Christopher
Vote:	6 Yes/0 No – Moses, Kincaid, Christopher, Hunt, Chappel, Silva <i>Absent: Koppenberg</i>
Action:	Motion Carried unanimously by roll call vote.

E. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The Agenda was unanimously approved as presented by all members present. There were no objections.

[Moses, Kincaid, Christopher, Hunt, Chappel, Silva; *Absent: Koppenberg*]

F. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

The Minutes of the **November 2, 2020 Regular Meeting** were unanimously approved as presented by all members present. There were no objections.

[Moses, Kincaid, Christopher, Hunt, Chappel, Silva; *Absent*: Koppenberg]

G. REPORTS:

1. Manager/Staff Report:

Director Hanson:

- Reported status on a number of items going on at the City – still working hard on annexation;
- Community and Economic Analysis – nothing has been presented as of yet; the consultants are working on it; expects it to be presented in middle to late January (via Zoom plus In-Person Meetings at the Depot);
- Discussed the annexation online survey – will be developing a strategy to talk about some of the issues presented in the survey;
- Reported on the status of the COVID Grant money;
- Described the new sound system for meetings in Council Chambers (both audio and video will be recorded).
- Responded to questions regarding the annexation study meetings.

H. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: There was no audience present.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Main Motion: To enter Committee of the Whole for open and ease of discussion on the stated Unfinished Business items IM 21-001, IM 21-002, IM 21-003, and IM 21-004.

Moved by:	Kincaid
Seconded by:	Chappel
Vote:	6 Yes/0 No – Moses, Kincaid, Christopher, Hunt, Chappel, Silva <i>Absent</i> : Koppenberg
Action:	Motion Carried by roll call vote.

[The Commission entered Committee of the Whole at 6:25 p.m.; exited at 7:12 p.m.]

1. Committee of the Whole: Discuss **IM 21-001**, City of Palmer Commercial Districts (note: action may be taken by the Board following the committee of the whole.)

Director Hanson provided a staff report regarding status of the proposed Central Business District (CBD) establishing consistent procedures and standards for the traditional downtown within the city of Palmer. For the Board’s review is proposed Ordinance 21-0XX enacting 17.30 Central Business District. (packet p. 14). The proposed ordinance will be introduced at the January 12, 2021 City Council meeting.

Topics briefly discussed in committee of the whole:

- Intent of the CBD and land uses.

2. Committee of the Whole: Discuss **IM 21-002**, Tourism and Local Events (note: action may be taken by the Board following the committee of the whole.)

Chair Silva reported the Board needs to set a date for discussion related to tourism and other local events.

Following discussion, IM 21-002 *Tourism and Local Events* will be scheduled for discussion at the BED April 5, 2021 meeting, under Unfinished Business. There were no objections.

3. Committee of the Whole: Discuss **IM 21-003, Railroad Tracks** and more effective use of that area, including Farmers Market, Community Stage area and parking (note: action may be taken by the Board following the committee of the whole.)

Director Hanson reported that upon completion the Downtown Palmer Brownfield Area-Wide Plan Final Report was not received prior to COVID. Part of the Plan talks about activities in the railroad right-of-way and some of the improvements that the Borough saw as realistic to be able to utilize this space short term. The BED should begin discussion about the economic and community impact of the railroad corridor in Palmer.

Following brief discussion, IM 21-003 *Railroad Tracks Utilization*, will be scheduled for discussion at the BED August 2, 2021 meeting. There were no objections.

- Board Member Kincaid suggested contacting the Committee to Restore the Railroad or maybe the committee on 557 to invite their input.
- Board Member It was also suggested to involve the Palmer Chamber for their input related to Farmer's Market and Friday Flings.
- Board Member Hunt suggested also inviting input from the Grow Palmer group.

4. Committee of the Whole: Discuss **IM 21-004, Annexation Strategies** (note: action may be taken by the Board following the committee of the whole.)

Director Hanson encouraged the Board to be alert for the open houses coming in January, 2021; he will communicate that with stakeholders and specifically this Board. Also, there will be a Joint Meeting between Planning & Zoning and City Council for the final presentation of the Report, probably in early March.

Following brief discussion, it was decided to hold off scheduling BED discussion on this topic until after the final presentation in March.

[The Board exited Committee of the Whole without objection at 7:12 p.m.]

J. NEW BUSINESS:

Main Motion: To enter Committee of the Whole for open and ease of discussion on the stated New Business item IM 21-005.

Moved by:	Kincaid
Seconded by:	Chappel
Vote:	6 Yes/0 No – Moses, Kincaid, Christopher, Hunt, Chappel, Silva <i>Absent:</i> Koppenberg
Action:	Motion Carried by roll call vote.

[The Commission entered Committee of the Whole at 7:12 p.m.; exited at 7:45 p.m.]

1. Committee of the Whole: Discuss **IM 21-005**, Palmer's Economic Development Strategic Plan – 2021 Update and Work Plan Update (note: action may be taken by the Board following the committee of the whole.)

Director Hanson provided a staff report directing attention to the packet for IM 21-005, Annual Update of Palmer's Economic Development Plan. The BED reviews and updates the Plan annually and presents to the City Council at the CC/BED joint meeting. As soon as the 2020 census is available, it will be appended to the Economic Development Plan.

Discussion topics while in committee of the whole included:

- How telecommuting/teleconferencing/video-conferencing can play a role in Palmer's economic development; more people working from home, not having to commute, have more availability of time to be part of the community, shop, eat, and do business in Palmer.
- Suggestion to add an objective re same under Goal 2 or 11.
- Suggestion to postpone and do further research and discuss at the CC/BED joint meeting.
- Caution against Open Meetings Act violation – Board members should send any research or comments through Director Hanson, who will share it with the whole board.

[The Board exited Committee of the Whole without objection at 7:45 p.m.]

K. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Board Member Kincaid:

- Commented appreciation for the good and informative meeting;
- Thanked the City for the distribution of funds to the brick and mortar businesses in these troubled times; it is her sincere hope that we be able to open up soon for tourism, believes Palmer has greatly benefited from the heavy regulations in Anchorage.

Board Member Chappel:

- Commented thank you for the good meeting; appreciates the work being done and looks forward to the next one.

Board Member Hunt:

- Also thought it was a good meeting; misses seeing everybody; thank you to Director Hanson for always being ready to answer questions and the good work he is doing.

Board Member Moses:

- Commented she is looking forward to taking a more active role as the Vice Chair and thanked the Board for the opportunity;
- Appreciated Board Member Hunt's comments and insight regarding connectivity and bringing it to our attention; that it gives the Board a good focus moving forward this year.

Board Member Christopher:

- Also thought it was good meeting.

Chair Silva:

- Discussed the idea of requesting the City Council add a non-voting position to this Board that would be whoever held the position of Executive Director of the Palmer Chamber of Commerce to help

facilitate the business of this Board. Director Hanson will look into it.

- Thanked everyone and looks forward to another year serving on on the Board.
- Urged everyone to check out the new City of Palmer website.

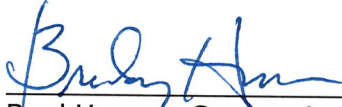
L. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned without objection at 8:46 p.m.

APPROVED by the Board of Economic Development the 5th day of April, 2021.



Dusty Silva, Chair



Brad Hanson, Community Development Director