

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

**SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2023
6:00 P.M. - COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

A. CALL TO ORDER:

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

B. ROLL CALL:

Present and constituting a quorum were Board Members:

Lorie Koppenberg, Chair	Janet Kincaid
Barbara Hunt, Vice Chair	Trisha Sims (via Zoom teleconference)
Louis Young	Christopher Chappel (via Zoom teleconference)
Sarah Tudor	

Also, present were:

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

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge was led by Jack Snodgrass.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The Agenda was amended to add a second Audience Participation as Agenda Item I. The amended Agenda was accepted. There were no objections.

E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: None.

F. REPORTS:

Director Hanson reported:

- Update on library – City Council has an upcoming special meeting for a presentation by Wolf Architecture providing information on repairing, expanding, or replacing the library, those costs are not fully developed.
- City Council adopted the budget for the upcoming year.
- Responded to questions regarding capital projects.

G. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Michelle Kincaid spoke of reduced parking requirements within the Central Business District that adds to congestion in downtown. Parking requirements in the code do not account for employees.

Chair Koppenberg asked for the rules of Audience Participation to be suspended to allow a member in the audience, Jack Snodgrass to give a brief presentation and answer questions from the Board.

Jack Snodgrass expressed concerns about the potential for a 10-million-dollar library bond, questioning the feasibility of its repayment from the general fund and suggesting the need to determine the library budget based on the city's financial capabilities.

Mr. Snodgrass also referenced a memo regarding the end phase of construction oil boom funding. He spoke to the city buildings and facilities that were built because of oil boom monies are now ending their useful life, stressing the need for extensive repairs. The importance of addressing these issues with aging infrastructure collectively rather than focusing individually on the library was emphasized.

Chair Koppenberg spoke to a past report of a proposal to establish a community center and the financial challenges associated with the project; the report suggested it would always operate at a loss. Reminded everyone that grants for these projects are for a period of time and should not be considered as a continued source of funding.

H. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Committee of the Whole: Discuss IM 23-003, Discussion of City of Palmer's Central Downtown parking requirements (note: action may be taken by the board following the committee of the whole).

Main Motion: To enter Committee of the Whole to discuss IM 23-003.

Moved by:	Kincaid
Seconded by:	Tudor
Vote:	Unanimous
Action:	Motion Carried

[The Board entered Committee of the Whole at 6:29 p.m.; exited at 7:36 p.m.]

Chair Koppenberg addressed parking in the downtown Central Business District creating economic development issues for businesses and residents. Asked the Board to review and discuss Mr. Moosey's memo to City Council dated May 18, 2023, with the purpose of requesting a joint meeting with City Council to offer suggestions to find solutions to this issue.

Committee of the Whole topics included:

- Discussion began with reference to several potential solutions as reflected in the memo, including multi-level parking structures, shared parking, and public transportation.
- Focused the discussion on parking minimums and requirements and parking for employees.
- Suggested using the general parking requirements as a guide for all areas of Palmer except for high use businesses which could utilize modified parking requirements.
- Discussed feasibility of paid parking programs when the public can park in any business' parking lot for free.
- Raised concerns of turning private property into paid parking areas instead of the private property owner building more buildings on their property eliminating the parking.
- Voiced concerns about private property owners being forced to give up their parking or property for public use parking.
- Discussed enforcement of parking requirements.
- Defined high use businesses as restaurants, bars, cafes, bakeries, hotels, motels, entertainment venues, dance halls and auditoriums, with suggested modified parking requirements of one parking

space per 100 square feet of gross floor area plus one parking space per every three employees, plus ten spaces for every 1,000 square feet of outside seating area in excess of 20 outdoor seats; if gross floor area is greater than 5,000 square feet eleven spaces per 1,000 square feet

- Discouraged using public parking to meet a business' parking requirement.

[The Board exited Committee of the Whole without objection at 7:36 p.m.]

The Board agreed to continue the discussion at the January meeting with the purpose of drafting a Resolution with proposed changes and schedule a joint meeting with City Council.

Chair Koppenberg will provide her table that she created for tonight's meeting to Director Hanson to be included in next month's packet for review and discussion.

I. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Michelle Kincaid, owner of Valley Hotel and Koslosky's Center, repeated her concern about the parking problem in the central basic district, is supportive of better signage, and fencing and commented the current parking code is not adequate and does not consider employee parking.

J. NEW BUSINESS: None.

K. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Board Member Sims:

- Commented it's a complicated issue but thinks we will get there.

Board Member Chappel:

- Commented the meeting was productive, thanked Lorie for everything she has done and looks forward to seeing what we come up with.

Board Member Kincaid:

- Good dialogue.

Board Member Tudor:

- Glad to see we are working on it and hope everyone will come together to decide what to do for the city.
- Reminded everyone of the upcoming Colony Christmas.

Board Member Young:

- Enjoyed working on the parking requirements.

Chair Koppenberg:

- Thanked Jack Snodgrass for sharing his insights at the meeting.
- Colony Christmas, Christmas and New Year are all coming up.
- Thanked the Board members.

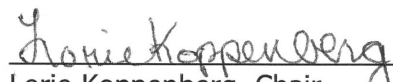
Board Member Hunt mentioned her term expires at the end of the month.

Next meeting is January 8, 2024.

L. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned without objection at 7:46 p.m.

APPROVED by the Board of Economic Development this 5th day of February, 2024.



Lorie Koppenberg, Chair



Brad Hanson, Community Development Director