

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA

REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2021
7:00 P.M. - COUNCIL CHAMBERS

A. CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Peterson at 7:00 p.m. Welcome to new Commissioners Linda Combs, Lisbeth Jackson, and Pamela Melin.

B. ROLL CALL:

Present and constituting a quorum were Commissioners:

Casey Peterson, Vice Chair	Josh Tudor (via teleconference)
Kristy Thom Bernier (via video-conference)	Sabrina Shelton (via teleconference)
Linda Combs	Lisbeth Jackson (via teleconference)
Pamela Melin	

Also present were:

Brad Hanson, Community Development Director
Nichole Degner, Community Development Specialist
Pam Whitehead, Minutes Recorder (via teleconference)

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge was performed.

D. ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMISSION:

1. Election of Chair:

Following nomination:

Main Motion: To elect Commissioner Casey Peterson to serve as Chair for the ensuing term.

Moved by:	Thom Bernier
Seconded by:	Combs
Vote:	Unanimous
Action:	Motion Carried by roll call vote.

2. Election of Vice Chair:

Following nomination:

Main Motion: To elect Commissioner Josh Tudor to serve as Vice Chair for the ensuing term.

Moved by:	Shelton
Seconded by:	Combs
Vote:	Unanimous
Action:	Motion Carried by roll call vote.

E. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The agenda was unanimously approved, as Amended, moving J New Business items 2, 3, and 4 to be heard after G, Persons to be Heard. There were no objections.

[Jackson, Melin, Combs, Shelton, Thom Bernier, Tudor, Peterson]

F. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

The minutes of the **November 19, 2020 Regular Meeting** were unanimously approved as amended to reflect the Minutes were approved the 21st day of January, 2021 (not the December 17, 2020 meeting which had been cancelled).

[Jackson, Melin, Combs, Shelton, Thom Bernier, Tudor, Peterson]

G. PERSONS TO BE HEARD: None.

[The following **New Business** items were moved forward per Amended Agenda]:

- 1. **Resolution No. 21-001:** A Resolution of the Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission in Appreciation of the Contributions of Planning and Zoning Commission Member Richard Benedetto.

Main Motion: For approval of Resolution No. 21-001.

Moved by:	Combs
Seconded by:	Thom Bernier
Vote:	Unanimous
Action:	Motion Carried by roll call vote.

Commissioner Thom Bernier and Commissioner Combs spoke in appreciation of Commission Member Richard Benedetto’s service to the P&Z Commission and City of Palmer.

Richard Benedetto (telephonically) thanked everyone and spoke in appreciation of his time on the P&Z Commission and the relationships gained.

- 2. **Resolution No. 21-002:** A Resolution of the Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission in Appreciation of the Contributions of Planning and Zoning **Commission Member Gena Ornquist.**

Main Motion: For approval of Resolution No. 21-002.

Moved by:	Thom Bernier
Seconded by:	Shelton
Vote:	Unanimous
Action:	Motion Carried by roll call vote.

Commissioner Thom Bernier spoke in appreciation for the contributions of Commission Member Gena Ornquist during her time on the Commission.

Gena Ornquist (telephonically) thanked everyone and spoke in appreciation of her time on the Commission.

- 3. **Resolution No. 21-003:** A Resolution of the Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission in Appreciation of the Contributions of Planning and Zoning **Commission Member Dan Lucas.**

Main Motion: For approval of Resolution No. 21-003.

Moved by:	Thom Bernier
Seconded by:	Tudor
Vote:	Unanimous
Action:	Motion Carried by roll call vote.

Commissioner Combs spoke in high appreciation for Commission Member Dan Lucas not only for his contributions to the Commission but also for his expertise in bridging with the City Council. Chair Casey Peterson also commented in appreciation for Dan’s expertise as Chair of the Commission. He will be

missed.

H. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. **IM 21-001:** Amending 17.08 Definitions and Palmer Municipal Code Chapter 17.32 General Commercial to allow retail Marijuana as a permitted use and amend 17.36 Industrial and 17.57 Agricultural to allow marijuana cultivation, testing and manufacturing as a permitted use.

Chair Peterson opened the public hearing for public testimony:

Gena Ornuist, Palmer resident, testified raising concerns about reported offensive odors coming from some of the buildings or premises that house marijuana retail or cultivation; recommended that the Commission take this into consideration when deciding where to allow these particular businesses.

Janet Kincaid, Palmer property and business owner, also voiced concerns about the offensive smells involved with marijuana businesses to surrounding businesses and neighborhoods; also recommended this be taken into consideration when deciding permitted locations, that it is very important to the future image of our community; advocated for not allowing in Downtown Palmer, suggesting the Industrial Park.

Commissioner Combs inquired of staff if anyone contacted the office with any comment. Director Hanson responded that no one contacted his office with any comments.

There being no other public testimony, Chair Peterson closed public testimony at 7:32 p.m.

Staff Report: Director Hanson summarized current status of the Ordinance. See page 11 of the packet for a summary statement and other information, stating on October 6, 2020 voters of Palmer passed a referendum repealing the prohibition of marijuana cultivation, manufacturing, testing and retail stores. The referendum called for all four licensing types to be legal within the city. The recommendation is to review the draft ordinance and if approved, move forward to the City Council with a recommendation for adoption.

Chair Peterson called for the motion to be put on the table for discussion:

Main Motion: For adoption of proposed Ordinance 21-0XX, Amending 17.08 Definitions and PMC Chapter 17.32 General Commercial to allow retail Marijuana as a permitted use and amend 17.36 Industrial and 17.57 Agriculture to allow marijuana cultivation, testing and manufacturing as a permitted use.

Moved by:	Tudor
Seconded by:	Melin

Lengthy open discussion and questions of staff took place regarding the steps necessary to implement the ballot proposition and the standards for marijuana businesses to be put in place. It was determined that additional research is needed regarding on-site consumption and definitions for schools, including pre-school and daycare centers.

Main Motion: To postpone further discussion or vote on IM 21-001 until the next meeting on February 18, 2021 to allow further research.

Moved by:	Combs
Seconded by:	Tudor
Vote:	Unanimous
Action:	Motion Carried by roll call vote.

Main Motion: To direct Staff to research the definition of schools and the ability to prohibit on-site use in a marijuana establishment.

Moved by:	Combs
Seconded by:	Shelton
Vote:	Unanimous
Action:	Motion Carried by roll call vote.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

J. NEW BUSINESS:

1. A Committee of the Whole: Discussion of IM 21-002 regarding Community and Economic Analysis for evaluation of an Annexation petition (note: action may be taken by the Commission following the committee of the whole).

Main Motion: To enter Committee of the Whole for discussion on IM 21-002.

Moved by:	Shelton
Seconded by:	Molin
Vote:	Unanimous
Action:	Motion Carried by roll call vote.

[The Commission entered Committee of the Whole at 8:35 p.m.; exited at 9:07 p.m.]

Staff Report: Director Hanson introduced Heather Stewart, Consultant with Agnew::Beck, who has been selected by the City Council to conduct a community and economic analysis regarding annexation. A printed copy of the presentation is included in the packet (pp 21-33). The Commission is to provide comments where necessary should further action be requested.

Director Hanson and Ms. Stewart led the Commission through the presentation, discussing Economic Analysis, Palmer's Goals for Annexation, and Study Areas. A number of virtual Zoom public meetings are planned, the first to be held February 4, 2021. The survey will also be reopened January 25 through February 19, 2021. The project website is PalmerAnnexStudy.org.

Director Hanson cautioned that the Open Meetings Act still governs virtual meetings, so only three Commissioners at a time can participate.

It was recommended for Commissioners to get the word out to as many members of the public as possible to participate in the virtual meetings as well as the survey.

There being no additional comments, Chair Peterson declared exit of Committee of the Whole at 9:07 p.m.

K. PLAT REVIEWS:

1. **IM 21-003:** Pre-application request to create a utility lot and a remainder tract from Tract C-1, Brittany Estates Addition 1, Phase 3, Plat No. 2005-802.

Director Hanson provided a staff report, noting the pre-application packet has been distributed through city departments for comments, which stated no changes necessary.

The Commission had no additional comments.

2. **IM 21-004:** Pre-application request to create 27 lots from Tract 1-C, Country Addition to Eve's Eye, Plat No. 98-94.

Director Hanson provided a staff report, noting City Departments reviewed the pre-application packet and had the following comments:

Building Inspector and Fire Chief: TR 1-B appears to be land locked with access easement only. Access easement should be developed in accordance to fire code. IFC appendix D. See D102 & D103. This is to ensure the fire department can access the area at all times.

Other departments: No changes necessary.

The Commission had no additional comments.

3. **IM 21-005:** Pre-application request to vacate a 4' x 63' portion of the alleyway North of Lot 16, Block 1, Riverside, Plat 7-160 and add to Lot 16.

Director Hanson provided a staff report, noting City Departments reviewed the pre-application packet and commented: No changes necessary.

The Commission had no additional comments.

4. **IM 21-006:** Pre-application routing slip to create 82 lots from Tracts 1-3, Cedar Hills #2 Ph 1, Plat No. 2017-15 and Tract J, Cedar Hills #2 Ph 1, Plat No. 2000-66.

Director Hanson provided a staff report, noting City Departments reviewed the pre-application request and commented as follows:

Public Works and Community Development: Developer will be required to enter into a Subdivision Agreement with COP and either provide City Utilities to propose a different plan for water and sewer services to the City Manager for approval. Septic and well systems require approval from the City Manager for deviation from PMC requirements. As part of the Subdivision Agreement, the developer is required to follow City Development Standards and Standard Specifications for all other requirements (roads, lighting, and traffic control).

The Commission had no additional comments.

K. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no members of the public in attendance.

M. STAFF REPORT: Director Hanson had no additional staff report.

N. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Thom Bernier:

- Commented thank you to Dan Lucas, Gena Ornquist, and Richard Benedetto for their service on the Commission and welcome to new Commissioners Jackson, Melin, and Combs.
- Congratulations to Chair Peterson and Vice Chair Tudor.

Commissioner Combs:

- Commented she is honored to start a term on the Planning & Zoning Commission and is honored to serve with the rest of the Commissioners;
- Thank you for a great meeting.

Commissioner Jackson:

- Commented Aloha from Hawaii, noting feels she has some big shoes to fill from the retiring Commissioners;
- Noted she is thankful for the opportunity to serve the City of Palmer and to hopefully contribute a little more in the future.

Commissioner Melin:

- Commented she is grateful to be part of the Commission; looks forward to working with everyone.

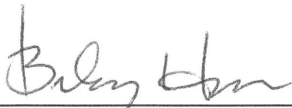
Chair Peterson:

- Commented welcome to the new Commissioners and hopes to worthy of the nomination as Chair for the remainder of the year.

O. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned without objection at 9:20 p.m.

APPROVED by the Planning and Zoning Commission this 4th day of March, 2021.



Brad Hanson, Community Development Director



Casey Peterson, Chair