

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA

REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 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 Chair Peterson at 7:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

Constituting a quorum, present in person were Commissioners:

Casey Peterson, Chair
Josh Tudor, Vice Chair
Linda Combs
Lisbeth Jackson
Pamela Melin
Sabrina Shelton

Absence(s) excused without objection:

Kristy Thom Bernier

Also present were:

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

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge was performed.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The agenda was approved as presented by all members present.

[Shelton, Melin, Jackson, Combs, Tudor, Peterson: *Absent*: Thom Bernier]

E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

1. The minutes of the **May 20, 2021 Regular Meeting** were unanimously approved as presented by all members present.

[Shelton, Melin, Jackson, Combs, Tudor, Peterson: *Absent*: Thom Bernier]

F. REPORTS: None.

G. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None.

H. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. **Resolution No. 21-004:** A Resolution of the Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission Recommending City Council Approve a Zoning Map Amendment for Lot 200, Block 1, Felton Addition Subdivision to be Rezoned from R-3, Medium Density Residential to R-4, High Density Residential, Located within Section 33, Township 18 North, Range 2 East, Seward Meridian, Alaska.

Chair Peterson inquired if there were any *ex parte* communications related to Resolution 21-004. None were disclosed.

Staff Report: Director Hanson reported general and background information on the requested rezone, including site information, parcel size, existing zoning, surrounding land uses, particular considerations, code requirements, and findings of fact. Public notice and publishing requirements pursuant to code have been met. A total of 2 written comments were received – 0 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 no objection. The applicants are: Kyle & Nicole Moffat, Martin & Nikki Moffat, The Alaska Life LLC.

Findings of Fact: Pursuant to PMC 17.80.036.C, the Commission shall give consideration as to what effect the proposed change would have on public health, safety, welfare and convenience, and or a map amendment show whether:

Fact 1: The proposed change is in accordance with the borough and city Comprehensive plans.

Staff Finding:

- Goal 1 of Chapter 6, Land Use, from the Palmer Comprehensive Plan promotes growth guided to make Palmer an increasingly attractive place to live, work, invest and visit.
- Goal 5 encourages the development of high-quality buildings that reflect Palmer’s historical character.
- Goal 6 of Chapter 6 supports improvements to the downtown area to help ensure Palmer’s traditional downtown in lively, attractive and inviting for residents and visitors.

Staff finds the following facts in support:

- a) The proposed change would support the goals and objectives of the City’s Comprehensive Plan by encouraging attractive development that will improve the neighborhood and increase the availability of higher density housing near downtown.
- b) This new building will reflect Palmer’s character and historical setting with high quality architecture while maintain the traditional appeal of Palmer.
- c) The proposed change will provide more accommodations in the downtown area as will as encourage spending for visitors and tourists.

Fact 2: The proposed change is compatible with surrounding zoning districts and established land use pattern.

Staff Finding:

- a) The property for the proposed rezone is contiguous to R-3 zoning on the East side, CL Commercial Limited on the West side as well as CG Commercial General to the North and South lines of the lot.
- b) Among the other comparable land use in the subject area are residential neighborhoods as well as other small businesses such as retail and gift shops. Many restaurants and dining establishments are within walking distance from the property, convenient for visitors of Palmer while staying at this location.
- c) PMC 17.27.060 establishes a minimum lot size for dwelling units, that would make the development compatible with surrounding properties.

Fact 3: Public facilities such as schools, utilities and streets are adequate to support the proposed change.

Staff Finding:

- a) This property is a triple frontage lot and has access on Dogwood, South Colony Way and South Bonanza, allowing adequate flow of traffic along with incoming and outgoing visitors.
- b) Utilities are available to serve the proposed use of property as High Density Residential, current water and sewer are set in place and will support the proposed structure.
- c) The proposed change is from R-3, Medium Density Residential to R-4, High Density Residential; there

would be little to no impact on public schools since the proposed change would be for short term lodging. The nearest public school is .7 miles from the property.

Fact 4: Changed conditions affecting the subject parcel or the surrounding neighborhood support the proposed change.

Staff Finding:

- a) The changed conditions affecting the subject parcel will be the reconstruction of a previous structure that has recently been removed. The continued development of the surrounding housing units supports the proposed change to R-4.
- b) The surrounding zoning districts consist of R-3, Commercial General and Commercial Limited, and have had no recent significant condition changes to the area. The recent amendments to the Central Business District allows for flexibility for downtown parking as well as opportunities for economic development and more compatible use of land.

Fact 5: The proposed change is consistent with the public welfare and does not grant a special privilege to the owner(s).

Staff Finding:

- a) The proposed change does not grant the owner any special privilege as the property in question is contiguous to existing residential zoning and commercial development.
- b) The proposed change is consistent with the public welfare by continuing to permit the current use of this property to be developed for commercial activity for the benefit of Palmer residents and visitors.

Staff Recommendation: (Resolution 21-004)

Based on the information provided, staff recommends approval of the requested rezone. Staff also finds the requested rezone to be in conformance with the Palmer Comprehensive Plan. If, following the Public Hearing, the Commission finds the applicant's proposal conforms to the Palmer Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code provisions, then staff recommends that the Commission approve the rezone request and forward to the City Council with a recommendation for approval.

Public Hearing: (Resolution 21-004)

Chair Peterson opened the hearing for public testimony at 7:15 p.m.

Applicants' Presentation:

Martin Moffat, on behalf of the Moffat family and Alaska Life, LLC

- Testified in support of the rezoning request;
- Spoke to the history of the property (previously referred to as "The Felton House" or "Palmer House") and described the renovations that have taken place since they purchased the property in 2018 to bring it up to code and still preserve some of its historical nature.

There being no others coming forward to speak, Chair Peterson closed the hearing for public testimony at 7:17 p.m.

The Commission reviewed and unanimously approved Findings of Fact 1-5 as proposed by staff in support of Resolution 21-004 by roll call vote of the commissioners present.

Chair Peterson called for the motion:

Main Motion: For approval of Resolution No. 21-004, recommending City Council approve a Zoning Map Amendment for Lot 200, Block 1, Felton Addition Subdivision to be Rezoned from R-3, Medium Density Residential to R-4, High Density Residential, to include adoption of Findings of Fact 1-5 as stated by staff in support of Resolution 21-004 and as reviewed by the Commission.

Moved by:	Combs
Seconded by:	Tudor
Vote:	Unanimous (<i>Absent:</i> Thom Bernier)
Action:	Motion Carried.

Chair Peterson called a short recess at 7:25 p.m.; meeting resumed at 7:27 p.m.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Committee of the Whole: Discussion of IM 21-016 regarding Palmer Municipal Code Chapter 17.59 T Transitional District (note: action may be taken by the Commission following the committee of the whole)

Main Motion: To enter Committee of the Whole for open and ease of discussion regarding IM 21-016.

Moved by:	Shelton
Seconded by:	Combs
Vote:	Unanimous (<i>Absent:</i> Thom Bernier)
Action:	Motion Carried.

[The Commission entered Committee of the Whole at 7:28 p.m.; exited at 9:03 p.m.]

Director Hanson provided an update from the previous meeting noting the City Council at its June 8 meeting directed staff to prepare a proposed plan for the preparation of an annexation petition. P&Z will play a large role in assisting staff in preparation of the plan by analyzing the study areas, review of land use maps for continuity of land uses, consider any Title 17 policy considerations, land use text amendments, setback considerations, and determine whether there are certain parts of annexed areas where land use regulations may not apply.

Committee of the Whole discussion included:

- Review and open discussion of the study area maps and the purpose of the T zone as it relates to annexation;
- Review of the T Transitional District language and commissioner suggestions for revisions;
- Discussion regarding permitted, prohibited, and conditional uses;
- Director Hanson will do further research and revise pursuant to the suggestions.

[The Commission exited Committee of the Whole at 9:03 p.m.]

J. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Committee of the Whole: Discussion of IM 21-018 regarding Palmer Municipal Code Chapter 17.60 General District Regulations (note: action may be taken by the Commission following the committee of the whole)

Main Motion: To enter Committee of the Whole for open and ease of discussion regarding IM 21-018.

Moved by:	Jackson
Seconded by:	Combs
Vote:	Unanimous (<i>Absent</i> : Thom Bernier)
Action:	Motion Carried

[The Commission entered Committee of the Whole at 9:04 p.m.; exited at 9:39 p.m.]

Director Hanson reported this is further review of Title 17, explaining the General District Regulations are part of the code that applies to all zoning districts, generally. The Commission is to review PMC 17.60 General Regulations and provide comments where necessary should further action be requested.

Committee of the Whole discussion included:

- Review and open discussion of PMC 17.60 General District Regulations for suggestions on revisions;
- Suggestion for clarification purposes to include Definitions of all terms used in the different zones districts.
- Suggestion to clarify 17.60.050, Projections into required yards, paragraph F. regarding enclosed porch or arctic entry;
- Suggestion to clarify 17.60.070, Fences and walls, paragraph A.

[The Commission exited Committee of the Whole at 9:39 p.m.]

K. PLAT REVIEWS: None.

L. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

M. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Shelton advised she will be out of state for the next meeting.

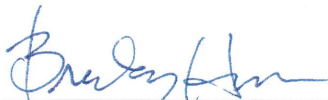
Chair Peterson thanked Director Hanson and his staff for all the help answering questions and concerns.

Director Hanson emphasized if any of the Commission has questions or concerns to not hesitate to call and let staff know, that it will facilitate getting to a faster end result.


N. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned without objection at 9:40 p.m.

APPROVED by the Planning and Zoning Commission this 15th day of July, 2021.



Brad Hanson, Community Development Director



Casey Peterson, Chair