

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA**

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**REGULAR MEETING  
THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 2022  
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 6:02 p.m.

**B. ROLL CALL:**

Constituting a quorum, present in person were Commissioners:

Casey Peterson, Chair  
Linda Combs  
Lisbeth Jackson  
Penny McClain  
Kristy Thom Bernier

Also present:

Brad Hanson, Community Development Director

**C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge was performed.

**D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

The agenda was approved as presented by all members present.  
[Thom Bernier, McClain, Jackson, Combs, Peterson]

**E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:** No minutes were presented.

**F. REPORTS:**

Director Hanson reported on the recent City Council/Board of Economic Development Joint Meeting at which the BED presented its Resolution to encourage the Council to fund a planning study for implementation of potential improvements for the downtown railroad right-of-way. The Council appropriated \$20,000 for the project.

**G. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:**

Andrew Melevanski, 380 N. Eklutna Street, spoke regarding the city land between him and his neighbor, the Andersons, raising concerns about it becoming a snow dump and asked for it to be vacated.

**H. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- 1. Resolution No. 22-004:** A Resolution of the Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission Recommending City Council Approve a Zoning Map Amendment for Tax Parcel C-21 to be rezoned from C-L Limited Commercial to C-G General Commercial, located within Section 33, Township 18 North, Range 2 East, Seward Meridian, Alaska.

Director Hanson provided a staff report informing that the applicants/owners of the property are Dale

and Catherine Fosselman and that on May 31, 2022, 159 public hearing notices were mailed to property owners within 1200' of the site. Notification and publication requirements pursuant to code have been met. A total of 1 written comment was received in response. He spoke to background, including site information, parcel size, existing, zoning, surrounding land uses, other considerations and code requirements.

Findings of Fact:

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

Fact 1) The proposed change is in accordance with the borough and city comprehensive plans.

Staff finds the following support in the Comprehensive Plan:

- 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 reflects 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.
- The proposed change would support the goals and objectives of the City's Comprehensive Plan by encouraging commercial development that will improve business opportunities.
- Guide development so there is the right balance of residential and commercial uses to ensure the City maintains its fiscal health.
- These new building will reflect Palmer's character and historical setting with high quality architecture while maintaining the traditional appeal of Palmer.
- The proposed change will provide more accommodations in the downtown area as well as encourage spending for visitors and tourists.

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

Staff finds:

- The property for the proposed rezone is contiguous to P Public Use District zoning on the South and East, C-L Limited Commercial District and R-3 Medium Density Multifamily Residential District zoning on the North side, C-G General Commercial District zoning to the West of the lot.
- The lot is located adjacent to an active Public zone with the Palmer Police and the Alaska State Troopers detachment, the Mat-Su Pre-Trial Facility and the Alaska Court System, Palmer. Among the other comparable land use in the subject area are attorney offices. Across the railroad right-of-way are small businesses such as retail, gift shops and short-term rentals. Many restaurants and dining establishments are within walking distance from the property, convenient for visitors of Palmer while staying at this location.
- PMC 17.32.060 establishes a minimum lot size of 7,200 square feet. The property is 1.6 acres, sufficient to provide adequate parking, landscaping and buffering from adjacent lots.

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

Staff finds:

- This property is a double frontage lot and has access on South Valley Way and East Cottonwood Avenue, allowing adequate flow of traffic along with incoming and outgoing visitors.
- Utilities are available to serve the proposed use of property as General Commercial; current water and sewer are set in place and will support the proposed structure.
- The proposed change is from C-L, Limited Commercial District to C-G, General Commercial District; there would be little to no impact on public schools since the proposed commercial lease space. The nearest public school is 0.7 miles from the property.

Fact 4) Changed conditions affecting the subject parcel or the surrounding neighborhood supports the proposed change.

Staff finds:

- Expansion of the Central Business District allows opportunities for commercial development opportunities. Commercial activities have expanded in the surrounding area in recent years.
- The surrounding zoning districts consist of R-3, C-L, and P zoning and have had no recent significant condition changes to the area. The recent amendments to the Central Business District allow 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 finds:

- The proposed change does not grant the owner any special privilege as the property in question is contiguous to public zoning and commercial development.
- The proposed change is consistent with the public welfare by allowing this property to be developed for commercial activity for the benefit of Palmer residents and visitors.

Staff Recommendation:

Based on the information provided by the applicant, public comments received before publication of this report and staff analysis, staff recommends approval of the request to a zoning map amendment from C-L, Limited Commercial District, to C-G, General Commercial District. Lot C-21, T18N R2E S33, is consistent with and in conformance with the Palmer Comprehensive Plan.

If following the Public Hearing, the Commission finds that the applicant's proposal conforms to the Palmer Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code provisions, then staff recommends that the Commission approve this request for zoning map amendments for Lot C-21, T18N R2E S33 from C-L Limited Commercial District to C-G, General Commercial District and forward a recommendation for approval to the City Council.

If the final vote of the Commission is not to approve the rezone, the Commission's decision is final unless the initiating party or property owner files a written statement with the City Clerk within 20 days of the Commission's decision requesting that the zoning be considered by the City Council.

Applicant's Presentation:

Jesse Carnahan and Matthew Hayes testified on behalf of Applicants, Dale and Catherine Fosselman, speaking to the "spirit" of the applicants' plans for the property.

Alex Pafasalvach spoke to her concern over increased traffic in the neighborhood.

There being no further members of the public to speak, Chair Peterson closed public testimony at 6:39 p.m. and called for the motion, followed by further open discussion regarding the Resolution and unanimous approval of Findings of Fact 1 through 5 as presented by staff.

**Main Motion:** For approval of Resolution No. 22-004, recommending City Council approve a zoning map amendment for Tax Parcel C-21 to be rezoned from C-L Limited Commercial to C-G General Commercial, located within Section 33, Township 18 North, Range 2 East, Seward Meridian, Alaska.

Moved by:	Combs
Seconded by:	Jackson
Vote:	Unanimous (Thom Bernier, Combs Jackson, McClain, Peterson; 2 vacant)
Action:	Motion Carried.

**I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

**J. NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**K. PLAT REVIEWS:**

1. **IM 22-009:** Pre-application plat request to create two lots from Tax Parcel D-21 (Parcel #2 of Waiver 95-42 pwm).

Director Hanson provided a staff report, directing attention to the packet (p. 47) for comments from City Departments.

The Commission had no additional comments.

2. **IM 22-010:** Abbreviated plat request to create two lots from Tract A-1, Alaska State Land Survey 96-4, Plat No. 99-62, to be known as Matanuska Brewing.

Director Hanson provided a staff report directing attention to the packet (p. 63); City Departments had no comments or issues.

The Commission had no additional comments.

3. **IM-22-011:** Abbreviated/preliminary plat request to create one lot from Lots 3 & 4, Block 1, Sherrod, Plat No. 12-204, to be known as Lot 3A.

Director Hanson provided a staff report directing attention to packet (p. 73), City Departments had no comments or issues.

The Commission had no additional comments.

4. **IM 22-012:** Pre-application request to vacate the 40' x 114' right-of-way located between Lot 7

and Lot 8 (Block 2, Christensen Add Subd.)

Director Hanson provided a staff report directing attention to the packet (p. 81); City Department comments included: City Manager: Is there a future city need such as a utility corridor? Community Development: Consideration should be given for not compounding an access issue for platted lots to west of property. Public Works: Recommends to NOT vacate. Plan to use as storm water area in the future.

Commissioners McClain and Thom Bernier spoke in agreement with Public Works.

**L. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

**M. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

**Commissioner Combs:**

- Requested for support to initiate change from Industrial at the location of the Brewery; Director Hanson noted he would look into it.

**Chair Peterson:**

- Extended a welcome back from vacation to Commissioner Jackson and welcome to new Commissioner McClain.

**Commissioner Thom Bernier:**

- Reported that Colony Days was very successful and thanked Director Hanson and staff for helping to make it happen.
- Next big event at the Fair Grounds is the Scottish Hyland Games;
- Commented they are gearing up for the Alaska State Fair.

**N. ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned without objection at 7:33 p.m.

**APPROVED by the Planning and Zoning Commission this 28<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2022.**

  
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Brad Hanson, Community Development Director

  
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Casey Peterson, Chair