

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

**REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, September 14, 2023
6:00 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 6:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

Present and constituting a quorum were Commissioners:

Casey Peterson, Chair
Penny Mosher, Vice Chair
Linda Combs
Lisbeth Jackson
John Murphy
Kristy Thom Bernier
(Vacant)

Also present were:

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

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge was performed.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The agenda was approved as presented without objection by all members present.
[Thom Bernier, Murphy, Jackson, Combs, Mosher, Peterson]

E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S):

1. Regular Meeting of October 20, 2022
 2. Regular Meeting of January 19, 2023
 3. Regular Meeting of March 16, 2023
 4. Regular Meeting of April 20, 2023
 5. Regular Meeting of July 20, 2023
 6. Regular Meeting of August 17, 2023
- Approval of the Minutes were postponed.

F. REPORTS:

Staff Report: Director Hanson:

- Updated as to current status of the Library – open house public forum discussion at the Depot next Thursday, September 21, 2023, 4-6 p.m., conducted by Wolf Architecture;
- Reported it is budget time at City Council.

G. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None.

H. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. **IM 23-015:** Consideration of Recommendation of a Text Amendment to Amend Palmer Municipal Code Chapters 17.08 Definitions, 17.20 R-1 Single-family Residential, 17.24 R-2 Low Density Residential, 17.26 R-3 Medium Density Multifamily Residential, 17.27 R-4 High Density Residential, 17.52 R-1E Single-family Residential Estate, 17.54 RR Rural Residential, Adding Homeless Shelter and Homeless Shelter Emergency and amending Commercial Land Use Matrix Chapter 17.28.020, and Enacting Palmer Municipal Code Chapter 17.18.020 Residential Land Use Matrix.

Staff Report: Director Hanson explained the proposed amendments identified on pages 9-23 of the packet. Based on previous discussion, changes have been made to the ordinance and are highlighted in yellow. Homeless Shelter and Homeless Shelter, Emergency, have been left blank on the matrix indicating it is not a permitted or conditional use. Also based on prior discussions, a Residential Land Use Matrix has been created along with amending pertinent definitions and deleting redundant definitions.

The Residential Land Use Matrix was created to simplify uses and be consistent with the Commercial Land Use Matrix. The Commission was asked to review the matrix to ensure completeness and accuracy. In addition, it was asked to review the complex land uses related to homelessness and ADA compliance and appropriateness within the different zoning districts.

Community Development recommends approval of the proposed text amendment to enact the Palmer Residential Land Use Matrix, amend definitions as appropriate, and forward same to City Council with a recommendation for approval.

Public Hearing: Chair Peterson opened the Public Hearing at 6:13 p.m. There being no persons coming forward to testify, the public hearing was closed at 6:14 p.m.

Chair Peterson called for the motion. Following further discussion and questions of staff:

Main Motion: For approval of the proposed text amendment identified in IM 23-015 (formerly IM 23-007) to enact the Palmer Residential Land Use Matrix, as amended with the changes presented by staff, and move forward to City Council with a recommendation for adoption.

Moved by:	Combs
Seconded by:	Jackson
Vote:	Unanimous [Thom-Bernier, Murphy, Jackson, Combs, Mosher, Peterson]
Action:	Motion Carried.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

J. NEW BUSINESS: None.

K. PLAT REVIEWS:

1. **IM 23-016:** Preliminary Plat Review – To create two lots from Lots 2A and 3A, Homesite Tract No. 100, Plat No. 2019-29, to be known as Lot 2A1 and Lot 3A1, located outside Palmer city limits.

Director Hanson reported comments from the following City Departments:

Community Development: The parcels are located within the designated Airport Influence Area; it is

recommended that a plat note be added to the new plat reflecting this information. If the proposed lots were located inside Palmer city limits and zoned CG, General Commercial, the minimum required lot width would be 60 feet and the minimum required lot area would be 7,200 square feet. The proposed lots have access from W. Recon Circle.

Other City Departments: No changes necessary.

The Commission had no additional comments.

L. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Michelle Kincaid commented regarding homeless encampments popping up on private property and could anything be done about it or addressed by the City.

Lorie Koppenberg thanked the Commission for listening to the community at its last meeting, noting that by this Commission taking the appropriate steps, we are safeguarding our city and citizens and safeguarding the economic viability of our town. Looks forward to the City Council following through. She also expanded on Michelle's comments regarding the homeless encroaching on private property; commended the Palmer Police Force and is very proud for what they do to help. She will be attending the City Council meeting when this topic is addressed because we are impacted individually and as a business every day.

M. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Murphy:

- Inquired as to procedure moving the proposed Ordinance to City Council.

Commissioner Jackson:

- Commented the action tonight is a great step forward to simplify with the matrix as opposed to extensive verbiage; thanked staff for all the work they've done.
- Commented on the topic of annexation being reminded by recent plat reviews on development occurring outside the city.

Commissioner Combs:

- Spoke in appreciation of the amount of thought put into proposed Ordinance with the focus on simplification for better understanding and thanked the public for their participation.

Commissioner Thom Bernier:

- Also thanked the community members for being here and taking part in the process.

Commissioner Mosher:

- Commented to the audience that she also appreciates their input; noted one of the things they brought up was homeless encampments, not just on private property but also on borough properties; encouraged the commissioners and public to attend the planning and zoning meetings at the Borough as well to make it clear that this is not acceptable in our community.
- Noted that she concurs with the comments on annexation.

Commissioner Peterson:

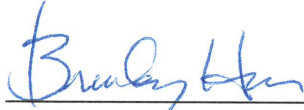
- Also thanked the public and the commission for speaking up, commenting that the homeless situation is a much bigger problem than just Palmer, that we should encourage the Borough in

conjunction with Wasilla, Palmer, and Sutton to come up with something that would be feasible.

N. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned without objection at 6:45 p.m.

APPROVED by the Planning and Zoning Commission this 21st day of December 2023.



Brad Hanson, Community Development Director



Casey Peterson, Chair