



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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DAVID R. CAREY
BOROUGH MAYOR

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gary Knopp, Assembly President
Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Members

THRU: *gallary* David R. Carey, Borough Mayor

FROM: *MB* Max J. Best, Planning Director

DATE: March 31, 2011

SUBJECT: Ordinance 2011-05; An Ordinance adopting Envision Soldotna 2030 as the official comprehensive plan for that portion of the Borough within the boundaries of the City of Soldotna

The Planning Commission reviewed the subject ordinance during their regularly scheduled February 28, 2011 meeting. A motion passed by unanimous consent to recommend approval of the ordinance.

In the ordinance, please make the following amendment to the last WHEREAS:

WHEREAS, the KPB Planning Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting of February 28, 2011 recommended approval.

AGENDA ITEM F. PUBLIC HEARINGS

4. Ordinance 2011-05; An Ordinance adopting Envision Soldotna 2030 as the official comprehensive plan for that portion of the Borough within the boundaries of the City of Soldotna

Memorandum & Staff Report given by Crista Cady

PC Meeting: 2/28/2011

The City of Soldotna has adopted an updated comprehensive plan, entitled Envision Soldotna, 2030. The plan was recently delivered to the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) planning department, along with Soldotna City Council adopting ordinance 2010-038, and Soldotna Planning and Zoning Commission resolution 2010-32. Excerpted minutes from the January 26, 2011, city council meeting, and the December 1, 2010, planning and zoning commission meeting were also provided. All of these documents are included in the meeting packet.

KPB Ordinance 2007-19-29 appropriated \$50,000 from the borough's general fund to be used in developing a new comprehensive plan for the City of Soldotna. This ordinance and supporting materials are also included in the packet.

Borough planning staff attended several of the comprehensive plan meetings, at both the planning and zoning commission and city council levels, and provided comments on the draft document to the city planner.

The KPB Planning Commission's comments and recommendations regarding the adoption of this plan will be forwarded to the assembly. Thank you.

END OF MEMORANDUM & STAFF REPORT

Vice Chairman Martin opened the meeting for public comment.

1. Stephanie Queen, Soldotna City Planner

Ms. Queen thanked the KPB Planning Department and Administration for their support of the Soldotna City. They have been interested in updating their comprehensive plan for about 16 years so it was quite overdue. She stated they were excited to be able to go through this process. It has been within the last two years that the City has been actively working on this document.

Ms. Queen commented that the City is very proud of the document that is before the Borough Planning Commission. They had quite a bit of public participation early on in this process by inviting people inside and outside the city limits. She stated they looked at issues relevant to Soldotna but also took a regional approach to some of the things that they wanted to include in this document.

Ms. Queen thought the document will be able to be incorporated into the operations of the City. They will use this document in the day to day decision making, whether it is formulating the five year capital plan or looking at smaller strategic plan type items. She also thought this document will allow the city to accomplish quite a bit of the "to do" items as set out in the 66 plus goals. What this document does is to give them some more specific action items to be able to really use it as a checklist. Ms. Queen saw this plan as a positive document for the City and the residents of the area to be able to have this at their disposal to use.

Ms. Queen thought one of the challenges with this project was keeping the public engaged, involved and informed since this took two years to develop. There were sometimes big gaps in the process where they weren't able to have meetings. Staff was constantly evaluating the public participation process. Many additional meetings were added to the development of the plan as well as some different types of outreach. They were able to incorporate a lot of the ideas that came from the public. She was available to answer questions regarding the plan or process and again thanked the Borough for their support.

Vice Chairman Martin asked if there were questions for Ms. Queen.

Commissioner Foster stated he liked this document and felt it was a usable document that could be used by anyone. He asked if there was any discussion under the rural residential characteristics of "*Larger minimum lot sizes to accommodate on-site well and septic, and to preserve a sense of open space.*" He asked what would happen when city water and/or sewer were brought to it and if the zoning would be changed to Suburban. Ms. Queen didn't recall any specific discussions about if the City undertook capital projects that extended services to those lots that they would instantly go back and amend this map. The suburban characterization was something new that came out of this plan. Currently there is no such designation of suburban. There is a rural residential zone that allows for things like agriculture, large animals. There is also the residential designation which is primarily in the core of town. She stated the suburban designation was something new that came out of the public meetings. When they looked at the future land use map they noticed there was a lot of wetlands and environmentally valuable, sensitive land with Soldotna Creek. To some degree they wanted to leave that as a question mark and not prescribe something there when they don't know what that development will look like. It is an ambitious plan and Staff would revisit that if development occurs.

Commissioner Foster stated that one of the concerns he had in Homer was that property can be subdivided down to 10,000 feet once sewer and water was brought to the property. There are property owners along sensitive areas whether it be a bluff or water body when they are not looking at their neighbors subdividing. There is an opposition of bringing sewer and water in. It is in fact, it is really good for the health of the land to not have additional water going in with an eroding bluff. He felt it was a hard balance that planning has to do so that they don't automatically allow subdivisions with future smaller lots just because sewer and water was brought in. Ms. Queen felt that was a very valid concern. It is the goal of the plan to extend sewer services to areas along the river. They would not want folks to not participate in that process because they would be concerned about the lot sizes subdividing. The Soldotna Municipal Code is skimpy on subdivision regulations.

Commissioner Holsten also thought the plan provided excellent information. She asked if there were plans to take non-motorized walkable, accessible neighborhood planning to the next stage. Ms. Queen replied that the reason that was in the plan was that it was important to many of the people who commented. They talked about summer and winter access. There were comments of appreciation that the City of Soldotna keeps their sidewalks clear in the winter. One of the recommendations was to update their roads plan but also update their recreation master plan. She felt that was one way of being able to get into a lot more detail of trying to find out where there were gaps in the trail network. This comprehensive plan lays the goal in front of them as identifying it as being important but there has to be future work to be able to get to the specifics of it. Ms. Queen stated that the Roads Master Plan was in their five year capital plan with the city. She hoped that trails could be incorporated into that or to be undertaken as its own document.

Commissioner Isham commended the City of Soldotna for establishing a good comprehensive plan. He referred to page 74 which states, "Continue to pursue upgrades to the wastewater treatment system and study the potential for a long-term alternative to river discharge of treated wastewater." He stated they could currently remove coliforms or viruses by using the UV system. The lower 48 is finding a lot of toxins from pharmaceutical medications that ends up in the wastewater treatment plant. They are finding that downstream of discharges of wastewater treatment plant that it was affecting reproduction of fish. Commissioner Isham asked if there were discussions regarding that and of the possibility of installing a pipeline that would discharge directly into Cook Inlet. Ms. Queen stated that it was too far from her expertise and deferred to Commissioner Ruffner or Rick Woods from the city who may know more about that. The issue of the pipeline did come up in the public meetings. There was a goal in the regional development and growth section that talks about coordinating with neighboring municipalities for mutually beneficent projects when there is an opportunity to do so. The City's wastewater treatment plan is budgeted for the next year and is starting to work with the relevant governing agencies. She stated that there was some discussion and concern about continuing to look for alternatives. Several folks within the City were already doing that but felt it was an important goal to leave in because it is going to be an ongoing issue.

Commissioner Parker stated she served on the City Council and they have done numerous upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant. It is a regulated facility by EPA. There have also been studies done to insure that the discharge from the treatment plant don't impact the fish in the Kenai River. She stated there have been no studies that have been done to find that the fish have been impacted by the discharges from the treatment

plant. This is a facility that will continually get upgrades.

There being no further questions or comments the public hearing continued.

Seeing and hearing no one else wishing to speak, Vice Chairman Martin closed the public comment period and opened discussion among the Commission.

MOTION: Commissioner Lockwood moved, seconded by Commissioner Holsten to recommend adoption of Ordinance 2011-05; An Ordinance adopting Envision Soldotna 2030 as the official comprehensive plan for that portion of the Borough within the boundaries of the City of Soldotna

Commissioner Parker was a resident of the City of Soldotna and commended Ms. Queen, City Planner and City Planning Commission Chairman, John Czarnezki for the terrific job that they did. In particularly, when they found that the outreach wasn't going as they wanted then they took it to the next level. It was through their efforts that they ended up with the document that they have. She was very proud of the work done by the City and for the vision that they have.

VOTE: The motion passed by unanimous consent.

BRYSON ABSENT	CARLUCCIO ABSENT	COLLINS ABSENT	ECKLUND YES	FOSTER YES	GROSS ABSENT	HOLSTEN YES
ISHAM YES	LOCKWOOD YES	MARTIN YES	PARKER YES	RUFFNER YES	TAURIAINEN YES	9 YES 4 ABSENT

AGENDA ITEM G. ANADROMOUS STREAM HABITAT PROTECTION AREA (KPB 21.18) - None

AGENDA ITEM H. VACATIONS NOT REQUIRING A PUBLIC HEARING - None

AGENDA ITEM I. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS - None

AGENDA ITEM J. SUBDIVISION PLAT PUBLIC HEARINGS

Chairman Martin reported the Plat Committee reviewed and conditionally approved 2 preliminary plats.

AGENDA ITEM K. COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS - None

AGENDA ITEM L. OTHER/NEW BUSINESS

AGENDA ITEM M. ASSEMBLY COMMENTS

No Assembly person present.

AGENDA ITEM N. LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS

AGENDA ITEM O. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Best stated that the Commissioners received information on the review and recommendations of KPB 21.18, Prior Existing Uses & Structures. He asked that the commissioners review and submit comments at the next meeting of March 14, 2011. A public hearing is scheduled for March 28, 2011 Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Best also stated that a letter was sent to Caribou Hills property owners. The seismograph trails were drawn on the map incorrectly through unrectified photos that placed them in positions that gave bad acreages. Staff has surveys over the last 20 years along with the LIDAR data which depicts the actual location accurately within a few feet. They have adjusted acreages so if anyone receives questions, then direct them to Mr. Best.

Vice Chairman Martin asked if there were questions for Mr. Best. Hearing none the meeting continued.