

**CITY OF UNALASKA  
UNALASKA, ALASKA  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2015  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL  
7:00 P.M.**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Steven Gregory called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**Roll Call:**

*Commissioners present:*

Steven Gregory

Doanh Tran

Vicki Williams

James Santana

*Commissioners absent:*

Jessica Earnshaw

**Staff Present:**

Erin Reinders, Planning Director

Anthony Grande, Planning Administrator

- 2. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA:** *None*

- 3. APPEARANCE REQUESTS:** *None*

- 4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:** *None*

- 5. MINUTES:** *Planning Commission & Platting Board, December 18, 2014.* Chair Gregory called for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 18, 2014 meeting. Doanh Tran made a motion, James Santana seconded the motion. Chair Gregory asked if there were any further discussions on the minutes. There being no comments, Chair Gregory called for a vote, which was unanimous (4-0). The minutes for the December 18, 2014 meeting were adopted.

**PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ITEMS:** *None*

**REGULAR MEETING:**

- 6. Receipt of Platting Authority approval of Resolution 2014-25 for the Parkside Estates Subdivision Revision 1, a resubdivision of Lot 1 Parkside Estates.**

Anthony Grande presented one subdivision that had recently been approved in the Planning Department on December 18, 2014. Parkside Estates Subdivision Revision 1 was an abbreviated plat that fell under the guidelines that allow for small subdivisions to be approved in the Planning Department and reported at a later date to the commission. No action was required.

## **7. Adoption and submittal of Planning Commission/Platting Board Annual Report for 2014 to City Council.**

Erin Reinders provided an overview of Planning Commission/Platting Board Annual Report. The report reviews accomplishments of the past year and identified goals for the coming year. In 2014, the Planning Commission/Platting Board met ten times, approved eight plats, granted three variances, recommended two zone amendments to City Council, recommended several changes to City Code, and reviewed the 2014 Land Inventory. One of the most important goals is to completing a Land Use Plan, which will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff recommended approval of Resolution 2015-03. Once this report is adopted by the Planning Commission it is scheduled to be presented to City Council on February 10, 2015.

Chair Gregory asked the commissioners if they had any questions or comments on the report. Not hearing any questions or comments, Chair Gregory asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2015-03, adopting the Planning Commission/Platting Board Annual Report for 2014. Vicki Williams made a motion, Doanh Tran seconded the motion. Chair Gregory asked if there was any further discussion on the report. There being no further discussion, Chair Gregory called for a vote, which was unanimous (4-0).

## **WORK SESSION:**

### **8. Staff presentation of *Unalaska Infill Development Analysis*.**

Erin Reinders began by noting that this infill development analysis is a direct result of a recommendation from the City's Housing Plan about putting together a study that would highlight developable lots. Ms. Reinders noted that Anthony Grande has put a great deal of time into producing this analysis and thanked him for his hard work.

Anthony Grande gave further details on the Unalaska Infill Development Analysis. Mr. Grande mentioned that this report is a follow up of the Land Use Inventory presented in October 2014 and focuses more closely on the vacant lot category. This analysis covers, in detail, 117 properties that were listed as vacant land in the Land Use Inventory. The main question Staff focused on was, "does this vacant land translate into potential future development?" Mr. Grande explained the concept of infill in regards to land development. Infill refers to developing properties and filling in in existing neighborhoods where there might be one or two vacant lots surrounded by previously developed lots. This would be different than expanding road service to a completely undeveloped area.

The main areas of focus in this analysis of the 117 properties were: topography, utilities, zoning, ownership, lot size, and access issues. The topographical information was gathered by completing a "windshield" survey of the lots where Staff drove around and inspected each lot. The majority of the rest of the information was collected from various City records. The maximum housing development potential was based strictly on zoning for each lot. There may be some cases where the topography won't likely allow for additional units. Approximately three quarters of the lots are zoned for residential use, the rest being industrial and commercial. The majority of the vacant lots have the three City utilities already available in the right-of-way. In this report, each vacant lot has its own page with all the City's findings and an aerial or actual photo.

The Comprehensive Plan mentions infill as a possible strategy and calls for a report of this type to be produced. This analysis shows that there is potential for infill development in Unalaska. Finalizing this document accomplishes one of the goals in the Comp Plan. Mr. Grande wanted to clarify that this is just a broad overview for informational purposes and in no way is an endorsement for a certain lot as developable. If someone wanted to develop the lot they might need to seek professional services for a more in depth analysis.

Chair Gregory asked for any questions or comments from the commissioners. Commissioner Tran praised the amount of work that went into putting the document together and thought it was a great starting point for people, like herself, that don't own property or a house. Commissioner Santana was happy to see that there were possibilities for future development. Chair Gregory praised Staff's work on the document. Chair Gregory brought up the only question, asking why some lots had access comments and others were blank. Staff answered that they only made comments if there was a perceived obstacle or concern. If a field was left blank it was due to there being no issues present.

At this point Chair Gregory opened the floor to public comment. Jeff Hancock was concerned about the term "infill" and its implications. He asked Staff how many of the lots in the Infill Development Analysis were City owned. Staff estimated around five lots. One of the lots happens to be next door to Mr. Hancock who wanted it known that he has concerns about future development of the lot. Currently, there are mostly single family residences surrounding the lot and he was interested in seeing the area remain that way with more green space and less crowding. Mr. Hancock would like to see adjacent property owners notified if lots go up for sale or if there is a possibility of development.

Chair Gregory hoped to alleviate some of Mr. Hancock's concerns by letting him know that when the Planning Commission rezoned some of the lots on Lower Haystack from Single Family to Multi Family he let it be known that he didn't want to see the Multi Family zoning creep up the mid and upper areas of Haystack.

A second member of the public, Suzi Golodoff, appreciates the efforts the City is making to find additional area for housing but hopes that the main focus isn't on infill development. As time goes on, more areas are becoming crowded which changes the character of the town. She would prefer to see more land open up for development.

Chair Gregory thanked Ms. Golodoff for her comments. Chair Gregory stated that it isn't the Planning Commission's job to encourage or discourage development, but rather to make sure development proceeds responsibly and according to code and the Comprehensive Plan. Chair Gregory encourages all members of the public to participate in the next Comprehensive Plan since that is what guides the City and Planning Commissioners in their decision making. Since housing was the number one concern in the current Comprehensive Plan, much of the City's focus is on remedying that problem.

Erin Reinders stated that there are many housing conversations happening in the City, and that this Infill Analysis is just one of many things being talked about. Ms. Reinders echoed Chair Gregory's comment for more public participation in the development of the Land Use Plan or the Comprehensive Plan as a whole. Staff will make it known when that process will start.

Commissioner Tran asked if the work camps were left out of the Infill Analysis due to there currently being activity taking place on them, or if they were somehow accounted for? Anthony Grande explained that since this analysis was just a snapshot in time that if a property is in flux by the time the analysis was complete things would have already changed. This analysis was based on the Land Use Inventory. If a property is excluded that means at the time the Land Use Inventory took place it was not designated as a vacant lot. Also, some lots are so big that even though part of the lot looks vacant, the other part is developed.


**OTHER BUSINESS:** *None*

**9. ADJOURNMENT:** Chair Gregory adjourned the meeting at 7:42 PM.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 26<sup>th</sup> DAY OF Feb 2015 BY THE CITY OF  
UNALASKA, ALASKA PLANNING COMMISSION.

  
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Doanh Tran  
Acting Chair

2/26/15  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Erin Reinders  
Recording Secretary

2/26/15  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Prepared by Kelly Tompkins and Erin Reinders, Planning Department