Session 14-20, a Regular Meeting of the Homer Advisory Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Stead at 6:30 p.m. on November 5, 2014 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS BRADLEY, ERICKSON, HIGHLAND, STEAD, STROOZAS, VENUTI

ABSENT: BOS

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOUD
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR MEYER

Approval of Agenda

Chair Stead called for a motion to approve the agenda.

STROOZAS/HIGHLAND SO MOVED

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

Public Comment
The public may speak to the Planning Commission regarding matters on the agenda that are not scheduled for public hearing or plat consideration. (3 minute time limit).

There were no public comments.

Reconsideration

Adoption of Consent Agenda
All items on the consent agenda are considered routine and non-controversial by the Planning Commission and are approved in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless requested by a Planning Commissioner or someone from the public, in which case the item will be moved to the regular agenda and considered in normal sequence.

A. Approval of Minutes of November 5, 2014 meeting
B. Decision and Findings for Conditional Fence Permit at 3945 Mullikin St.

Chair Stead called for a motion to adopt the consent agenda.

HIGHLAND/STROOZAS SO MOVED

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

Presentations

A. Tom Taffe, Wind Turbines

Tom Taffe introduced Kamran Vasseghi and explained that they have been studying wind turbines for two years. Mr. Taffe addressed:

- Increasing power costs;
- Benefits of vertical access wind turbines;
- Federal incentives for solar power and wind power;
- The need for keeping up with technological changes;
- Drawbacks and risks of propeller type wind turbines;
- Referenced UGE as a company they should be dealing with because they have already done the research and development in over 90 countries over eight years;
- UGE has solutions for smaller areas;
- The need for incentives and standards;
- State grant programs for commercial projects;
- Encourage the community to get informed and involved.

In response to questions, Mr. Taffe and the Commission addressed system capacity, unit cost, view protection and planning, federal and state subsidies, and fossil fuel energy.

Reports

A. Staff Report PL 14-94, City Planner's Report

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

There was further discussion regarding towers and the FCC's role, regulation, and preserving view shed.

Public Hearings

Testimony limited to 3 minutes per speaker. The Commission conducts Public Hearings by hearing a staff report, presentation by the applicant, hearing public testimony and then acting on the Public Hearing items. The Commission may question the public. Once the public hearing is closed the Commission cannot hear additional comments on the topic. The applicant is not held to the 3 minute time limit.

Plat Consideration

A. Staff Report PL 14-95, Tietjen Subdivision Church of Christ Addition Preliminary Plat

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

There was no applicant comment and no public comment.

Commissioner Venuti asked if the applicant is aware this will not affect their gas line assessment. City Planner Abboud said he did not know. An unidentified audience member said he is aware.

VENUTI/STROOZAS MOVED TO APPROVE STAFF REPORT PL 14-95 TIETJEN SUBDIVISION CHURCH OF CHRIST ADDITION PRELIMINARY PLAT WITH STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

It was noted that this action seems pretty straight forward.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Pending Business

New Business

A. Staff Report 14-96, Wind Energy Systems

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report and acknowledged the comments about changing technology and opportunities for different types of energy units. He envisions more of a focused discussion of some of the externalities of these devices and how they might be regulated.

Commissioner Stroozas noted Mr. Taffe's comments about state and federal money as a kick starter to help get something going, and thinks it will take something like that to get it going. In his opinion there aren't enough people who want to do it on their own. If a typical residence uses 600kwh per month at 22 cents per kwh is $132 per month. It would take about 340 months to pay back and that doesn't factor in maintenance. His recommendation is for staff to review the proposal and bring it back at a later date.

Commissioner Erickson suggested the street lights that are powered by the small wind turbines might work well on the spit trail and it would be a good chance to see how well the work. She also expressed that obstruction of the view shed is an important factor.

Commissioner Venuti said that one of the most important issues when they initially discussed this was protecting the view.

Commissioner Bradley added that they only referenced one company, there are other opportunities to see designs for street lights and so forth that is more efficient and less showy. She commented about the changing technology and that it is likely cost probative for most people. As they become more affordable and we start seeing them more often she wonders if we'll get used to seeing them, like we do with cell towers now.

Commissioner Highland noted this is renewable energy and something that is going forward on doing some good. There are going to be people who are willing to pay to do their part. Mr. Vasseghi has a piece of property in town and will likely need one. We want to think proactively about this. She doesn't think it is a good idea to postpone this for too long, because we are already in an energy crisis.

They discussed code and current height allowances and how all this can addressed. First they need to get a definition of tower. The Commission agreed to schedule discussion at a future date.

Informational Materials

A. City Manager's Report for the November 24, 2014 City Council Meetings
B. City of Homer Capital Projects Status Report- Public Works Department October 2014
C. Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Commission Notice of Decision Re: Section Line Easement Vacation Plan with Dierich Addition Lot 4B-1 Time Extension Request

Comments of the Audience

Members of the audience may address the Commission on any subject. (3 minute time limit)

There were no audience comments.

Comments of Staff

Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen commented about the wind turbines on Pillar Mountain in Kodiak.

City Planner Abboud said he will work with the Chair on updating the Commission work list.

Comments of the Commission

Commissioner Stroozas wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Commissioner Venuti commended the Planning staff for doing a great job while Rick was away. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Commissioner Erickson commented that a couple things stood out to her tonight. One was the review and technology every two or three years to see where we're at every two or three years. She liked the fact that they looked at a chapter in the Comp Plan every year is a great idea because things change quickly. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Commissioner Bradley had no comments.

Commissioner Highland was excited to have tonight's conversation. It's a futuristic conversation. If everyone changed something, in time it would make a difference. She wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Chair Steady wished everyone a happy Christmas and wonderful New Year. The topics discussed are near and dear to his heart and he looks forward to future discussions, but he doesn't agree with everything that was presented tonight.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers. A worksession will be held at 5:30 p.m.

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MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____