

Agenda
Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU
Michael LeVine, Chairman
August 9, 2022

I. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – Read by Commissioner Pedersen.

We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land, and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. Gunalchéesh!

II. ROLL CALL

Michael LeVine, Chairman, called the Regular Meeting of the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Planning Commission (PC), held in Assembly Chambers of the Municipal Building, virtually via Zoom Webinar, and telephonically, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners present: Commissioners present in Chambers – Michael LeVine, Chairman; Paul Voelckers, Vice Chair; Travis Arndt, Clerk; Ken Alper; Erik Pedersen; Mandy Cole

Commissioners absent: Dan Hickok, Deputy Clerk; Joshua Winchell

Staff present: Jill Maclean, CDD Director; Adrienne Scott, Planner I; Chelsea Wallace, CDD Administrative Assistant II; Sherri Layne, Law Assistant Municipal Attorney

Assembly members: Alicia Hughes-Skandijs

III. REQUEST FOR AGENDA CHANGES AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA – None

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 14, 2022 Draft Minutes, Regular Planning Commission

MOTION: *by Mr. Arndt to approve the June 14, 2022 Planning Commission Regular Meeting minutes.*

B. June 28, 2022 Draft Minutes, Regular Planning Commission

MOTION: *by Mr. Arndt to approve the June 28, 2022 Planning Commission Regular Meeting minutes with one correction.*

V. **BRIEF REVIEW OF THE RULES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – Chairman LeVine briefly explained the rules for participating in person and via zoom format.

VI. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS** – None

VII. **ITEMS FOR RECONSIDERATION** – None

VIII. **CONSENT AGENDA** – None

IX. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS** – None

X. **REGULAR AGENDA**

VAR2022 0003: A proposed Variance to reduce a front yard setback from 20 feet to 10 feet

Applicant: Joshua Simonson

Location: Greenwood Avenue, Block C Lot 3A

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the Director’s analysis and findings and APPROVE the requested Non-Administrative Variance with the following condition. The Non-Administrative Variance would reduce a front yard setback from 20 feet to 10 feet.

Condition: Prior to being issued a Building Permit, the applicant shall provide a parking plan showing how off-street parking requirements are being met.

STAFF PRESENTATION – by Director Maclean

QUESTIONS FOR STAFF – Mr. Pedersen asked why this is a non-administrative variance. Ms. Maclean explained administrative variances are those which fall within the Director’s authority. This variance exceeds her authority to vary. She has authority to approve variances within two feet. This is beyond that and, therefore requires Commission approval.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION – Joshua Simonson said they are pursuing new construction on the property and the variance is necessitated by the slope of the lots and the drainage culverts. He addressed neighbor concerns regarding parking and said he is proposing a 38-foot driveway and there would not be any on-street parking required.

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICANT – Mr. Voelckers explained variances require a high threshold to support them. He said the site plan looks as though rotating the house by 90 degrees would fit within the required setbacks and asked if other geometries had been considered.

Mr. Simonson explained they had considered several possibilities but they were trying to maintain the views of the channel from the deck.

Mr. LeVine asked if it was possible to build it without the deck. Mr. Simonson answered that if they did so, it would require rotating the house. If they were to do that, the house would have the main window view directly into the neighboring living room.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Scholl – 3640 Greenwood Ave – Mr. Scholl said he hopes there is a house built there but he has safety concerns regarding snow plowing on the sidewalk. If the variance is granted, he is concerned there may be a problem with cars blocking plow access to the sidewalk.

Mr. Alper asked about the testimony regarding a car in the driveway. According to the sketch, the driveway will wrap around and be long enough to allow vehicles without overlapping the sidewalk. Mr. Scholl answered that he had not seen the site plan prior to the meeting and he was envisioning a driveway straight from the garage.

Ms. Cole asked about the variance Mr. Scholl mentioned in his testimony. He explained that he had received a rear setback variance in order to comply with the front setback requirements.

Anitra Waldo – 3620 Greenwood Ave - Ms. Waldo testified saying she welcomes the new neighbor but wants the Commission to understand the structure of the road. Their road is narrow with limited snow storage. She is concerned that cars parking in the street would block snow plows, garbage trucks, and emergency vehicles in the winter.

Mr. Pedersen asked if on-street parking is currently permitted. Ms. Waldo answered for six months of the year, there is no parking allowed on one side of the road.

Mr. Voelckers asked if there is a sidewalk on both sides of the street. She said it is only on the water side.

Mr. LeVine said the authority of the PC regarding parking in this case is limited to requiring three spaces. The current proposal provides for four spaces. If they were to rotate the construction as suggested earlier, it could reduce the parking spaces. He asked if she would prefer denying the variance if that meant reducing the parking. She said she would have to consider that.

Ken Truitt – [Tlingit name *Kadashan Took Seak*] – 3610 Greenwood Ave – Mr. Truitt explained the street is more narrow than code and they have already experienced issues with emergency vehicles refusing to come due to the roads.

Mr. Pedersen asked when the LID was entered into and whether the road was gravel or paved prior to that. Mr. Truitt answered it was around 2004 or 2005 and it was an unmaintained dirt road at the time.

Tom Waldo – 3620 Greenwood Ave – Mr. Waldo echoed the previously heard concerns saying the road is narrowed to a single lane during the winter with snow removal.

Mr. LeVine asked if there were four spots that met code, would that remove his concerns.

Mr. Waldo said it would help but he is still not crazy about it. He stated the new build would be out of character with the other houses in the area if it is allowed the variance.

Todd Miller – 3580 Greenwood Ave – Mr. Miller stated the variance would not allow enough room for parking and the snow berm that is built up each year. Mr. Miller also felt the house could be rotated and then would not need a variance.

ADDITIONAL APPLICANT COMMENTS – Mr. Simonson spoke to say he understands the concerns of the neighbors. He agreed it is a narrow street and parking is a concern. He is hopeful that the design of the side entry driveway will alleviate or mitigate any parking concerns.

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS FOR APPLICANT

Mr. Arndt asked how far the left side of the building is from the drainage ditch. Mr. Simonson estimated it is around 20 or 25-feet.

Mr. LeVine asked if there were four trucks in the driveway, how much room is remaining before encroaching the road. Mr. Simonson said there would be up to 6 feet remaining. Mr. Arndt asked if the trucks would block the sidewalk. Mr. Simonson explained that it would not.

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS FOR STAFF

Mr. Arndt referenced public testimony regarding the narrow street and the LID and asked the Director if she knew if the road is undersized or the width of the street. Ms. Maclean did not have that information.

MOTION: *by Ms. Cole to accept staff's findings, analysis, and recommendations, and approve VAR2022 0003.*

Ms. Cole spoke against the motion. She said the changing of the geometry of the house was for the viewshed and not for geography or other reason. Mr. Voelckers agreed with Ms. Cole saying he agrees that it would be nice to grant the variance but it does not meet the criteria. Mr. Arndt

also agreed saying there are other options that could be built on this lot. Mr. LeVine also spoke against the variance. Mr. LeVine added the applicant's narrative said it would be expensive to fill in the back of the lot and that expense generally is not sufficient to justify the hardship requirement for a Variance.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yea: Alper

No: Cole, Arndt, Pedersen, Voelckers, LeVine

The motion FAILED 5-1 on roll call vote.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS – None

XII. STAFF REPORTS

Ms. Maclean reported:

- Title 49 will meet on August 18.
- Hazard Mapping will be 29 August prior to the joint Assembly/PC meeting.
- The Comprehensive Plan has been added to the Budget and is fully funded but the Department needs to fill positions before they can move forward.
- Lands, Housing, Economic Development met last evening.
- Public Works and Facilities Committee met today.
- Assembly Committee of the Whole met last night. Recruitment and job vacancies were a hot topic.
- Ms. Maclean added later that the Alternative Development Overlay District (ADOD) is scheduled for public hearing and the Catholic Social Services rezone will go before the Assembly on August 22.

Mr. LeVine asked if there is a time limit for the Joint meeting with the Assembly. Ms. Maclean said it is not limited, but she expects it to last about an hour.

Mr. Arndt noted Joseph Meyers has been promoted and asked if he would still be working on permits and plan review. Ms. Maclean said she hopes the CDD will fill his position soon. As of August 15, Mr. Meyers will be in his new position working on the Juneau Affordable Housing, Accessory Apartments, and other housing topics.

Mr. Voelckers asked about the timeline or intent regarding mass wasting and hazard mapping. Ms. Maclean said she expects that to be a topic at the joint meeting. Mr. Voelckers asked if there has been any problem with owners getting financing due to their location relative to hazard zones. Ms. Maclean said she would get back to him with that.

XIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Cole reported:

- She attended the Lands committee last night and appreciated the ADOD video presentation. The ordinance was forwarded to the Assembly with support.
- Telephone hill project is moving forward.

- There are two parties interested in the Pederson Hill property. They are Tlingit & Haida (interested in building affordable single housing) and a private party (with plans to build multi-family units).

Mr. Voelckers asked if Tlingit & Haida had specified the number of units they are looking to build.

Ms. Cole said they did not.

Mr. Arndt reported:

- Title 49 Committee met and moved all of the changes for shared accesses.
- CIP committee will begin meeting soon.

Mr. Voelckers reported that JCOS met last week and discussed:

- Dynamax will be modeling CBJ buildings and neighborhoods to map energy uses.
- Alix Pierce gave a presentation regarding progress toward getting a circulator around downtown.

Mr. Arndt asked if the Circulator would be downtown only or would it reach further. Mr. Voelckers answered they are currently at the consultant stage only and decisions had not been made.

Mr. Pedersen reported the South Douglas/West Juneau committee met and they are working on goals and mission statements and have meetings scheduled in the near future.

Ms. Maclean reported the draft for Blueprint Downtown is out for public opinion. She added JCOS is no longer staffed by CDD. It has moved to the Engineering and Public Works department. Deputy Director Koch is the primary contact.

XIV. LIAISON REPORTS – Ms. Hughes-Skandijs reported:

- Assembly Committee of the Whole met last night and discussed:
 - JPD radio replacement.
 - Dock electrification.
 - Staffing across CBJ.
- Human Resources committee will meet on August 16 to appoint a new Commissioner.

XV. CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – None

XVI. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS – None

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT – 8:35 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled August 23, 2022 7:00 p.m.