



Rabbit Creek Community Council

1057 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 100, Anchorage AK 99503



March 15, 2017

David Whitfield, Senior Planner
Platting Board
Municipality of Anchorage Planning Department
PO Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519

RE: Case S12325, Blue Beary Estates Subdivision

At our March 9th monthly meeting, Rabbit Creek Community Council (RCCC) voted to submit the following comments and concerns regarding Platting Case S12325, for Blue Beary Estates Subdivision. These comments passed unanimously by the approximately 23 members in attendance. Prior to the vote, the Council heard a presentation from the developer's representative, David Grenier.

RCCC is a neighboring council area with an interest in this subdivision for several reasons:

1. Maintaining compliance with Title 21, the Hillside District Plan (HDP), and other adopted plans that apply to the Hillside;
2. Achieving practical, near-term access points to Chugach State Park (CSP), in order to serve the burgeoning public demand;
3. Ensuring that park access is properly aligned and designed to reduce neighborhood conflicts, and
4. Protection of Little Rabbit Creek and wetlands that recharge Potter Marsh, which lies in our Council area.

Details of RCCC's interests and concerns:

1. Future access. Road access should be platted to all lots in Blue Beary Estates and to adjoining landlocked parcels, per Title 21.08.030 L. Phase 3 of this proposed subdivision, as well as adjoining parcels to the northwest, appear to be landlocked unless this plat dedicates a buildable right-of-way (ROW). The section line along the north boundary of this parcel does not appear to be a viable ROW: it crosses very steep terrain that appears unsuitable for future road or trail access. Detailed contour maps and possibly field visits are necessary to ensure that any proposed access will be practical to develop.

2. The HDP calls for minimal road and driveway disturbance of streams and natural drainage (Policy 14-M, and page 3.1) The current "flagpole" shape of

lots 11 and 12, and the narrow shape of adjoining lots 13 and 14, require four closely-spaced bridges or culverts across Little Rabbit Creek. A shared driveway easement, or a single public ROW that extends across the creek setback area, would comply with the HDP creek protection policy and provide access to Phase 3.

3. Watercourse and wetland protection through tracts. The Municipality (MOA) should seek the most effective means of watercourse protection along tributaries of Little Rabbit Creek. The developer has commendably tracted out the wetlands. The tracts should be extended to include the stream setback area, per MOA policies in the HDP (Policy 14-H, page 6-30), the Comprehensive Plan (Policies 65, 67, 70), and the Anchorage Bowl Parks Plan. Little Rabbit Creek is important for recharge of Potter Marsh. Several lots have a boundary at the creek edge, with a required 50-foot development setback. Instead of setbacks on private lots, which are subject to unmonitored development, a stream protection tract could be created along parts of lots 4, 7, 8, 11, 13 and 14.

4. Secondary road access needs to be platted along the eastern boundary. HDP Roadway Connections Map (4.1) show a secondary access road along the eastern part of the parcel, which would reach a Heritage Land Bank (HLB) parcel that abuts Chugach State Park. This HLB parcel is shown in the HDP (Map 4.6) as a potential future trailhead with parking. Title 21.08.040 D and E require a dedicated vehicular ROW: “The platting authority shall require the dedication of a vehicular right-of-way for public access to trails, parks, and other public lands.” In this case, there is no practical substitute location. The developer’s representative suggested two alternatives that are not suitable:

1. The existing Honey Bear Road’s northerly cul-de-sac.
 - This road was built without a pedestrian pathway. There is no parking at the end of the cul-de-sac; therefore it cannot meet the adopted concept of a parking lot. There is a ROW from the cul-de-sac that leads to HLB land, but it appears to be for future pedestrian-only use, and therefore, insufficient width for a potential road into HLB land. Users would want to park in the cul-de-sac and along neighborhood roads, and that is a demonstrated source of conflict.
 - The HDP clearly depicts future road and trail access via the proposed subdivision (Newell homestead parcel/Blue Beary Estates), and not via Honey Bear Road. Honey Bear Road was platted (and probably already built) at the time the HDP was adopted, and was not considered to be a substitute access.
 - The repeated overflow parking at the Honey Bear southerly trailhead is a source of neighborhood friction. Additional, *well situated* parking and trailheads are clearly needed to meet demand. To minimize neighborhood impacts, future CSP parking should be located on public land such as the HLB parcel, rather than in a cul-de-sacs or roadways.
 - The half-width section line along the northern boundary of the parcel is not suitable for a road or trail connection to HLB land. It is prohibitively steep.

Construction would be totally impractical within the easement. Also, contiguous connections are not shown: it may not connect to Newell Road or another public ROW.

- Emergency vehicle access to the ridge crest on HLB land is useful for wildfire protection. This can be achieved with the planned easterly secondary road to the HLB parcel but not with the unbuildable northerly section line.
- To reduce the footprint of a road along the eastern boundary, title 21.08030.H4 may enable a narrower ROW design because of the steep slopes.

5. Alignment in the field. Field verification is needed to align trail and road connections on this challenging terrain.. The HDP Trails Map 4.6 indicates that some of this [secondary road access along Blue Berry Estates] will require a switchback alignment.

6. ROW would serve the public better than an easement. Title 21 recommends that trail and road connections be achieved by dedication of ROW, rather than reservation of easements. Title 21.08.040 D and E4: “Dedicated right-of-way is preferred for pedestrian access, but public use easements or access tract dedication may be considered when justified.”

Thank you for consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Adam Lees, Chair

cc: Hal Hart, MOA Planning Director;
Brooke Blessing, MOA Non-Motorized Trails Coordinator;
Director, MOA Parks and Recreation Department;
Chair, Bear Valley CC;
John Weddleton, Anchorage Assembly