

Rabbit Creek Community Council
Meeting of 10 February 2000
Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM at the Rabbit Creek Community Church. Board members present included Fries (President), Sell (Vice-president), Ross (treasurer), Mendenhall (secretary), Miller, Weinig, Pease, and Zidek.

Minutes of the 13 January meeting were approved (moved: Sell; 2nd: Zidek) with two corrections.

Treasurer's report (Ross): Members paid \$270 in dues last month; our bank balance now is \$1,415.35. There are 106 paid members, and the quorum for a general meeting therefore is 21. Since fewer people were present, a **Board meeting** was declared.

Announcements:

- P&Z meeting on Bear Valley fire station plans: the entrance will be narrowed, and signs will be added on Rabbit Creek Road; however, additional landscaping is not planned.
- AMATS meeting: many expressed the need for upgrading DeArmoun at the "S-turn".
- Census 2000: exams are being held for prospective workers.
- Recycling: the Task force has issued a newsletter.
- "Bridge Builders" and the Mayor invite attendance at a Pledge of Mutual Respect, 26 February at 2 PM.
- The Federation of Community Councils wants to send more newsletters by Email.
- Mendenhall has joined the board of the Friends of Potter Marsh.
- Diane Holmes will submit the trails plan for Section 36 to HLB next month. The Nordic Ski Club supports the plan.

Legislative Teleconference

- Bunde has submitted HR133, which would require a majority vote of residents in each section of a service area before such areas could be changed. Rabbit Creek Community Council has supported this in letters and will send another.
- Weinig requested that DOT receive funds to clear Rabbit Creek Road more promptly of snow and to maintain it better in summer, in preference to construction of new roads.
- Weinig has requested that DOT direct gas tax receipts to road maintenance rather than new roads.
- Pease noted that Sen. Ward doubts the need for more bike trails, but he seems unaware that almost none exist in our area.

General meeting: Since 21 members had arrived (a few of whom paid dues tonight), a general meeting was declared at this point.

Zoning variance request by Potter Valley LLC (Tim Potter)

The proposal is to develop 29.15 acres of their 160-acre tract (Viewpoint South Subdivision Tract A-4, "Buckwalter Property"). In order to build a low-density subdivision, they are applying to down-zone from R-3SL to R6 and to withdraw from the Wastewater Management Plan. (R-3 zoning and the Plan both require at least 3 dwelling units per acre.) The developers would provide on-site water and septic (percolation is good, according to their tests). They also wish to withdraw the area from the Wastewater Plan because the steep terrain would be too disturbed by sewer construction.

Discussion:

The new Anchorage Comprehensive Plan may support lower densities in parts of the Hillside. A draft may be out in March and reach the Assembly in June. Down-zoning has been granted in the recent past in Goldenview Gate (R-3 to R-7). Concern was expressed over impacts of clearing and paving of steep terrain on the watershed, and on wells and septic systems downhill from the project. Perhaps the developers should consider a community water supply. It was noted that Potter Marsh would not be affected by this development (it is in Potter Creek's watershed, which does not

drain into the marsh)

Variance requests should be submitted to P&Z all at one time, for ease of consideration by the Community Council; some developers submit them numerous times during the process. It would be preferable if the whole 160 acres were proposed for downzoning at the same time. Downzoning is intended for the whole tract, but it is not being proposed now because of the expense of perc tests. Greenbelts are planned in some of the 160 acres. Concern was expressed that another housing development would degrade the quality of life and the character in adjacent neighborhoods. It was suggested that the tract will be developed sometime, and low-density housing would be better than an R-3 subdivision. (See end of Minutes for **resolution**)

Open Space Plan: Thede Tobish of the Municipal Planning Department presented a map showing open space in the Anchorage Bowl, including existing parks, areas that citizens identified at workshops as important for recreation or education, and critical wildlife areas. The map will be incorporated into a future Open Space Plan, which will be prepared during the coming year as part of a new Parks and Recreation Plan. (The Comprehensive Plan will not include details of open space.)

Discussion: How will the Muni conserve open space during the next 12-18 months, until an Open Space Plan mandates protection of some areas? It was requested that the map be used to guide decisions in the meantime. Tobish stated that there will be no explicit change in policy until the Plan exists and Title 21 has been amended. The map is being used in some permit decisions, but P&Z adheres to the letter of Title 21. (It was pointed out that P&Z could legally impose more restrictions than Title 21 specifies, but they don't.)

Board meeting: At approximately 9:15, some members had left the meeting and a quorum for a general meeting no longer existed. A Board Meeting therefore was declared.

Public access issue on Valley View Estates tracts (Bob Miller)

Bob wishes to subdivide 40 acres of a 200 acre tract in Village View Estates Tracts. He has submitted the plat for approval, but Community Planning has asked that the whole 200 acres be platted, and also has requested pedestrian right-of-ways for access to Chugach State Park and between Village Scenic Parkway and Potter Valley Road. The rights-of-way would conflict with development plans (feasible plans are limited by the terrain). Also, one of the proposed trails would be too steep.

Discussion:

Jerry Lewanski, chief ranger for Chugach State Park, said the Park requested the public pedestrian easements because development of the property would block people from walking into the park. CSP routinely asks for such easements to preserve legal access to the park. CSP knows how to build trails on steep land. Nancy Pease, as a local resident, said locals get to the park by those routes and it's important to the health of the neighborhood. Plats require such easements for safe and orderly development. Title 21 requires plats to reserve such easements.

Some members said it's unfair to require a landowner to provide a public trail or road, which can be expensive and can limit development options. The public should buy parks and access routes if they want them.

Fries suggested that property owners and CSP users get together and design access easements for the whole area, instead of addressing them piecemeal. The Open Space Plan should deal with the access issue.

Action:

It was moved (Pease) and seconded that the Rabbit Creek Community Council supports the concept of a pedestrian easement from Potter Valley Road to Village Scenic Parkway and down to Chugach State Park. The motion failed (5 aye, 2 nay, Miller abstaining).

Mental Health Trust Lands zoning proposal (Alison Smith, Linda Cyra-Korsgaard; Mental Health Trust and TNH Inc.; Larry Houle, Director, Heritage Land Bank)

The Mental Health Trust has applied to rezone land near the south end of Goldenview Drive from PL1 to R-3SL. They propose to build 340 houses on the tract.

Discussion:

A traffic analysis has not been done. Traffic would be routed to Goldenview Drive; some members said that road cannot carry all the resulting traffic. Trails in the area are not addressed in the proposal, including the Moen Trail and those in the municipal Trails Plan. The Hillside Working Group, at several meetings, expressed the desire for low-

density housing to preserve the character of the neighborhood. And the tract is the last remaining wildlife corridor between Potter Marsh and Chugach State Park. The group is trying to find funds to buy parts of the tract for conservation.

Why is lower-density housing not proposed (with zoning of R-6 and withdrawal from the Wastewater Plan)? It would not be economically feasible to develop the area with water and sewer at a lower density. A buffer is required between developments of different densities. But buffers in recent developments have proved to be skimpy or nonexistent.

Is there a demand for more houses now, or for houses on small lots? The tract would not be developed until demand existed.

Action:

A resolution to support low-density housing or open space on the Mental Health Trust tract (**see attachment**) was moved (Pease), seconded (Weinig) and approved (7 ayes, 1 abstaining).

Action:

A resolution to support down-zoning of the Buckwalter Tract and its withdrawal from the Wastewater Plan (**see attachment**) was moved, seconded, and passed 8-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13.