

# Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission

Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 5:30–7:00 p.m.

Hybrid—in-person at 4700 Elmore Rd and by MS Teams

Call to Order at 5:33 pm by Chair Bryce Klug.

1. Land Acknowledgement – Chair Klug
2. Establish Quorum – Chair Klug

Commissioners attending: Bryce Klug, Darrick , Loren Leman, Marc, David Reamer, Staff: Kristine Bunnell, Conner Scher and Brandy Pennington excused. Guests noted below.

3. Approve Agenda – Chair and Commissioners

Approved as distributed by email.

4. Introductions – Visitors

Eric Hilsinger, DOT&PF Central Region, will be talking about some of their projects. John Piccard, Kinney Engineering, attended in support of the Downtown Trail Connection project.

5. Meeting Notes—Kristine did not have February 23 minutes available, so will defer action on approval until next month.

## NEW BUSINESS

6. AMATS Downtown Trail Connection Consultation, Erik Hilsinger.

Two trail segment proposals: One is Downtown, from about the ARRC headquarters, around the boat launch facility, around outside of the railroad to connect in vicinity of Westchester Lagoon.

The first is a 1.6 mile trail connection in the *Anchorage Trails Plan* since 1997. It's purpose is to improve safety by reducing or eliminating railroad, pedestrian, and bicycle user conflicts. Eric explained routing. Several comments from commissioners about routing, maintenance plan, snow removal in the winter, directional and interpretive signage. Question: "Eric, would you like a resolution of support?" His response: "I don't think so at this time. This is the introduction phase . I will continue to consult as we move these projects."

The second is the Fish Creek Trail project. That one has gained a lot of attention from the neighborhood and will need a lot more outreach. Folks in the Turnagain Community Council have concerns, as well as the Greatland Trust, and Alaska District USACE. Will probably need a cultural resources study. "We will keep you informed as the results come in."

Comments from commissioners about using the trails, impact of the Fish Creek Trail, lots of remaining work on that one. Commissioner Leman confirmed considerable pushback on the Fish Creek project, at least as currently proposed, from Turnagain Community Council and the immediate neighborhood.

7. Glenn Hwy and Hiland Interchange

This project is also in a very early phase of design. Further design will be based on results from geotechnical testing that is scheduled for this summer or fall. That will require planned access onto BLM and base (JBER) lands. CIRI had questions and talked to the JBER cultural resources officer. "We are waiting to hear back from BLM and are trying to identify if there are issues or concerns we should be aware of?" Eric will be consulting with the Native Village of Eklutna. Comments about military uses nearby and other local issues. No formal action taken by HPC.

#### 8. JBER Memorandum of Agreement

JBER has been working on demolishing Building 520-7250 and has been in consultation with the SHPO. HPC is the advisory council on this historic preservation project. The mitigation they propose is an historic architectural recordation, which is what is called an Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation. It is sent to Washington, DC and to a couple different libraries. They are asking if the HPC would like to be a concurring party.

Bryce Comment: I think it's good to have the HPC be a concurring party. As a certified local government every year we do our annual report and they want to know if the HPC participated in any consultations and what our efforts were. Commissioners (unidentified) moved and seconded to be a concurring party and for Bryce to sign. No objections, so motion passed.

#### 9. Recap with Government Hill Community Council

The community council was advised about the upcoming project and will be kept informed as progress is made.

#### 10. Government Hill Wireless Station CLG Grant

The Wireless Station is the oldest communication building in Anchorage—it was built in 1917. They plotted the property the station is on into three separate lots. The wireless station building crosses one lot and then the T shaped building crosses another lot. And then there's another building that's basically on a separate lot. The buildings were conveyed to the MOA from the GSA with the agreement that it would maintain the property as a historic landmark in perpetuity. But there's always been a question about how the MOA would do that, because nobody has money to maintain any of the three buildings. The MOA has a difficult time as it is maintaining the other historic properties we have. So a lot of meetings have happened.

We had a plan where we turned everything into housing and that was kind of what the RFP was all about. And then Connor and I had some ideas where we would pick up the building, move it to the front lot and then take down the other two buildings and have senior housing and a childcare center, to actually be able to support the building. And now the community is talking in their park plan about moving the building over to land given to the Port. They would do fundraising and turn it into a museum. So I think it's important with the building study that we look at, OK, it doesn't stay in place and get remodeled and become a museum on-site there or become housing on-site there or can they move it? Will it come off of the National Register if they move it? Probably. But we could have a discussion with the keeper of the Register. If we move the building the property would likely go back to GSA and they would auction it off for housing.

Unless our Congressional delegation can put together a reverter clause, which would mean we could do with it as we want. So the HPC will be providing some input, more conversation. The important question is, "Are the buildings salvageable?" Good comment. You, Connor, and I have

been through planning for this property twice now, so it's like, OK enough planning. Can the building be moved? Can it be fixed? Can it be fixed in place and not moved? And that's what we want to find out. And if it can be fixed and left in place, can it be re-platted, or will it need to be? They're trying to save the building because it is adorable.

So, for the status on the grant, the Assembly accepted the grant on Tuesday night and we should be able to move forward with trying to find somebody to do that work for us. We do have a couple term contractors we might be able to work with.

#### 11. Local Landmark Register Nominations Subcommittee

We have not held another subcommittee meeting since the last HPC meeting. Conversation about how to motivate property owners to get their property listed. The Old City Hall is going to be transitioning to include the Downtown library. There's a conservation easement on the outside as well as the inside of the building, and so they've asked me to consult with them on the conservation easement and they're trying to figure out now that the building is like 15,000 square feet. They need only 4000 square feet for the library, so they are trying to figure out where the best place is for the library. Discussion about Mushing District.

#### 12. MOA HPP Funding, Status Report

The State has submitted everything to HUD and so we're just waiting for its approval, which was supposed to be 30 to 45 days and that time is almost up. The MOA HPP is one of the projects on the list. We justified this because a lot of the historic buildings in the Anchorage area are located in seismic zones, so it had to be tied to the November 2018 earthquake. And so that's how we made that connection. So next meeting we hope to have a grant agreement. Discussion on what remains to be done—33 context statements. At least some of these will need a response.

#### 13. Public comment on non-agenda items

No public. No comments.

#### 14. Commission/staff comments on non-agenda items

Kristine: working on intern job description. Considerable discussion about that. Kristine suggested the May meeting might be at the Pioneer School. Or at the Wireless Station. Loren told about his father (Nick Leman) and cousin Bill Kvasnikoff from Ninilchik working on the Ship Creek water project for the Army during World War II and in their off-time trapping "way out of town" near where Alaska Regional Hospital is today. They declined the government's offer for them to homestead that land.

#### 15. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

*Minutes prepared by Loren Leman, Secretary, from transcription provided by Kristine Bunnell, staff.*