

West Anchorage Planning Group

Meeting Notes

Thursday June 18, 2009, 5:30-9:30pm

Federation Community Councils Conference Room

In attendance:

Jason Bergerson, Breck Tostevin, Mike Mitchell, Peggy Auth, Alli Harvey, Mike Carlson, Cathy Gleason, Andy Hutzler, Ron Peck, Rod Pflieger, PJ Cranmer

Staff:

Thede Tobish, Tyler Robinson, Jon Isaacs, Kim Wetzel

I. Introductions

Added revision and adoption of Ground Rules/Charter to agenda.

II. Project Updates

A. Comment Summary Tables

Three sets of comment summary tables were provided; color-coded by Focus Group, Community Councils, and West Anchorage Planning Group (WAPG). Each group of participants was asked to share their opinions on the Objectives, Values and Issues in West Anchorage. The Focus Groups had more time in their work sessions to talk about Trends and Solutions.

Q: How do comments compare across groups? Were there conflicts?

A: There were not conflicts with values, but there were conflicts on what were solutions to achieve the same goals.

Q: How to we start the solution-based conversations?

A: Pick the area-wide opportunities. And sort the site-specific opportunities. For example, parking requirements are causing places like Spenard to suffer. A tool should be- allow parking overlaps with different clientele. This tool might not be designed yet.

Q: Can a development buy up some parking lot for shared use?

Mr. Bergerson: The parking lot at the Ravenite (by Cope Street) would be a good place for a public lot.

→ Provide your comments to the summary tables Kim will provide the WAPG the raw notes to any WAPG, CC or Focus Group meeting if you need them for context.

B. Debrief of Airport Meeting

Mr. Robinson described that a meeting convened at City Hall on

Mr. Hutzler- An outcome of the meeting was that Raspberry Road residents will get to meet to discuss alternatives at entrance of South Airpark.

Isaacs- There are some themes emerging from discussion of various airport projects. How does the airport do business, what are they guided by? It may be useful to have airport-focused community meetings. A listen and present agenda without a hammer on each other.

Mr. Bergersen- Freight movement has a particular effect to the Spenard Recreation Center area.

Ms. Auth- Her husband is in the Airport Citizens' Advisory Group. She's sat in on those meetings. The May 20, 2008 meeting with the airlines resulted in the drafting of a letter. You wonder what the airport is connected to the rest of the world? We don't know what the recovery is going to be or how long is it going to last? The world has really changed in a fundamental way. Are they following old guidelines? They should listen to trends outside of Alaska.

Mr. Isaacs- DOT Deputy Commissioner Christine Klein said we need to be nimble. She said they're facing increased competition and need to stay competitive.

Mr. Robinson- The mayor's office is announcing an Airport Advisory Committee. It might have been presumptive given that we are in the process of having talks with the airport about improving their public process. *Note: A press release since the WAPG meeting described that the advisory committee will convene after the release of the West Anchorage District Plan in order to oversee implementation of the recommendations in the final plan.*

Q: How does a special airport meeting roll into this West Anchorage District planning process?

Ms. Gleason - She brought in the airport mandate. It does say, "encourage economic development", but it also describes the mandate to protect state resources, the application of other statutes, minimizing the impact of the airport on other resources. We're still very far away from the conversation where we agree on multi-purposes for the airport.

Mr. Hutzel - The last airport director was a go-getter. He brought the terminal into the next century and he thinks 10 years ahead. He thought they needed the 4th runway. That role isn't filled anymore. Christine Klein is actually holding several hats.

Q: What is happening with Kulis?

A: Mr. Robinson-- The airport has made it known they want to redevelop it, but we can't speak to it. (We wish Rich Wilson were here to respond.) There are more challenges to modifying an existing site. They're just starting a Kulis Master planning process.

Mr. Tostevin – An airport community meeting would need FAA. FAA might have a bigger toolbox.

Andy- Lake Hood has a pilots meeting twice a year, regardless of who is the airport meeting. Andy committed himself to some of the pilots' suggestions and he took the comments into consideration. We can't commit until everything has been thoroughly analyzed by maintenance, safety, environment. We are listening, but we can't commit!

Isaacs- Or there may have been some things that were done, but weren't communicated back.

Andy- We have an open door. Maybe you should get on the Commissioner's schedule. Not formal, but walk in.

Cathy- We still need to bridge the gap where the airport that has been saying "we don't have to obey any municipal laws". THAT is biggest hurdle we're facing.

III. Internal Review Draft Profile Chapters

Jason- Why doesn't the LUPM have many recommendations to the West Anchorage proposed boundary?

It's probably because of constraints and because the area wasn't looked at very closely.

Kim Wetzel provided an overview of the community profiles

Vacant and currently occupied land uses have changes for development should be taken into account

Jason indicated that some old parks are underutilized and could be converted to other recreation and open space

Peggy – 2020 and title 21 – how much common lands should be part of development, not to tax the parks, look at locating high density housing closer to public facilities

Look at school district and permanent dividend fund demographics

Tax increases due to zoning R2m are hitting land owners hard... assessed value increasing at a higher rate for this zoning district

How does the title 21 revision process affect this planning process? Tyler, not that much... provided examples about industrial land being reserved and reductions in parking

How is vacant land identified, what is undeveloped vs vacant vs public

Airport property really needs to be as specific as possible vacant, undeveloped, zoned, special use... should be existing use, regardless of what it's zoned, accurate picture

Also, account for what has developed vs what was zoned

Anchorage adopted the Spenard District Commercial development strategy, has been an ignored development. Highlight it in the plan, and that it needs to be followed. Complaints are that it needs to be updated. It should be followed as a basis for any land use and rezonings. Identify the key plans and documents that should be followed in West Anchorage

Should be making recommendations for updating any existing plans

Q: Can the Assembly ordinances be searched for rezones or any provisions that apply to West Anchorage?

Asplund wastewater decision ... need to mention that the waiver has not been issued yet, and adjacent lands can be developed if needed, and address conclusions about no impacts

Q: How to best provide comments to the planning team including questions and suggestions?

A: WAPG should email Kim Wetzel their comments, questions and suggestions regarding the Profile. She will track the questions and provide response summaries.

Interest in looking at the location of private wells

Comment: Include Central Middle School and Holy Rosarie, Lumen Christy, North Star Elementary, and Stellar schools because they may be outside the planning boundary, but their attendance areas are within the boundaries.

Comment: The WAPG needs a briefing of the West Romig Plan by Blythe Marson and others involved in the project. They need to talk about offsite impacts of the proposed project and we do not want to create another polarizing plan.

Comment: Can we amend the *Parks Plan* through this process? Point Woronzof Park needs more than medium protection, as indicated in the *Parks Plan*. We need to revisit this as a group and potentially recommend an amendment to the *Parks Plan*.

Mr. Mitchell: During the May 2009 meeting of Trails and Greenways Coalition, Nancy Pease made a recommendation to “green-print” or identify areas (parcels) that are undeveloped in Anchorage and then rate the priority to acquire them as future park lands based on high ecological value. Our WAPG could receive a presentation about this process too. The Anchorage 2020 Plan ID-ed parcels (page 63) and the Parks Plan did too. We could recommend a presentation to rank the value of the properties for future preservation.

Make a recommendation for resurveying the noise corridors... also look at noise studies along major transportation corridors (large roads and rail corridors) check with state ADOT. Policy recommendation regarding noise. Look at the noise implications of new overpasses and expanded road projects and share results of the studies.

Comment: Check and see if there is a new updated seismic map this week from the state.

III. Proposed Planning Area Boundary

Historic loss of Spenard Community Council boundary.

IV. General Comments & Questions

Action item – Have an informal meeting with WAPG and planning staff to go over maps and data. *These will provide maps to the Federation that can be viewed by WAPG members or CC West Anchorage subcommittees at their convenience.*

WAPG Bylaws were revised:

- 1) Removed the timeframe of the existence of the group [10 month reference] and leave language that WAPG members serve until the Plan is adopted.
- 2) Removed language that the WAPG establishes the meeting agenda of the group and leave the language that the WAPG members serve in an advisory role to the Planning Department.

Need to look at attendance, people need to either send alternates or be replaced... need commitment, find a solution