



Municipality of Anchorage

Watershed & Natural Resources Advisory Commission

Action Summary

Wednesday, April 23, 2025

12:00 Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Planning and Development Center
and via Microsoft Teams

Regular Meeting

Commissioners	Municipal Staff
• Emily Creely, Chair* • Lee Cruise* • Tamás Deák, Vice Chair • Maddie Halloran • Nic Kinsman* • Matt Nemeth* • Rick Sinnott • Samantha Simpson (<i>excused</i>) <i>*virtual</i>	• Michelle Nelson, Long-Range Planning • Daniel Mckenna-Foster, Long-Range Planning Manager • Kenna Billups, Watershed Management Services, PM&E

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Creely called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

A. Establishment of Quorum

B. Disclosures (*none*)

II. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS (*none*)

III. MINUTES

A. October 23, 2024 Action Summary, Regular Meeting

Commissioner Deák moved to approve the October 23, 2024 action summary. **Commissioner Halloran** seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Wetlands Permitting Discussion

MOA staff informed the commission about a property that was identified as a “Class C” wetlands in the 2014 Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan that a developer does not believe is a wetland today. They hired a third-party

contractor to conduct a wetland delineation. They tested the three parameters that are required for a wetland determination: hydrology, soil, and plants and it did not meet the test. Due to staffing limitations at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), they are unable to get a concurring opinion in time for development this summer. Staff asked if there were any options to approve a third-party wetlands assessment.

Chair Creely advised that a potential area requires two tests to determine if it falls under Clean Water Act jurisdiction. First, it needs to meet the three-parameter test and then it needs to have a hydrologic analysis and only USACE has the authority to make either determination. It is not within the Municipality's jurisdiction to review and approve third-party wetland delineations and determinations. The significant delays at USACE highlight the need for advocacy from the commission for federal resources so that USACE can continue to staff up to process submissions. There was understanding for how the delays at USACE can slow down development in Anchorage, but having MOA approving wetland delineations is not a solution if USACE lacks the staff to process wetland determinations. It is simply outside of the Municipality's jurisdiction to review or approve any report that is based on the three-parameter test of a wetland.

Commissioner Kinsman recommended a targeted update to the 2014 Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan to update the wetland maps and the Municipality's process for managing wetlands outside the jurisdiction of USACE.

Commissioner Kinsman motioned to develop a resolution that (1) clarifies the permitting process acknowledging delays/choke points, (2) from an advisory expert perspective cautions the Municipality from legal liability of circumventing current process, and (3) encourages a wetland plan update to the benefit of development and protect high value wetlands. **Commissioner Deák** seconded the motion. Passed unanimously. Planning Department staff offered to provide a draft resolution with proper formatting for the commission to review and revise accordingly.

V. NEW BUSINESS

VI. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (3-minute limit) (none)

VII. OTHER BUSINESS/STAFF REPORT

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Cruise moved to adjourn. **Commissioner Kinsman** seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1:06 p.m.