



Municipality of Anchorage
Watershed & Natural Resources Advisory Commission

ACTION SUMMARY

Hybrid
Planning and Development Center, Room 170
and Microsoft Teams

Wednesday, July 23, 2025
12:00 Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Regular Meeting

Commissioners	Planning Department Staff
• Emily Creely, Chair • Lee Cruise* • Tamás Deák, Vice Chair • Maddie Halloran* • Nic Kinsman • Matt Nemeth* • Samantha Simpson* • Rick Sinnott <i>One vacancy</i> *Attended via Teams	• Luke Bertram, Long-Range Planning • Daniel Mckenna-Foster, Long-Range Planning Manager

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Creely called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

A. Establishment of Quorum

B. Disclosures

Chair Creely disclosed that her employer seeks a contract with the Municipality (MOA) or work related to the content of the *Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan (AWMP)* and stated that she'd disclose future conflicts of interest that may be possible. **Vice Chair Deák** affirmed that it'd be case-by-case to disclose and discuss.

II. MINUTES

A. April 23, 2025 Action Summary, Regular Meeting

Vice Chair Deák moved to approve. **Commissioner Kinsman** seconded. Approved as written. **Vice Chair Deák** commended staff for the minutes' concision.

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Staff introduced wetland discussion with the need to update the plan for wetland permit review to move from Long-Range Planning to the MOA in general. Long-Range Planning staff does not have the technical expertise to accurately assess wetlands permits, and Development Services may have funding to hire staff to review those permits.

Chair Creely asked for clarification on the purpose of the resolution. Daniel McKenna-Foster confirmed that it was to encourage needed updates for the plan. Small changes can be done internally, whereas updating the map would be a much larger undertaking.

Commissioner Sinnott asked staff how many wetlands applications the MOA receives. **Staff** stated that there have been two applications year-to-date; however, it is likely that many projects have gone through without any wetlands application since there is no enforcement mechanism.

Chair Creely clarified if the MOA has a permitting authority established. **Staff** confirmed that the MOA does have a permitting process for wetlands. The permit does specify that property owners are responsible for applying for additional required permits with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

Chair Creely expressed concern that property owners may not know that the wetlands permit exists. **Staff** concurred and emphasized why the plan update matters.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Vice Chair Deák asked staff to include when the MOA enacted the permit in the resolution as part of the findings. Staff confirmed they will include the May 28, 2025 date in the resolution.

Commissioner Sinnott asked staff to revise the resolution draft to move the Commission's findings to the preambular clauses of the resolution from the operative clauses, since they are not part of the action of the resolution.

Vice Chair Deák expressed agreement.

Commissioner Kinsman asked that the motivation of the resolution to educate the Assembly be added to the preamble. She had also asked that language be added to say United States Army Corps of Engineer permits as required under law by the Clean Water Act. **Chair Creely** agreed and asked that the following clause be added to the preamble:

WHEREAS, under the new court rulings, some wetlands will be determined not jurisdictional under the Clean Water Act; and

Commissioner Kinsman emphasized the need for this language since developers may be moving forward without obtaining necessary permits from the USACE.

Vice Chair Deák offered to help staff rewrite the resolution to the Commission's preferred structure. **Chair Creely** offered to email staff revised clauses to be added to the preamble of the resolution.

Staff confirmed that they are working on direct outreach to the Assembly with the resolution.

Commissioner Kinsman asked that the words "associated outreach" be added to C. of the resolution. In the same point, she had asked that "The Commission supports an update" be changed to "The Commission encourages an update" to show a more active interest in updating the plan.

Commissioner Sinnott expressed agreement with the Commission's edits.

Vice Chair Deák asked that C.2. of the Resolution be moved into the preamble to make the resolution clearer and more concise.

Staff offered to make the edits to the resolution as asked by the Commission and to present it at a future work session. The Commission concurred.

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (*none*)

VI. OTHER BUSINESS/STAFF REPORT

Staff updated the Commission on the Planning Department's new MailChimp newsletter. **Staff** informed the Commission about TSDO (Transit-Supportive Development Overlay), which went to the Planning and Zoning Commission on July 14, 2025, for a work session and initial meeting, and has been continued to September. The MOA's seismic hazard mapping project is mapping the risk of seismic activity in all developable parcels with a 500' buffer. Staff had asked contractors to include watershed areas to take liquefaction into account. This map will include information on soil data, boring information, and layers of the ground.

Staff will begin work on rezoning municipal parks to PR Parks and Recreation Zoning along with updating the map to rezone parcels that are in defunct zoning districts around the Anchorage Bowl.

Commissioner Sinnott asked staff if the Planning Department is supportive of the *AWMP* update. Staff informed that the project is not currently on the Department's radar. However, issues are arising with the map being outdated, which **Chair Creely** expressed is often inaccurate. **Commissioner Sinnott** asked if the project is on the Assembly's radar. Staff informed that it is not, and that the plan update project needs to be taken up to MOA's administration and the Assembly.

Chair Creely stated that she often finds issues that are adjacent to Planning but not in Planning's purview. **Staff** emphasized that things that aren't necessarily in the Department's direct purview can be relevant in future projects or plans for Planning.

Staff informed the Commission that issues that they'd like to see go to a resolution can be directed to Luke Bertram.

Commissioner Kinsman noted the new wayfinding and interpretive signs along trails throughout the MOA and asked if a similar effort could be enacted for MOA wetlands to educate visitors about their dynamics. Staff will bring in additional municipal employees to discuss doing this initiative at a future meeting.

Chair Creely asked staff if there were any updates from Watershed Management. Staff will bring in Watershed Management into the next Commission meeting.

Chair Creely asked staff about the status of culvert and other water infrastructure management. Staff informed that the MOA's infrastructure bond is strained and has a growing backlog.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Deák moved to adjourn. **Chair Creely** seconded. Adjourned at 1:00 p.m.