



Municipality of Anchorage

Watershed & Natural Resources Advisory Commission

Virtual Teams Meeting

ACTION SUMMARY

12:00 Noon

Wednesday, August 26, 2020

Regular Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:06 p.m.

A. Establishment of Quorum

Present: Emily Creely
Tamás Deák
Brett Jokela
Holly Kent
David Nyman, Chair
Simon Wigren

Excused: Paul McLarnon
Stephanie Quinn-Davidson, Vice Chair (*excused; arrived late in meeting*)
Rick Sinnott

Staff: Thede Tobish, Senior Planner, Planning Department, Long-Range Planning

Guests: Tamara Zeller and Melissa Burns, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

B. Disclosures

No disclosures.

II. ACTION SUMMARY

A. Regular Meeting of July 22, 2020

Commissioner Jokela moved to approve the July 22, 2020 meeting minutes as written.
Commissioner Kent seconded.

The July 22, 2020 minutes were approved unanimously as written.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. WNRC Case No. 2020-01, Land Clearing and Bird Nesting

Tamara Zeller and Melissa Burns from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) presented an overview of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and outlined recent changes made to this law, specifically relative to incidental takes and land clearing practices.

Changes have reduced the powers and interpretation of this law, but its reach and implementation continue. There is a perception that the law no longer applies, and the bird timing windows are not followed. Melissa gave an overview of the bird timing window for this part of Alaska. The law is most often applied in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) projects.

The USFWS guests also outlined the Urban Bird Treaty program and its use in Anchorage. The Municipality was a co-signee to this treaty for the greater Anchorage area in 2008. The treaty focuses on habitat protection and restoration, wildlife hazards reduction, and education.

The Commission then had a dialogue with USFWS staff about implementing the bird timing window with land clearing practices in the Municipality. Could it be applied in the MOA's mass specs and/or added into Title 21? The Commission suggested an effort to further educate tree-cutting companies. USFWS staff offered to share its brochures on land clearing and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to further educate landscape companies and general contractors.

The Commission agreed to learn more and consider additional efforts to address bird habitat protection in the Municipality.

B. WNRC Case No. 2019-01, Bird Cherry Eradication Effort – Letter of Support Discussion

The Commission discussed if, or whether, it needed to follow up on the bird cherry eradication projects in Anchorage.

The USFWS participated in this discussion and noted it was unclear if the eradication of large areas of bird cherry trees impacted migratory birds. The Commission determined that no additional action is needed at this time.

IV. NEW BUSINESS (none)

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (none)

VI. OTHER BUSINESS/STAFF REPORT (none)

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Deák moved to adjourn. *Commissioner Jokela* seconded.

The motion passed without objection.

The meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.