



Municipality of Anchorage

Watershed & Natural Resources Advisory Commission

Virtual Teams Meeting

ACTION SUMMARY

12:00 Noon

Wednesday, June 24, 2021

Regular Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m.

A. Establishment of Quorum

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

(4 vacancies)

MOA Staff: Kristine Bunnell, Senior Planner, Long-Range Planning Division,
Planning Department

Guests: Paul McLarnon, Commissioner, pending reappointment
Jenn Miller, CEO, Renewable IPP, LLC
Shelly Rowton, Land Management Officer, MOA Heritage Land Bank
Sean Skaling, Chugach Electric Association
Simon Wigren, Commissioner, pending reappointment

B. Disclosures

No disclosures.

II. ACTION SUMMARY

A. Regular Meeting of December 23, 2020

B. Regular Meeting of January 27, 2021

Commissioner Deák moved to approve both sets of minutes as written. *Commissioner Jokela* seconded.

The December 23, 2020, and the January 27, 2021, minutes were approved unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS (See Other Business)

IV. NEW BUSINESS .

A. WNRC Case No. 2021-01, Proposed Chugach Solar Farm

Chair Nyman suggested a technical advisory report would be helpful. The commissioners had an overlapping discussion between this item and item B. Wetlands.

Jenn Miller, CEO of Renewable IPP, LLC, explained to get through the Alaska Regulatory Commission would take about a year. Tax credit of 26% will be available for the project through 2021. Asked when subcommittee could be done with a recommendation—the response was *within 3 months*.

ACTION ITEM, MS. MILLER:

Ms. Miller will email all the information she has compiled/generated to *Chair Nyman* and *Kristine Bunnell* so it can be distributed to the Commission. A summary of land considered will be provided also. She thanked the Commission for taking time to consider the project.

ACTION ITEM, COMMISSION:

Commissioner Deák summed up a subcommittee process moving forward that may include asking for additional information from the project proponent. Several members expressed interest in serving on a subcommittee. Process recommendations for this advisory commission is to establish a Subcommittee devoted to reviewing the information and then making recommendations to the full commission. May take about three months depending on what information the project proponent provides. A technical advisory report could be useful in reviewing the CU application [if/when subcommittee received the application].

WNRC is there to provide technical assistance as an Advisory Commission. A subcommittee can review the data set of project. The subcommittee can then go to the full commission for discussion and report or assessment. Needs more than a half-hour discussion. Moving forward the Commission needs to get info from Real Estate and then the subcommittee meets.

At Least Two Main Issues to Be Concerned With

This project is setting a precedent in Anchorage. WRNC wants to make sure it has reviewed in a meaningful manner to find the project is environmentally, technically, and economically sound in its full context. This project may put Anchorage on the map for other project proponents to look to.

The WNRC needs to be mindful of real investment and economic incentives that could be in potential conflicts with resource management.

It is too early to discuss a resolution of support or other action by WNRC.

Chair Nyman polled who would be interested in participating in a subcommittee and how that process could work.

It was recommended that a white paper could be developed that would be amended as responses to different questions or issues were brought up and responded to by the project proponent.

Commentary would close with a non-objection or recommendations for further recommendations.

It should be noted here that Jenn Miller expressed a thumbs-up to the process being laid out by the commissioners.

Commissioner Deak recommended chair form subcommittee and then recruit subcommittee members.

Chair Nyman agreed to form the Chugach Solar Farm Subcommittee.

Commissioner Jokela said subcommittee should provide list of issues to request information on.

Chair Nyman reminded commission a representative from the Corps will be at the July meeting with a presentation.

ACTION ITEM

Ms. Miller will email all information and provide a list of alternative sites next week.

WATERSHED MITIGATION IMPACTS AND CREDIT ISSUES – For HLB

Shelley Rowton from HLB stated any recommendations will make it a stronger project. HLB handles MOA conservation easements. Compensatory mitigation and recent costs to the MOA are much more expensive now.

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Sean Skaling, Manager of Business Development and Sustainability at Chugach Electric Association, wanted to hear how the conversation went on the solar farm. They are interested in

adding renewables and have a renewable goal. It is very difficult to add renewables at this point, so he just wanted to track the project and thanked the Commission for letting him listen in.

Simon Wigren said on June 9, 2021, the Biden Administration signaled the attempt to rewrite Clean Water rule. It depends on what EPA and Corps come out as interim guidance as to how to proceed. Anchorage wetlands might be jurisdictional again.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS/STAFF REPORT

Commissioner Kent brought up list from December meeting minutes and thinks should weigh in on the list including Chester Creek restoration and snow dump and others:

- Connors Bog Snow Dump
- Chester Creek Restoration Project at Arctic Boulevard
- Solar Farm at Strawberry Bog
- Cook Inlet Beluga Whales
- Fish Creek Restoration in Spenard
- MOA Stormwater Utility
- Tire Particulates as Pollution (per Seattle findings)

Commissioner Deák would like to discuss restoration by Fish Creek Restoration.

Kristine Bunnell noted interviews were taking place this week for Thede Tobish's position.

Shelley Rowton said Girdwood conservation easement in the works.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion passed without objection.

The meeting adjourned at 1:14 p.m.