

Girdwood Housing Working Group Meeting January 13, 2021 Minutes Final

Due to the current spread COVID-19 virus, meetings are held virtually and telephonic indefinitely.

The Girdwood Board of Supervisors, its committees, and subcommittees are subject to the Alaska Open Meetings Act as found in Alaska Statute 44.62.310 and Anchorage Municipal Code 1.25 - Public Meetings.

7:05PM Call to order, Mike Edgington

Agenda Approval for January 13 meeting Patrick Doran/Kalie Harrison
Minutes approval from December 16 meeting Patrick Doran/Jeanne Hanson

Introductions & New Attendees:

Attending are: Patrick Doran, Mike Edgington, Kalie Harrison, Drew Harlos, Erin Eker, Jeanne Hanson, John Hanson, Shannon O'Brien
Robin Ward & Shelley Rowton HLB

Announcements & Presentations:

New tax assessments arrived in the mail, assessment valuations increased as expected. Increase in home value with no significant increase in supply. More people are now able to work from home. This housing shortage is reflected in other places in the US as well.

Business:

1. Discuss alternative housing ideas such as tiny homes, kit homes, rv parking, etc.

Tiny Homes:

MOA code allows tiny homes on a permanent foundation.

Roof must handle snowload requirement, 150-200 PSI, In Girdwood. Girdwood has minimum lot size of about 10,500sf.

.Multiple tiny homes on a lot requires proper zoning, condominium-style. Site for some higher end tiny homes in AK:

<http://www.alaskatinytimberhomes.com/home.html>

Erin adds that financing has been an issue in building/buying tiny homes in the past. Bank may not fund projects where land has higher value than the structure.

Tiny homes may be too small for family living.

Co-Housing:

Shelley Rowton mentions cohousing option, where there are shared resources, such as kitchen. An example of this is Raven's Roost, there are some others within MOA as well. <https://www.abbottcoho.org/site-project/site/>

Jeanne Hanson to follow up with David Whitfield on what it takes to change code to make this sort of development possible.

Unit Lot:

Adopted into AMC in 2016. Smaller lots, owner owns the home as well as the land. Has to be in land zoned multifamily: No more than 8 lots. In Girdwood, the following zoning areas could type of development GR4, GR 5, GC6, GC7, GC8, GC9.

Mixed Use Development:

Many resort communities have shops on lower level and housing above. In Girdwood there are not many lots available.

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Kit Home/Tiny Home:

Linwood homes has kit homes. One idea is a 800sq ft family home on the same lot as tiny home. Snowbird condos may be an example of this type of development and has been widely cited as an example of the type of development that is desired by potential homeowners.

Mobile Home Court:

Girdwood has mobile home court, grandfathered in currently, but no other location is currently allowed in code. Possible to develop more of this type of option? There are well-manicured mobile home courts, as by West High School, and this opens possibility of more affordable housing. RV terminology is not received well in Girdwood, in part based on past effort to develop a RV park near where the brewery is located.

Multi-Family development:

Additional multifamily development is not well received by Girdwood residents currently. This may be in part due to construction of multifamily projects that are not owner occupied, used for nightly rental and not helping to solve the housing shortage.

Partnership/Public/Private Development:

HLB could sell land to non-profit to create public/private partnership. Developer can build homes with covenants to keep homes occupied by owner. Cook Inlet Housing Authority as similar projects in Anchorage. This is similar to part of the Girdwood Community Land Trust concept.

It is noted that HLB does not have land that is readily developable, lots have no road/no utilities/etc. HLB encourages group to review Sitka CLT, which does address affordable housing: <https://www.sitkactl.org/about.html>

HLB staff notes that HLB is not a developer, but they can partner with other groups that have the expertise to develop property for the purpose of creating affordable housing. Native corporations have strong experience in affordable housing. AHFC might be a good partner; various Native corporations seek investment opportunities. Neighborworks and Rural Cap may provide models that are helpful or extension into Girdwood. HUD has a number of programs that are not well-utilized.

Comments & observations:

Cost of building is high, hard to make tiny homes/alternative options pencil out.

Larger structure improves economy of scale. Duplicating footprint/layout helps to cut cost for construction. Venting, utility hook-up, also are more expensive for individual property development compared to shared connection.

Traditional apartment style condominiums create more affordable option.

Group discusses incentives, as private developers are unlikely to opt for affordable housing options over projects with higher return on investment. Tax abatement is one option.

Girdwood Area Plan open house recently showed negative/positive impressions of public toward different types of housing: Mobile homes – negative; Tiny homes – mixed; RV – mixed. Van life was positive; RV/motorhome was negative. Area Plan/Comprehensive Plan is underway, however a separate Housing Action Plan (similar to Trails Plan) utilizing consultants and experts is necessary. HWG would direct this work; funding is a significant need.

“Affordable” should not have a stigma of “Temporary”. Families want to put down roots in the community in affordable housing. <https://ivory-innovations.org> sustainable affordable housing solutions from Park City.

Sustainable construction that is more permanent would be more enticing to folks.

“Sustainable” approach with solar panels, well water, composting toilets or septic, as a way to develop HLB land without needing access to full services, depending on zoning. Community septic and community well are options. Cold Climate housing research center, has ideas that could be explored: <http://cchrc.org/yourhouse/plumbing.htm>

https://gwscientific.com/cchrc/sns/anaktuvuk-pass/system_manuals/Lifewater%20Extreme%20STP%20Engineering%20Manual.pdf

<https://www.contractormag.com/radiant/heating/article/20878308/uaf-sustainable-village-is-lab-for-experimental-building-mechanical-systems>

2. Assign Actions

Jeanne: Contact David Whitfield regarding Raven's Roost type development

Erin & John: coordinate & contact residents who may have ideas on investors from Native corporations/partnerships

3. Confirm next meeting date/time: February 10, 2021 – 7pm Regular meeting

Adjourn 9:30PM