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THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA Assembly Committee Of The Whole Work Session

December 13, 2010

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Deputy Mayor Merrill Sanford called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Assembly Chambers.

Assemblymembers Present: Jonathan Anderson, Mary Becker (telephonic), Bruce Botelho (telephonic), Ruth Danner, Bob Doll, Johan Dybdahl, Merrill Sanford, David Stone.

Assemblymembers Absent: Karen Crane.

Staff present: Rod Swope, City Manager; Kim Kiefer, Deputy City Manager; John Hartle, City Attorney; Laurie Sica, Municipal Clerk; Dale Pernula, Community Development Director; Greg Chaney, Planning Manager; Skye Stekoll, Engineering Associate; Heather Marlow, Lands and Resources Manager; Rorie Watt, Engineering Director; Sheila Fisher, Recreation Superintendent; John Stone, Port Director.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Monday, November 1, 2010 Committee of the Whole Meeting

Hearing no objection, the minutes of the November 1, 2010 Committee of the Whole meeting were approved.

b. Monday, November 22, 2010 Committee of the Whole Meeting

Hearing no objection, the minutes of the November 22, 2010 Committee of the Whole meeting were approved.

III. SITE PLANNING – DOWNTOWN PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY AND PROPERTY

Mr. Swope said that when the CBJ obtained the funds and approval to consolidate the Public Works Shops at the new facility at 7 mile, Engineering solicited private and public interest in the use of the downtown public shops for other purposes. We are returning the various ideas that have been proposed.

Mr. Watt said there is a memo in the packet with a variety of pictures and the study of the area of concern. There is also information and a proposal by the Docks and Harbors Board. There is more agreement than not about the area. There is no proposal for use of the existing building. It is in poor condition for anything but a storage facility and any use as a maintenance shop with remodel costs would be prohibitive. That building is slated for demolition. Regarding the seawalk, we have looked at a shoreline path, and outer path and a middle path. The outer path

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seems to be the favored option. The hybrid option with fill has some support but we are unsure of the response of the permitting agencies. The property in use now will have to be determined as to what is used as open space and what set aside for a building. There are ideas about a harbor office, a restaurant, a maritime museum, restrooms – a building is possible but no one has funding for any of those proposals at this time. The question would be to reserve a space for a building in the future. The other area of discussion is the space under the bridge. This is essentially covered space and there are many uses, such as storage or play areas. The other issue is snow storage. We are making efforts towards a long term plan but this area will be used for snow storage in the near future. He asked for direction from the Assembly on how to proceed with the use of the area, on the area under the bridge and whether the Assembly favored more open space or building space.

Mayor Botelho asked what additional land would be needed for parking requirements if 3500 sq. ft. were reserved for a building for three uses: a maritime museum, a port office and the Marine Exchange of Alaska. Mr. Watt said he would check with code, but it would be significant and also would require spaces for the park.

Mayor Botelho asked what effect the designation of park space under the bridge might have on future use and expansion of the bridge and right-of-way, given the community's experience with the "4F" designation of construction. Mr. Watt said he has had preliminary discussions with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF/PF) and they have asked that non-hazardous materials and activities be in that area – no fuel tanks, welding, and they may object to permanent structures. Mayor Botelho asked if 4f would prevent expansion of the bridge if a park were to be developed under the bridge. Mr. Watt did not see this would be an issue at a future date – 20 – 30 years out. If it were to happen now, you might have to move the park around but I don't see it being a guide to our methods.

Mayor Botelho asked what are the concerns of the Docks and Harbors Board (D&H) and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC), and their areas of agreement or disagreement? Mr. Watt said that the drawings reflect the ideas presented to date and Harbors would like to maintain control of the area on the North side, with the seaplane landing and docking. It is a space allocation issue that needs to be solved, especially on the south side of the bridge.

Ms. Danner asked about the utilization of space under the bridge and said there is graffiti there. She has contacted DOT/PF/PF about been getting it cleaned and was given the impression that it is a low priority and DOT/PF/PF was reluctant to allow CBJ to pay for and perform the painting. She asked how much cooperation will DOT/PF give us when there is a park there?

Mr. Watt said there is an agreement back to the 70's for the airspace use of the area and the CBJ owns the land. Regarding the graffiti, he did not see DOT/PF objecting to the city volunteering to paint the bridge, but he had not seen a lot of interest from DOT/PF regarding this property or the project.

Ms. Danner asked about the seawalk and said a seawalk further out into the water seems more expensive.

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Mr. Watt said yes, it would be, and referred to the drawings called Concept Alternate 1, 2 & 3. Concept 1 is the further out seawalk on piling, has an idea of a fill island and would be more expensive. Concept 2 is a seawalk that hugs the shore and is a filled option, which may be more difficult to permit. It would be in DOT/PF right of way, at or below the existing sidewalk and the general comment is a question of why bother with this, it doesn't add much interest. Concept 3 is a pure boardwalk option further out. The reason the idea of the boardwalk further out is popular is that the view would be better and people would be further removed from the noise of Egan Drive. It would be at an elevation that would sometimes be above tidelands, sometimes above water, and it would be a fairly unique pedestrian feature.

Mr. Sanford asked if any costs had been estimated for Concept 2 & 3. Mr. Watt said estimates have been done but he did not bring them to the meeting. He will distribute. He estimated \$10 million plus, and this would need to be a phased project. Mr. Sanford said he wanted to know the cost of the boardwalk concept along Egan and the increase cost to go out into the tidelands.

Mayor Botelho asked if \$10 million was the seawalk or the entire site. Mr. Watt said \$10 million would be the seawalk and a rudimentary park.

Mr. Anderson said even though it is challenging to do this – we need to know permitting costs as well as construction costs. Mr. Watt said a seawalk on a pier is easier to permit. The section by Taku Smokeries was permitted fairly easily.

Mr. Doll asked about funding. Could the portion from the subport to the landing on the park be funded by Marine Passenger Fees? Mr. Watt said possibly if the safety and efficiency standards could be supported, but the farther away from the cruise ship dock it is more difficult to justify. He deferred to Mr. Hartle, who said federal law prohibits any funds raised from the ships from being used for anything other than for safety and transporting of commerce. The seawalk from the rock dump to town is an unchallengeable use of those funds. As it gets farther away and more park-like and more amenity-like, it will be more tenuous.

Mayor Botelho asked if it would depend on the activities at the bridge that might generate traffic, such as a maritime museum or the whale project.

Mr. Sanford said as we get farther along with the seawalk, we will have to have the funding issues pinned down to understand the sources better. We need to discuss tonight the uses of the city shop site, and as the plans develop further, we will be able to give a better judgment.

Mr. Anderson said the answers regarding use of marine passenger fees are always debatable. Mr. Sanford said we can get closer.

Mr. Dybdahl said the Assembly should not plan for a lot of investment under the bridge right away – the bridge may need to be expanded or replaced, as some feel it is somewhat inadequate now.

Ms. Becker asked about storage under the bridge. Mr. Watt said storage would be ok, but not a storage building, and no hazardous materials.

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Ms. Becker asked about Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access and she hopes all the plans will include some ADA accessible fishing pier from the land. Mr. Watt said there were many comments with support for improved fishing access. We don't have the detail on this now. The complexity is to make the float accessible is difficult with extreme tides in the area and the length of ramp needed. We don't have funding sources for this now.

Mayor Botelho asked if it is possible to give PRAC and D&H some time to comment on this.

Mr. John Stone spoke on behalf of D&H and Mr. Jeff Wilson spoke on behalf of PRAC.

Mr. Stone referred to the D&H memo in the packet and said D&H currently manages the area north of the bridge. The area is used for seaplanes and many gillnetters do net repair there and a few boats are moored there. We have plans to improve the area. We would like to create a more formalized net repair area, and perhaps an area for fish sales. A fish lift crane is an idea. In the past we had open access, but Public Works (PW) installed a gate and it has become more difficult to use. We would like to see better access in the future. The Marine Services center was an idea put forth with a Port Directors office – there are potential parties, such as the Marine Exchange of Alaska that may be interested in sharing a building. It would be good to have some supervision in the area, prevent vandalism, and perhaps expand it to include an “anchor” to the seawalk – such as a maritime museum. He said he thought marine passenger fees could be used for this type of development. We have not done a feasibility study of these ideas.

Mr. Wilson said that downtown parkland on the waterfront is rare. Now the only spot is Marine Park and it is very small, with no rural aspect for green space. This PW site is small, and if you put a building there, it cuts into the area. We would like to see the public be able to use this so that downtown families can use the waterfront. Working with a variety of parties to anchor this as the beginning of the seawalk would be good. What is important now from the PRAC vision is open space. PRAC would prefer green space to a building, and if a building was required, he would support a maritime museum. If we build, we will have building and parking and very small areas for a park. It should be designed and built as a park. He would like fishing, picnicking, and perhaps the whale sculpture. Having signage, interpretive areas, and fishing gear rentals would be great. He would like to see the money spent on the seawalk. We have talked about a skateboard park under the bridge with some play equipment. We understand we will have to share the area for snow. There are many competing interests and not a lot of space.

Mr. Sanford asked about Mr. Wilson's thoughts regarding all the land, all the way down to gold creek – do you think there could be nodules in that entire area supporting some of the ideas we include now – by broadening our perspective?

Mr. Wilson said there is a great opportunity now to develop the waterfront, to develop the educational aspects of the tidelands. We have a chance to get better access corridors across Egan to a seawalk – to get tourism movement into that area. He said the bridge park is a key piece for the community to have a waterfront park.

Mr. Dybdahl said there are many good ideas if they can be afforded, but how will people get there. Mr. Wilson said access is very difficult and the traffic study would have to be looked at.

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There is not much room for parking or tour buses to pull in or park, especially with big office buildings or a museum.

Mr. Stone said they are looking at a modest sized office building and using the Harris Harbor entrance. In summer, it would be walk in – D&H is not envisioning buses and considers this is a pedestrian-oriented site.

Mr. Anderson said he is conscious of the funding source, so there needs to be something legitimized as a tourism source – such as a maritime museum. If there is a building there it seems most logical. He was supportive of park and green space, but that piece is worthy of consideration.

Ms. Danner said a building – the infrastructure – water and sewer, would be added costs, but whatever we end up doing, regardless, restrooms are required, which will need plumbing, water and sewer. Mr. Sanford said all new water and sewer were brought in with the reconstruction of 9th street. Mr. Sanford said the water source to the current building is now poor but could be upgraded.

Mayor Botelho suggested directing staff to reserve space for a marine center concept outlined by D&H, including an element of a maritime museum as a priority. He recommends minimizing the actual building frontage on the water with a large setback from the shoreline.

Mr. Doll said the harbors has plenty of area for their headquarters now, and this is such a rare plot to devote any portion of it to an office building now is hard to accept. He asked how a maritime museum would be developed.

Mayor Botelho shared his concern about a facility for office space only. The crucial element is the maritime museum.

Mr. Sanford supported the Mayor's concept and the plans submitted by D&H.

Mr. Anderson said he hopes staff will work with the attorney to justify any use of marine passenger fees to allow us leverage in this area.

Mr. Doll said that part of the goal of docking the "Storis" Coast Guard ship in Juneau would be to serve as a maritime museum.

Mr. Dybdahl said situating the seawalk away from Egan is a positive way to remove people from traffic.

Ms. Becker supported Mayor Botelho's suggestion. Ms. Danner asked if it was important to indicate the uses of the building. Mr. Sanford said it is important to let all the departments know where we sit on this issue.

Mr. Anderson said he supports a tourist attracting element there.

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Mayor Botelho said absent a museum, he would not want to authorize the placement of a building. There are other places the other functions can happen. If a museum can be combined with other uses, then that is good. Tying to a museum use may make a building happen and will assist with funding.

Ms. Danner agreed and she is concerned with the size. An office space for 22 employees in the Marine Exchange and four from harbors seems like a lot of space. She is concerned about pre-conceived tenants.

MOTION, by Botelho, to reserve 3500 square feet on the property for a building on the site.

Mayor Botelho said this does not take into consideration the parking, but puts sideboards on the building size.

Mr. Stone supported Mayor Botelho's motion and this is not prescriptive and changes can be made, but staff needs guidelines.

Mr. Dybdahl said it is important to have human presence to ensure safety.

Hearing no objection, it was so ordered.

MOTION, by Botelho, that planning should anticipate snow storage and removal activities on the site.
Hearing no objection, it was so ordered.

MOTION, by Botelho, that the area north of the bridge would be under control of the Docks and Harbors Board.

Mr. Anderson supported this. The area under the bridge should not be an open storage yard, and P&R should be consulted regarding uses. The north side should be in D&H control.

Mr. Dybdahl fully supported D&H control of the north side.

Ms. Becker asked for more specifics regarding storage needs are for under the bridge. Mr. Stone said a secure area for machinery, so it can't be vandalized. Mr. Stone said some is next to Egan drive now and in the building (infested with carpenter ants). Fencing would be sufficient. Mr. Stone said this is a concept without a lot of planning and can be modified. Mr. Doll said a fence did not seem to be a compatible use.

Ms. Danner said she likes Option Z and would prefer that the under bridge area be used for park vs. storage, she likes the flow of the seawalk and paths, and supports the north side of the bridge for D&H.

Mr. Sanford asked D&H and P&R if Option Z could be a mutual project. Mr. Wilson asked for the 3500 sq. feet now for P&R open space prior to any building use. P&R would like to see the seawalk continue north someday and would like to see space dedicated for this.

Hearing no objection, it was so ordered.

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Mr. Doll said Option Z is fine but is missing the picnic shelter. He would like to see this worked into the plan.

Mr. Sanford said the planners should expand their frame of reference as there is significant open space in the area.

Mr. Dybdahl said that one of the positives of the Option16b cruise ship dock is that it will allow for accessible fishing, any additional ADA fishing ramp would add significant expense.

Mr. Sanford said he did not think that any facility could not be constructed to ADA standards.

Ms. Becker said that she would like to see a focus on amenities for local citizens as well as tourism.

Ms. Danner said Concept Alternative #1 is her preference and she would like to see interim options to access mid-points in the seawalk for need for emergency access.

Mayor Botelho asked if there is an Assembly willingness to site the whale project in this area. is an issue. The only area indicated to date is the 'cake' area at Marine Park.

Mr. Sanford said he had no problem situating the whale at this location but we need to know if it would still be possible to use marine passenger fees for the decking.

Mr. Dybdahl said it would be the biggest attraction for tourism on the site if it were sited here and with a maritime museum, with guideposts on the shore side of the seawalk so as not to impair the view.

Mayor Botelho would like the Assembly to look at Concept Alternative #1 as a general expression of the Assembly and to hear the costs, in order to make a decision and move forward.

Mr. Dybdahl said moving it away from the highway provides educational opportunities regarding tidelands since the schools are close.

Mr. Swope said this discussion provided good direction. He does like the idea of a fish market on the north side, net repairs, fishing boats and seaplanes – these are all things locals and visitors would like to see and he did not want to see the area to be used for storage. A maritime museum will help justify the use of Marine Passenger Fees to construct the seawalk but will not build a museum and it is questionable to use MPF for any non-port use, including small boat harbors.

Mr. Anderson asked if a building would have to be there before it could be counted as a destination. Mr. Hartle said he has pulled every case on the tonnage clause since its inception – it was in the body of the constitution. There are a few recent cases and he will try his best to synthesize these with the questions in mind.

Mr. Doll said that in attempting to draw cruise ship passengers to the area, we should minimize storage – maritime museum, whale, open space – all contribute, and the harbor activities on the north side.

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Mr. Sanford encouraged the staff groups, P&R and D&H to work well together.

Mayor Botelho requested that Chair Sanford schedule a concluding discussion on the Assembly's goals and objectives at a future COW.

Mayor Botelho said he had a request to reinstate Assemblymember participants on the High School Project Team, and asked Mr. Doll, Ms. Becker and Mr. Sanford to serve. There were no objections.

IV. ADJOURN: 7:16 p.m.

Submitted by,
Laurie Sica, CMC
Municipal Clerk