

**KENAI CITY COUNCIL JOINT WORK SESSION
LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN
OCTOBER 11, 2021 – 5:00 P.M.
KENAI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND VISITOR CENTER
11417 KENAI SPUR HIGHWAY, KENAI, AK 99611
MAYOR GABRIEL, PRESIDING**

NOTES

Council present: B. Gabriel, H. Knackstedt, B. Molloy, T. Winger, J. Glendening, G. Pettey, V. Askin

Airport Commission
Present: P. Minelga, J. Zirul

Harbor Commission
Present: M. Dunn, B. Peters, D. Peck

Planning and Zoning Commission Present: J. Twait, G. Woodard, G. Greenberg, A. Douthit

Parks and Recreation
Commission Present: J. Dennis, S. Kisenka, M. Bernard, J. Joanis, D. Rigall,

Others present: City Manager P. Ostrander, Assistant to the City Manager C. Cunningham, City Clerk J. Heinz, Planning Director R. Foster, Public Works Director S. Curtin, Parks and Recreation Director B. Frates, Airport Manager E. Conway, Parks and Recreation Administrative Assistant T. Best, City Council Member Elect J. Baisden, City Council Member Elect D. Sounart

A. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Gabriel called the work session to order at 5:00 p.m.

B. Introduction and Presentation of Land Management Plan – City Manager

City Manager P. Ostrander introduced the draft Land Management Plan (LMP) noting the purpose of the meeting is to explain how the plan was put together, and what the next steps will be over the next few months. The reason for creating the plan was because the City was looking to evaluate and develop recommendations for City-owned lands that encourage responsible growth and development for the community. He provided a background on the City's acquisition, use, and management of lands, and noted that three years ago the City Council directed Administration to take a City-wide approach to land management which led to the current draft LMP.

He highlighted the City Lands Inventory and Database, noting it would result in an improved response to the public when providing information about City-owned lands. He reviewed how the Plan will provide recommendations for lands based on the categories Retain, Dispose, Dispose (lease only) and Mixed (Retain/Dispose). He discussed a timeline for review, additional meetings, and final council adoption.

He provided a tour of the online GIS mapping developed by Gary Greenberg, showing layers highlighting all municipal lands, lands recommended for sale or lease, and lands recommended for retention. He also showed a filter feature which allowed toggling lands for disposal, lands for leasing, etc.

It was noted that revisions and recommendations would be taking place over the next few months through commissions and Council work sessions. He noted that comments could be submitted via an online or paper comment form distributed at the meeting, and all comments would be captured in a document which would include the commenter's name, comment, and map the comment refers to. If the comment is incorporated into the final plan, the original comment will be referenced.

C. Public Comment

Council Member Pettey asked about the acreage of the City and how much is privately held.

Council Member Knackstedt asked how the document would be updated as a living document, and was clarified that the Planning Department would be responsible for updating the plan. Updates would be accomplished through the GIS database, and written plan updates would be done through regular sequence.

Planning & Zoning Commission Chair Twait asked if it was possible right now for people to purchase a piece of property, and it was clarified that this can be accomplished immediately and this was a tool for management moving forward.

Harbor Commission Chair Mike Dunn asked when the GIS would be available for the public, and it was noted that Administration hoped to bring the tool online as soon as possible.

Planning & Zoning Commissioner Alex Douthit asked if lots would be assessed only by the Borough or if there would also be independent appraisal. It was clarified that current assessment information was from the Borough, but that some small amount of properties might be appraised separately.

Mayor Gabriel asked whether legislation would be required to deem some properties for a public purpose. It was clarified that those lands are assumed needed for a public purpose, and legislation would deem them not for a public purpose.

Council Member Elect Baisden asked whether Administration would be making changes based on submitted comments or if Council would make those decisions. He also asked if the City is going to be doing auctions for the land. It was clarified that Administration may be making changes to correct inaccuracies or include additional information, but recommendations from commissions or public would be brought to Council for approval. Baisden noted that sales of City lands can evoke an emotional response from residents. Clarification was provided that Title 21 and 22 require development and for the City to sell property.

Mayor Gabriel asked regarding lands with retain/disposal recommendations if subdivisions needed to take place beforehand, or at the time a developer is interested. City Manager Ostrander noted it was part of the implementation plan, and would also depend on what Council wanted.

Council Member Askin asked how difficult it would be to change the zoning of a parcel that was designated Municipal Use, and referred to a parcel in the presentation. It was noted that Administration would have to work with the State to change this.

Planning & Zoning Commissioner Alex Douthit asked if there was a standard process for land sales, and asked about buyers obtaining their own appraised value. It was clarified that per Kenai Municipal Code, an appraisal is required before sale.

Mayor Gabriel thanked City Manager Ostrander for the work he and his staff put into this, and that Kenai's lands are one of our largest assets that could be better utilized and this is an excellent start.

D. Council Discussion and Comments

Council Member Pettey thanked Administration and Council for authorizing the implementation of this plan, and was looking forward to receiving input from the commissions.

Council Member Askin also thanked Administration, expressed appreciation for the tool, and thanked Greenberg for his work on it. She stated that she is excited to how the program go live online for the public, noting that this will be good for the City.

Council Member Knackstedt noted that Administration did a great job on the document, that it was easy to follow and well organized. He thanked Greenberg for his work on the GIS mapping.

Vice Mayor Molloy thanked Administration, Greenberg, and everyone who put together the Plan, noting that it was comprehensive and detailed. He made a recommendation to divide the document into smaller chunks to make smaller digital file. He noted that he agreed with Baisden that land use one of the most contentious issues that Council deals with. He stated the timeline was pretty tight and goes over the holidays, and that it would be very important to get the engagement and input from the public. He commented that it seems that there is a lot of land with a "dispose" recommendation which would lead to misunderstanding that the City is up for sale, and agreed with Commissioner Douthit regarding land values. He noted that some changes may take a while, especially those which involve the State. He noted that the Plan does not discuss potential acquisitions of land, and is also missing discussion on reviewing and evaluating future needs of the City.

Council Member Winger thanked Administration for their work, stating that this is a good starting point for drawing business. She noted that she agreed with Vice Mayor Molloy that if the City if wants the most input from the community, holiday time may not work well for people and the timeline could be adjusted.

Council Member Glendening thanked Administration and agreed that holidays are not a good time for work sessions. He noted that he would like to see a zoning map and a land use table included. He noted he was unclear on how the value of the land is determined, and clarification was provided that Kenai Municipal Code required an appraisal to determine fair market value, and that the applicant pays for appraisal and would be credited back after sale.

Mayor Gabriel thanked those for attending and noted there would be more opportunities for the commissions and public to flesh out this plan. He noted that the City has a good inventory and documentation of its lands, and this will be a good foundation moving forward. Thanked

City Manager Ostrander and Gary Greenberg. He reminded Commissioners that they can reach out to Administration.

E. Adjournment

The work session adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

Notes were prepared by:

Jamie Heinz

Jamie Heinz, MMC
City Clerk

