



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Minutes - Draft

Planning Commission

Thursday, July 25, 2024

7:00 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Present: Darrell Windsor (Chair), Katie Riley (telephonic, left at 8:45 PM), Wendy Alderson, Robin Sherman, Stacy Mudry
Excused: Thor Christianson (Assembly liaison)
Staff: Amy Ainslie, Kim Davis
Public: Amy O'Connor, Fredrick O'Connor, Tripp Larose, Pat Wilkinson, Michael Danen Vest, Cody Loomis, Ariadne Will

Chair Windsor called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

Commissioners moved item MISC 24-07 to the end of evening business.

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

A [PM 24-08](#) Approve the June 5, 2024 meeting minutes.

**M/Mudry-S/Alderson moved to approve the June 5, 2024 meeting minutes.
Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.**

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

V. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ainslie updated the commission on Davis taking the Planning Manager position and the newly posted Tourism Manager position. The Planner I position would be posted soon. Upcoming zoning changes regarding Katlian Bay and changes to the use tables for docks would be coming to the commission for review. The land study request for qualifications had been turned in and would be awarded. The RFP for the Jarvis Street horticulture site was out to bid and would be due on August 22.

VI. REPORTS

B [MISC 24-07](#) 2023 Annual Short-Term Rental Report

Ainslie presented the 2023 Annual Short-term Rental (STR) Report. There were 67 permits issued in 2023, with 51 active, 6 yet to start, and 10 inactive, totaling 57 active permits consistent with previous years. There was a slight decrease in average nights rented but an increase in bed tax remittances, indicating higher prices. Revenue from permits rose by 20%, with an average of nearly \$26,000 per permit.

Airbnb remained the top advertising platform, with word-of-mouth marketing gaining popularity. Professional property management service usage dropped by 46%, possibly due to more primary residences obtaining permits. Employment and travel data for summer seasons in 2022 and 2023 were reviewed, showing a busier travel season in April 2023. Additionally, usage of short-term rentals in permitted zones was discussed, with the possibility of requiring an administrative permit. Staff was also reviewing a centralized permitting system to streamline the process and improve efficiency.

VII. THE EVENING BUSINESS

C [VAR 24-10](#)

Public hearing and consideration of a zoning variance request to increase the maximum density and to reduce the required parking at 408 Lake Street in the R-2 multifamily residential district. The property is also known as A Portion of Lot Six (6), Block Nineteen (19), U.S. Survey 1474, Tract A, Townsite of Sitka. The request is filed by Tripp LaRose. The owners of record are Patrick Wilkinson and Kristen Wilkinson.

Davis introduced a request for a zoning variance at 408 Lake Street in the R-2 multifamily residential district to reduce the required amount of parking from six to five parking spaces and to increase the density on a nonconforming lot of record for use as a triplex. The owners were seeking to remodel the structure and establish a code compliant third dwelling unit. There were two units on the first floor and one unit on the second floor. There were other multi-family structures in the area and the proposal was consistent with the higher density character of the surrounding area and was unlikely to result in any noticeable impact. Potential parking impacts included utilizing parking on nearby properties or possible longer walking distances. There was on-street parking formally on Lake Street. Impacts were most likely to be minimal as this location was close to town and two of the dwellings were on the small side. Staff recommended approval.

The applicant Trip Larose and owner Pat Wilkinson were present. The owners were intending to use the dwellings as long-term rentals and had purchased the property as a triplex. There was no public comment. Commissioners discussed the density, parking and had concerns regarding the rationale of historical use. The commission amending their findings to strike the historical use and keep the size of the lot and placement of the structure as the special circumstances. They were in support of housing stock rehabilitation and expected to see more of these cases in the future. Sherman suggested the code be amended to have density be a conditional use which could be review on a case by case basis instead of a variance process.

M/Alderson-S/Mudry moved to approve the zoning variance for a reduction in parking requirements and to increase density at 408 Lake street in the R-2 multifamily residential district subject to the attached conditions of approval. The property was also known as A portion of Lot Six (6), Block Nineteen (19), U.S. Survey 1474, Tract A, Townsite of Sitka. The request was filed by Trip Larose. The owners of record were Patrick and Kristen Wilkinson. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

M/Alderson-S/Mudry moved to adopt and approve the amended required findings for variances involving major structures or expansions as listed in the staff report. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

D [VAR 24-11](#)

Public hearing and consideration of a zoning variance to reduce the north front setback from 14 feet to 10 feet at 318 Eliason Loop in the R-1 single-family and duplex residential district. The property is also known as

Lot 5, Block 6, Hillside Subdivision. The request is filed by Frederic and Amy O'Connor. The owners of record are Frederic and Amy O'Connor.

Ainslie introduced a request for a zoning variance at 318 Eliason Loop in the R-1 single-family/duplex residential district. The owners were requesting a reduction to the north front setback from 14' to 10' for placement of a single-family home. This was to move the structure away from the unstable slopes on the property, while still maintaining access to the rear of the property. This property was platted as a corner lot as it abuts three rights-of-way (ROW) on Eliason Loop. The property was currently developed with a pad. The placement of the structure not being parallel to the front property line meant the distance between the garage doors and the front property line were consistent with the distance that could result from not granting the variance. There were concerns regarding egress and visibility that were likely to still exist even if the variance wasn't granted. Staff recommended approval.

The applicants Amy and Frederick O'Connor were present. They had expressed concerns about the stability of the slopes and had reduced their footprint of the structure. With the structure closer to the front of the lot where more of the bedrock was, would help with the stability of the foundation. There was no public comment. The commission discussed the potential impacts regarding safety, visibility, and access. Including the distance of the structure to the road, line of sight, snow buildup and removal, and the placement of the structure on the property was also considered.

M/Mudry-S/Alderson moved to approve the zoning variance for a reduction to the north front setback at 318 Eliason Loop in the R-1 single-family/duplex residential district subject to the attached conditions of approval. The property was also known as Lot 5, Block 6, Hillside Subdivision. The request was filed by Fredric and Amy O'Connor. The owners of record were Fredric and Amy O'Connor. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

M/Mudry-S/Alderson moved to adopt and approve the amended required findings for variances involving major structures or expansions as listed in the staff report. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

E [CUP 24-08](#)

Public hearing and consideration of a conditional use permit for a bunkhouse at 507 Katlian Avenue in the WD waterfront district. The property is also known as Lot 1A, S.P.C. Subdivision No. 2. The request is filled by Michael Danen Vest. The owner of record is Seafood Producers Cooperative.

Davis introduced a request for a conditional use permit for a bunkhouse for transient workers at 507 Katlian Avenue in WD waterfront district. This was housing for workers at the Seafood Producers Cooperative (SPC) processing plant. This was a 960 square foot bunkhouse with ten beds and a bathroom. There was a processing plant, warehouse, office space, and an existing bunkhouse with a maximum occupancy of 28. There were 49 parking spaces required; 2 for the new bunkhouse, 5 for the existing bunkhouse, 8 for the warehouse, 8 for the office space and 28 for the processing plant. Proposed signage included no trespassing signs posted to the street side of the building and no buffers were proposed. Minimal impacts were expected, most seasonal employees don't have vehicles, and odors were in line with residential use. Staff recommended approval.

The applicant Michael Vest was present and had no additional comments. There was no public comment. Alderson was a member of SPC and asked to be excused from discussion and voting, the Chair excused her. Commissioners discussed the

bunkhouse and raised concerns about parking and the potential for future expansion. Staff reassured commissioners the conditional use permit could be amended and would trigger a re-review from the commission if any significant changes were to occur.

M/Mudry-S/Sherman moved to approve the conditional use permit for a bunkhouse at 507 Katlian Avenue in the WD waterfront district subject to the attached conditions of approval. The property was also known as Lot 1, S.P.C. Subdivision. The request was filed by Michael Danen Vest. The owner of record was Seafood Producers Cooperative. Motion passed 4-0 by voice vote.

M/Mudry-S/Sherman moved to adopt and approve the required findings for conditional use permits as listed in the staff report. Motion passed 4-0 by voice vote.

F [P 23- 04](#)

Public hearing and consideration of a final plat for a minor subdivision resulting in four lots at 2507 Sawmill Creek Road in the R-1 LDMH single-family or duplex low density or single-family low density manufactured home district. The request is filed by Cody Loomis. The owner of record is Cody Loomis.

Davis introduced a final plat for a minor subdivision resulting in four lots at 2507 Sawmill Creek Road in the R1 LDMH single-family or duplex low density manufactured home district. All lots met the minimum development standards. Lot 4 was currently developed with a duplex and drainage plan had been accepted by the municipal engineer. The site was partially developed and within a developed neighborhood. There was a minimal slope from the front to the rear and abutted the National Forest boundary line. There were also wetlands covering most of the property. The utilities were from Sawmill Creek Road with the access easement along the western side of Lot 4. Drainage easements had been added to the plat. Lots 1 and 3 would necessitate some creative design for building placement but would still result in attractive and buildable lots. Staff recommended approval.

Applicant Cody Loomis was present. He had no additional comments. There was no public comment. Commissioners discussed the plat and asked about the need for an Army Corps permit. Staff confirmed permits would be required for whomever developed the lots.

M/Mudry-S/Alderson moved to approve the final plat for a minor subdivision to result in four lots at 2507 Sawmill Creek Road in the R-1 LDMH district subject to the attached conditions of approval. The property was also known as Lot 13-A, M.O. Brown Resubdivision. The request was filed by Cody Loomis. The owner of record was Cody Loomis. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

M/Mudry-S/Alderson moved to adopt the following findings as listed in the staff report. Motion passed 5-0 voice vote.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Windsor adjourned the meeting at 9:27 PM.