



City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

Coast Guard City, USA

Planning and Community Development Department

Case No: ZA 20-06
Proposal: Zoning Map Amendment: R-1 LDMH to R-1
Applicant: Jere Christner
Owner: Christner Alaska Community Property Trust
Location: 303 Charteris Street
Legal Desc.: Lot 11 B, Potter Estates
Zone: R-1 LDMH single-family, duplex, or manufactured home low density district
Size: 15,015
Parcel ID: 2-4701-000
Existing Use: Residential
Adjacent Use: Residential
Utilities: Public
Access: Charteris Street

KEY POINTS AND CONCERNS:

- Lot is currently developed with a duplex on site
- The applicant is interested in subdividing the property in the future, which given the lot size is not possible without rezoning to R-1
- Staff does not believe this request would result in spot zoning; area is developed with R-1 zoning abutting the property and across the street.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Aerial
Attachment B: Zoning Map
Attachment C: Plat
Attachment D: As-Built
Attachment E: Photos
Attachment F: Applicant Materials

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

The applicants are requesting a zoning map amendment from R-1 LDMH single family, duplex, or manufactured home low density residential district to R-1 single family and duplex residential for their property on Charteris Street.

It is the desire of the applicant to subdivide the property to make a new building lot for residential development. The minimum lot size in the R-1 LDMH zone is 15,000 square feet net of access easements. At 15,015 square feet, the applicant could not subdivide his lot without either obtaining a substantial platting variance for the size differences or by rezoning the property. While staff felt that as a platting variance, the proposal would not meet the burden of proof for findings (some sort of undue hardship the lot presents), staff does think this lot is a good candidate for rezoning.

The Potter Estates subdivision is zoned as low density, but it is adjacent to R-1 developments with smaller lot sizes. Further, two of the lots in the subdivision (now in the Purdy Subdivision) immediately east of the subject property were re-subdivided in 1985 and are substandard for the district. The property on the southwest side of this lot is zoned as R-1, as are the properties across the street. Staff does not believe that this rezoning (or the resulting subdivision and development it enables) would significantly alter the character of the neighborhood.

It's notable that the change in development standards undertaken by the Commission in 2019 to reduce minimum lot sizes in the R-1 (and other) zone enables this possible subdivision. Prior to the zoning text change, the minimum lot size in the R-1 zone was 8,000 square feet. Without the reduction to 6,000 square feet minimum, the applicant in this case would not be able to subdivide this property without both a zoning map amendment as well as a platting variance. This application affirms that higher density development (one of the housing goals in the Comprehensive Plan) can be enabled through reasonable, well planned changes in the zoning code and development standards.

While this application in and of itself does not provide approval for a future subdivision, staff felt it was prudent to conduct some preliminary analysis on whether the lot would be suitable for subdivision. A subdivision of this lot could result in 2 lots. There is adequate width to meet the 80' minimum width requirement. The current structure on the property is set over 100 feet back from the front property line, leaving enough room on the front of the lot for subdivision and placement of another structure. The lot is relatively flat, but some vegetation may need to be cleared. An access easement may be needed through the newly created lot to access the "rear" property and existing structure. With a minimum 20' wide access easement, staff calculated there should be adequate space and square footage to place said easement on the lot and still provide for two properties that exceed the 6,000 square foot minimum net of access easements.

ANALYSIS

Project / Site: Lot to be rezoned is 15,015 square feet. Lot is developed with a driveway, parking areas, and duplex structure. Largely flat with significant vegetation on the lot.

Traffic: Moderate traffic on Edgumbe Drive and Charteris Street for residential use. As rezoning enables more dense development of the area, more traffic could result from passage of the zoning map amendment. The roads in this area should adequately handle the increased traffic.

Parking: Space is available to create parking if it would be desired by the property owner.

Noise: Low to moderate – should not be substantially higher than surrounding R-1 uses.

Public Health or Safety: No impacts to public health or safety anticipated.

Habitat: No concerns for habitat.

Property Value or Neighborhood Harmony: Given the surrounding R-1 zoning and substandard lots within the R-1 LDMH zone in this area, staff does not think this proposal would significantly alter the character of the neighborhood or negatively impact neighbor harmony and/or property values.

Comprehensive Plan: The proposal directly correlates to Housing Action H1.1e “encourage higher density development” by enabling subdivision and development, as well as Housing Action H 1.1c “reduce minimum lot sizes” by moving the property in a lower lot size zoning district (while not resulting in spot zoning).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION/CONCLUSION

Staff recommends approval of the zoning map amendment.

RECOMMENDED MOTIONS

- 1) **“I move to recommend approval of the zoning map amendment to rezone 303 Charteris Street from the R-1 LDMH single-family, duplex, or manufactured home low density district to the R-1 single-family and duplex residential district. The property is also known as Lot 11B Potter Estates. The request is filed by Jere Christner. The owner of record is the Christner Alaska Community Property Trust.”**
- 2) **“I move to adopt the findings as listed in the staff report.”**

The Commission finds that:

- a. The zoning map amendment does not negatively impact the public health, safety, and welfare,
- b. The zoning map amendment has followed all code regarding amending the official zoning map with regards to public process;
- c. The zoning map amendment will not result in adverse effects on surrounding neighbors.
- d. The zoning map amendment comports with the Comprehensive Plan by aligning with goals H1.1c and H1.1e.