



City and Borough of Sitka

PROVIDING FOR TODAY...PREPARING FOR TOMORROW

A Coast Guard City

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Eisenbeisz and Assembly Members

Thru: John Leach, Municipal Administrator

From: Amy Ainslie, Planning Director

Date: August 19, 2021

Subject: Rezoning of 4951 Halibut Point Road

Background

In the No Name Mountain/Granite Creek Master Plan, future uses identified for the property located at 4951 Halibut Point Road included either commercial recreation or high-end residential development (given that affordable housing on the site did not appear to be financially feasible). At the conclusion of the plan, the Assembly directed staff to issue a Request for Information (summer 2020) to gauge the market interest in how the land should be developed. After analyzing the responses, the Assembly directed staff to issue a Request for Proposals (winter 2020-2021) for the sale or lease of the property with an open call for development proposals.

CBS received one response to that RFP from Shee Atika, Inc. and its partner, Adventure Sitka, LLC with a proposal to develop the site for commercial recreation. The Assembly has passed an ordinance on first reading authorizing a lease of the site to Shee Atika, Inc (lessee). Second reading will take place on August 24th.

The land is currently zoned as R-1, single-family and duplex residential housing. This is not reflective of previous planning efforts; R-1 zoning is commonly used in Sitka as a holding district for undeveloped municipal lands. This is explained in SGC 22.16.040(A)(2).

A few different zoning designations for the site were considered, but Recreation was selected by CBS and the lessee in lease negotiations, as it aims to protect recreational enjoyment of lands in the district, preserve the natural setting, and reasonably limit heavier and/or denser residential, commercial, and industrial uses. There are prescriptive easements that run with the land 50' shoreward and 50' seaward of mean high water; this is an important factor in the drive for recreational zoning of this site.

The Planning Commission reviewed this request at their August 18th meeting and voted unanimously to recommend rezoning the property from R-1 to Recreation.

Analysis

The intent of the Recreation district is explained in SGC 22.16.150(A): “The recreation district is intended to contain both public and private lands to be used for recreation purposes. Lands designated for this district should be evaluated for long-term public benefits to accrue from the protection offered by this designation.”

The recreation zone is essentially a mix of single-family residential, open space, and light commercial uses (though commercial uses are largely conditional, rather than permitted uses). Rezoning the site to Recreation as opposed to General Commercial preserves greater setbacks from property lines, has more open space requirements, and limits the heavier/more intensive uses General Commercial would allow.

Fiscal Note

No fiscal notes are associated with this rezoning.

Recommendation

Approve the zoning map amendment to rezone 4951 Halibut Point Road from R-1 single-family and duplex residential to R recreation district.