



Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting #22

Location: Rabbit Creek Community Church Auditorium

Date: March 17, 2008 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

NOTES

1. Introduction – introductions of CAC, consultants, guests, public attendees (John Reese - chair) (10 minutes)

CAC

- John Weddleton
- John Reese
- Dave Lappi
- Chris Hamre
- Carol Fries

Staff

- Chris Beck
- Heather Stewart
- Mel Langdon
- Kristi Bischofberger
- JoAnn Contreras

Miscellany

- Update on new/replacement CAC member – CAC still looking for one.

2. Review project schedule: A draft HDP is anticipated to be developed by the end of July

Discussion

- CBeck gave an overview of the project schedule as it currently stands.
- Framework Plan will present options, but will not make recommendations.
- The Draft Hillside District Plan *will* present recommendations. The draft Hillside Plan that will be presented to the community in June (now July).
- The Draft Plan will present recommendations of the CAC and the MOA administration will be recorded in the draft plan. If these conflict, the plan will explicitly state that.
- Some concern was voiced about having only 10 days for public comment after the workshops:
 - Because the plan is released in early April, there actually is about a full month for public review

- Ideally the comment period should be long enough to include an entire meeting cycle of all the various Hillside interest groups (Community Councils, horse council, trails groups, developers, potter marsh people, etc.)
- The consulting team has now decided to push back the schedule. Public comments are due May 12.
- Where are the developers? Do they have a group?
 - 1) efforts are underway to add a developer to the CAC
 - 2) we've been meeting with them several times over the past few months, building trust and understanding with those folks; they call regularly and are involved. They have the same rights as any other citizen, and have formed a Bear Valley landowners group.
- The Planning Team needs to consider for the public process how it's engaging the developers; it can't appear as though they are being afforded special consideration. It would be a shame to get all the way through this and have the process called into question for this reason.
 - The Planning Team has had special interest meetings with a variety of groups: HALO, community councils, potter marsh people, etc. The developers felt as though their voice was not being heard, especially since Connie dropped out of the CAC.
 - What about Vic and Dee in representing developers? There is still the perception that the voice of landowners has not been a part of these discussions.
 - We may be at risk the other way too, though. Jennifer Johnston on the Assembly brought up the fact that with Connie gone, the CAC doesn't represent developers and landowners, but represents the general homeowner very well.
- Chris, how often have you seen this kind of thing happen?
 - The thing I (C. Beck) see most often and am most concerned about is groups that feel they've not been included, who come in at the end and derail the process.
 - Typically, you get a lot of participation from people who understand and support planning throughout the process, then those folks who are not big supporters, especially if they have the resources to bring in attorneys, complain like heck and stop the plans at the end.
 - I don't know of anything we've done on a procedural process that we'd be challenged on.
- If we're going to stick with the May 4 deadline, can we make it a deadline for comment or notice to provide comment to give more opportunity for groups that don't meet in that time period?
 - We would like to make it more nuanced than that; we don't want to encourage people to give a three-week notice of public comment at the end of the comment period.
 - Would it be possible to move the deadline to May 9 (Fri)? Or May 12 (Mon)?
 - Kristi B.'s experience is that people always wait until the last minute to submit comments, so pushing the deadline out will only push the project later. Better to make the deadline early so we can have a longer grace period.
 - As noted above the deadline has been shifted to May 12th

- Would it be possible to have the May CAC meeting at the MOA Planning Office so John R can teleconference in?
 - Yes.
- Are these options to be considered in a cost vacuum? Are there notes about how much any of this is going to cost?
 - We have today a draft section of the Framework Plan for you to look over that is about funding mechanisms. This is a big process, so it's going to be a lot if we can get the Assembly to adopt a Hillside District Plan that says the Hillside is going to adopt a new strategy for roads, drainage and trails, but as of the time of writing the plan, we don't know exactly what that's going to be. Details will be worked out in the future about how to set up the new mechanism(s), costs, mill rate(s), how it/they will be governed, etc. That itself will require a separate process, with a lot of additional public involvement.
 - In the end, this is the first phase of the Hillside District Plan; the implementation phase will sort out those details, led by the Hillside.
 - Regarding drainage standards, the HDP may have some Hillside-specific policies, but the Design Criteria Manual (DCM, out for second review right now), is where the guts will be.
 - If some desired Hillside standards don't make it into the adopted DCM, we should try to get them into the HDP.
- The Framework Plan will be modified after the workshops, so the Draft Plan is the modified/edited Framework Plan?
 - Yes, with more detail.
 - Some caution was voiced against too much planning by image and sound byte – the Framework Plan should have substance.
 - Agreement from the Planning Team, but at the same time, we want the document to be short enough that people will read it. People seem more likely to look at pictures and captions that pull them in.
 - Also, the MOA planners believe very strongly that we need a record (Framework Plan) of clear, unbiased choices that have been considered and discussed as part of this Plan. We want a record of all the hard work you've done over this process.

3. Review role of the CAC and public in recommendations presented in the Draft Plan

Discussion

- There is a spectrum of involvement on the part of the CAC at this point in the process: 1) help the consultants identify targeted outreach groups; 2) make themselves available to answer questions to these groups, including attending their meetings; 3) offer other ways of looking at issues. The CAC is not being asked to “sell” the Plan.
- The group agreed that the CAC will be part of the early May (and now, also June) process of deciding which options to recommend to the Assembly.
- Recommendations in the HDP ultimately will be made by the Muni Staff, reflecting what has been heard from the public, and working with the CAC. Where the Muni staff and the CAC/public disagree, the “dissenting views” will be documented and explicitly explained in Draft Plan. This will give the Assembly, who ultimately is

responsible for approving the plan, a clear idea of the variety of opinions on key subjects.

- The CAC will be invited to a series of work sessions, to follow the public workshops, to work with the consulting team and MOA staff to develop the recommendations that will be presented in the Draft HDP.

4. Public Workshops: Overview of structure, publicity, CAC role

Discussion

- Heather talked about publicity for the workshops.
- A discussion followed about the best way to reach out to community councils.
- Followed by a discussion about the best timing for mailing postcards.
- Chris/Heather gave an overview of the tentative schedule/agenda for the workshops.
- The CAC suggested additional groups for targeted outreach.

5. Review Changes to the Draft Framework Plan

Discussion

- CBeck led a discussion on some of the major changes to the Framework Plan draft since the last CAC review of the document.
- Consultants asked that the CAC look at the current draft and send comments after the meeting if inclined.

Changes:

- The physical overview of the Hillside study area was put into the introduction section; including a note about how the human factor affects natural systems.
- A summary of whence the 4,000 – 6,000 dwelling units was added
 - The natural question that comes from that is “Are we on target?” – there needs to be a discussion or response to that.
 - The rate at which that growth takes place is something we can not control; the market is going to determine the rate of growth. So what is most important about the 2020 plan growth allocations is that the plan sets a target of 13-20% of Anchorage’s growth (4,000-6,000 units of 30,000 total) will occur on the Hillside. It doesn’t matter if we hit that by 2020 or not.
 - Table 1.1 – can we start with: existing homes date of 2020 (2001?), then have additional homes as of March 2007, followed by total existing homes March 2007?
- Regarding the Lower Hillside Alternative: in the introduction to growth in Lower Hillside, we set the stage for the possibility of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs - if a landowner-developer aggregates a certain number of lots, they can increase density if as long as the proposed development meets certain standards).
 - The draft standards allow a range of densities (from 2 to 3/acre), with the intent that the higher level would be allowed if developers take actions that benefit the public. How are you going to define “public interest”? Determine standards that developers would meet?

- That will be explained in the Land Use Phase II report that backs up the Framework Plan (in general terms; we're not going to try to write the precise ordinance in this plan).
- How do you prevent orphaned lots in this concept? – Not sure; don't know how much of a problem it is.
- With regard to property taxes, having neighboring properties redeveloped to a higher density is going to raise property values, so taxes will probably go up. The "orphaned" property is likely to be compared with neighboring properties regardless of whether they are developed under a conditional use. Chris Hamre gave example of his home near Prominence Pointe: his property has been compared by the MOA with Prominence Pointe even though they have streets/gutters/amenities, etc. that his property doesn't have.
- If the zoning doesn't change, then the property value shouldn't spike, and likewise taxes shouldn't spike.
- The plan is much better off if it doesn't propose changing the zoning; it's much easier to get public approval if you just give the option to develop at a higher density but don't change the zoning.
- In the presentation of higher density on the Hillside: PUDs are already allowed, so when you're pushing the allowable number of homes and imposing more standards, you're really taking something that already exists and modifying it. The only thing that you're doing that will encourage making use of this modified PUD is moving the wastewater service boundary.
 - Can you say that no PUDs will be allowed in the rest of the Hillside as a tradeoff? That elsewhere only conservation subdivisions are allowed instead? (probably not an effective tradeoff)
- Commercial options:
 - When you talk about a "country store" people are skeptical because there's nothing that compels people to build a country store as opposed to any other commercial establishment on that land. If you're going to be specific about requiring a country store in particular, then you need to put that in the HDP – hit the basics: "We're going to require a country store by limiting x, y, z."
 - Try to take out the pejorative language ("risk").
 - Talk about how to handle traffic in relation to this commercial spot.
- The Green/Built Infrastructure approach is intended as the creation of an integrated system of drainage, open space, roads, etc.) in a way that will better protect resources and help reduce development costs ("a win-win scenario"). This is not happening under the existing or revised versions of Title 21 and the DCM
 - Asked of Kristi Bischofberger – is this a fair description of how this would occur?
 - Yes – we think integrating all these aspects of development and on integrating development plans among subdivisions will have those benefits.
 - One specific example of how this works: the need to locate and fund a road to serve the proposed subdivisions above Prominence Pointe. Funding for this road was in the portion of the leg budget cut by the governor last session.
 - That explanation still won't prevent some landowners from making a takings complaint.

- In the commercial section there is a description of the “Bear Valley area;” what is the Bear Valley area, specifically?
 - Consultants are grappling with how to present the location of potential commercial sites in the Plan:
 - Option 1) identify a relatively large area (e.g. along Hillside Drive south of O’Malley), fix the allowed number of such developments (e.g. no more than 1) and let the market determine best exact location
 - Option 2) Identify a single, specific area (as has been to date, with the focus on the area near Bear Valley school); indicate this with a dot or star
 - The market will decide the easiest place to locate the commercial given financial and regulatory constraints, not necessarily the best location.
 - There are potential traffic issues in that area that should be considered.
 - Suggestion to limit the new commercial to just one establishment in “the Southeast Area” (because it’s so far from other commercial acres).
 - Should require it to be adjacent to a public facility (i.e., fire station, school, utility) because if the MOA is going to bully it through in residential areas, homeowners won’t get enough of a chance to fight it if they don’t want it.

- Regarding Funding Mechanisms - the group discussed the implementation section of the Framework Plan draft
 - Plan says – some version of service district is need, not sure which specific option is best, more work is needed
 - This conclusion is less bold than the CAC thought it would be, but likely the right way to go. The public is likely not yet ready for a final, specific recommendation.

- In terms of the need to be equitable: in Rabbit Creek, you’re asking people who have been impacted by development to pay for impacts they didn’t cause. The burden to improve drainage, roads etc. still comes across as being born by taxpayers and not enough by developers.
 - Some mechanism to pay for roads and drainage, etc. on the Hillside should have been in place a long time ago – we can’t go back and change that.
 - Where the school district is involved, part of that should be borne by all of Anchorage.
 - Maybe go a little further than tapping into State funding by saying that we’re trying to fix past wrongs; people have been bringing this to the forefront for years.
 - The bottom line is that the horse is out of the barn; we have to deal with what we have, even if it means absorbing some inequity because we can’t go back and charge past developers from a long time ago.

- Regarding the idea of imposing impact fees:
 - How equitable are they if they exist on the Hillside but not in Midtown or Downtown?
 - Bigger developments (Fred Meyer, ex) in those areas are currently hit with impact fees.
 - Also, the physical infrastructure is already in place in Downtown/Midtown; ARDSA is in place. So that has already been paid for and is still being paid for through other mechanisms.

- It is possible that if impact fees are implemented they would be citywide.
- An additional table has been added to look at mil rate comparisons.
- Could you add dollar values to one of the tables to show how much you would pay to raise a million dollars on the Hillside? Maybe add a column to Table 6: how much is it going to cost each taxpayer to raise a million dollars?
 - Or add a caption under one of the tables walking the reader through this sample:
The service area needs \$1million to do a project. To raise that amount, it would levy 1/3 mil, which for a house of \$500,000 would be about \$x/year.
- The group discussed extending the MOA Parks boundary into Chugach State Park:
 - It's probably a good idea, but one person expressed a concern that it might encourage the two entities to do nothing and push responsibility back on each other.

6. Wrap-up (5 min)

- Assignments
 - Next scheduled meeting April 21, 2008