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**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Denali Borough Planning Commission
Denali Borough Office
August 21, 2024**

REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING

CALL TO ORDER

Presiding Officer James Ward called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

Planning Commissioners present were: Mark MENKE, Zack RUSSELL, James WARD, Steve JONES, Baxter MERCER, and Susan BRAUN.

Mayor Chris Noel was also present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Susan BRAUN MOVED to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded.

The VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA PASSED by unanimous show of hands.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Susan BRAUN MOVED to approve the minutes from the June 19, 2024 Regular Meeting. The motion was seconded.

The VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES PASSED by unanimous show of hands.

COMMUNICATION AND APPEARANCE REQUEST

There were no Communication and Appearance requests.

REPORTS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR REPORT

Community Development Director Stephanie Ford verbally highlighted information from the attached written report (SEE ATTACHMENT A).

BOROUGH PLANNER

Denali Borough Planner Marsha Lambert reported the following:

- There will be a Planning Commissioner training offered on October 27th with the Planning Conference scheduled for the spring of 2025.
- The Denali Borough is now ready to accept lease applications for Denali Borough lands.

1 **MAYOR**

2 Mayor Chris Noel highlighted information provided in the attached written report
3 (SEE ATTACHMENT B).

4
5 **PLATS AND CONDITIONAL USES**

6 **PC RESOLUTION 24-10: SPRUCE TOP SUBDIVISION PLAT**

7 Baxter MERCER MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION PC 24-10. The motion was
8 seconded.

9
10 The commissioners discussed concerns regarding easements designated as private
11 and road easement dividing lots within the subdivision.

12
13 Baxter MERCER MOVED TO AMEND RESOLUTION 24-10 by changing all private
14 easements to public easements. The motion was seconded.

15
16 The VOTE TO AMEND PASSED by unanimous roll call vote.

17
18 Baxter MERCER MOVED TO AMEND RESOLUTION 24-10 to provide authority to
19 the Land Planner to resolve orphaned segments of property in:

- 20 • Lot 1; North East Corner
- 21 • Lot 2; South West and South East corner
- 22 • Lot 5; North West Corner
- 23 • Lot 6; North edge and adjust the South West property line
- 24 • Lot 7; North East Corner
- 25 • Lot 8; South East and South West Corner

26
27 The motion was seconded.

28
29 Susan BRAUN MOVE TO AMEND THE AMENDMENT to include the following:

- 30 • Lot 10; North edge
- 31 • Lot 11; North East edge

32
33 The motion was seconded.

34
35 The VOTE TO AMEND THE AMENDMENT PASSED by unanimous show of hands.

36
37 The VOTE TO AMEND RESOLUTION 24-10 PASSED by unanimous show of
38 hands.

39
40 The VOTE TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 24-10 AS AMENDED FAILED with
41 JONES, BRAUN, and RUSSELL OPPOSED.

42
43 **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

44 There was no unfinished business to consider. Road construction standards will be
45 discussed during a work session following the regular meeting.

1
2 **NEW BUSINESS**

3 **PC RESOLUTION PC 24-08: WATER LINE/UTILITY EASEMENT**

4 Steve JONES MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION PC 24-08. The motion was
5 seconded.

6
7 The VOTE TO APPROVE RESOLUTION PC 24-08 PASSED by unanimous roll call
8 vote.

9
10 **PC RESOLUTION PC 24-09: APPROVE STREET NAMES IN THE COMMUNITY OF**
11 **CANTWELL**

12 Baxter MERCER MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION PC 24-09. The motion was
13 seconded.

14
15 Baxter MERCER MOVED TO AMEND RESOLUTION 24-09 to add a statement
16 recognizing the 2021 public meetings.

17
18 The VOTE TO AMEND RESOLUTION 24-09 PASSED by unanimous show of
19 hands.

20
21 The VOTE TO APPROVE RESOLUTION PC 24-09 AS AMENDED PASSED by
22 unanimous roll call vote.

23
24 Baxter MERCER MOVED TO RECONSIDER THE VOTE. The motion was seconded.
25 The VOTE TO RECONSIDER PASSED with JONES opposed.

26
27 Susan BRAUN MOVED TO AMEND PC RESOLUTION 24-09 to correct the Street
28 Names identified in the "Be it resolved" section. The motion was seconded.

29
30 The VOTE TO AMEND PC RESOLUTION 24-09 PASSED by unanimous show of
31 hands.

32
33 The VOTE TO APPROVE PC RESOLUTION 24-09 AS AMENDED PASSED by
34 unanimous roll call vote.

35
36 **PC RESOLUTION 24-11: NEW STREET NAME**

37 Baxter MERCER MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION PC 24-11. The motion was
38 seconded.

39
40 The VOTE TO APPROVE RESOLUTION PC 24-11 PASSED by unanimous roll call
41 vote.

42
43 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

44 There were no public comments.
45

1 **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

2 Planning Commissioners welcomed Zack Russell to the Commission.

3
4 **PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT TO THE ASSEMBLY**

5 Commissioner MERCER offered to provide the Planning Commission report at the
6 Wednesday, September 11, 2024 Denali Borough Assembly meeting at the
7 McKinley Community Center.

8
9 **TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

10 The next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 18, 2024 at 6:00pm at the Denali
11 Borough Office.

12
13 **ADJOURNMENT**

14 Presiding Officer James WARD adjourned the meeting at 8:02 PM and moved the
15 meeting into work session

16
17 **WORK SESSION**

18 **DRAFT DENALI BOROUGH CODE 9.11 ROAD CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS**

19
20 The Planning Commission reviewed the draft version of Denali Borough Code 9.11
21 Road Construction Standards and the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Road
22 Construction Standards and discussed possible amendments to consider at a future
23 meeting.

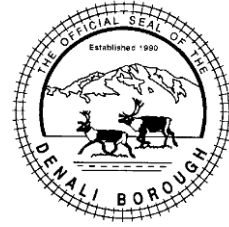
24
25 No action was taken during the work session.

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33 APPROVED: _____
34 James WARD, Deputy Presiding Officer

35
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38 ATTEST: _____
39 Amber Renshaw, Clerk Date Approved: _____

DENALI BOROUGH

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR UPDATE

August, 2024

Outdoor Recreation

- **Antler Ridge Area**
 - Area open, vaulted toilet installed and operational.
 - Cultural resources survey being conducted this week to move forward on National Historic Preservation Act and National Environmental Policy Act compliance for Phase 2 (Trail construction).
- **Community and Outdoor Recreation Plan**
 - Goal to open for public comment from Oct 1-31 with potential of bringing plan before Planning Commission in November and Borough Assembly in December.

Transportation

- **Separated Pathways** – attending coordination meeting with partners at the DOT&PF and NPS as projects move forward
- **Railroad Realignment Project** – working to engage in discussions with partners about moving forward this high priority project identified in the Public and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL) to realign the railroad to eliminate the at-grade highway crossing at MP 235 and separated crossing at approx. MP237.

Community Development

- **Subdivision Draft Concept Designs for Stampede Panguingue and Yanert**
 - Borough staff is conducting an internal review of draft designs
- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Grant**
 - Grant application submitted in mid-July.
- **Upcoming Grant Applications**
 - Community Change Grant (EPA) – working with Alaska Municipal League and School District on an application with school infrastructure improvements as the “heart” of the application.
 - Rural Professional Housing Grant Program – Registered for grant application for construction of housing for teachers, health care workers, and public safety officials.
- **Community Development Workgroup**
 - This quarter’s meeting will be next Monday, August 19th including discussion of potential fall flu vaccine clinic.

- **Congressional Delegation Engagement** - Met with Murkowski staffers who visited the area on August 8.

Stephanie Ford
Community Development Director

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Chris Noel, Mayor

August 2024 Mayor's Report

Administrative

- The Riley Fire disrupted our normal meeting schedule, and July meetings of the Assembly and Planning Commission were canceled.
- The FY24 Denali Borough Grants program cycle has ended and the final quarter (April – June) reimbursements have been dispersed to grantees. In total, the borough distributed \$723,969 of the \$764,875 awarded in FY24. The Matching Grant program grantee Denali Preschool and Learning Center will carry their remaining fund balance of \$27,662 for one additional quarter as that program allows a 15-month period for construction projects. Thank you to all grantees for timely and accurate reporting this fiscal year.
- The FY25 grant program cycle began July 1st, 2024, with first quarter reimbursement reports due October 20th.

Finance

- Preliminary tax revenues from the fourth quarter bring the total tax revenues for FY24 to \$5.78 million. Preliminary overnight accommodation tax revenues for FY24 are \$5.2 million and alcohol tax revenues amounted to \$452,000, surpassing the budgeted revenues by \$0.8 million and \$52,000.
- An engagement letter for audit services with Alliance CPA LLC was signed and work has begun for the FY24 audit.
- Following the borough's FY23 audit recommendation to resume tax audits, the borough selected three operators at random for tax audits to be conducted in late September. Notice of selection for tax audit has been provided to the selected operators.

Solid Waste

- The rental excavator arrived at the landfill on June 18th, and the crew has been busy clearing the ditches along the access road (Sanitation Way) and developing the cover material source on borough land south-east of the landfill footprint. C and R Pipe and Steel brought a bailer down to the landfill, and the excavator was useful in cleaning up and loading out the scrap steel. Stay tuned for a final tally of the amount of material diverted from the landfill through our ongoing scrap metal program. As of this report, an estimated 250,000 pounds of steel was successfully diverted and recycled.
- Following a request from the City of Anderson, I waived tipping fees for up to \$5,000 of waste disposal from derelict lot cleanup. The City continues to work diligently to condemn vacant lots posing a risk to community health and safety.

Riley Fire Response

- The Riley Fire started at 13:30 PM on Sunday, June 30th- just one mile north of the Denali National Park entrance near the Alaska Railroad tracks. The fire was initially attacked by smokejumpers, water scooping aircraft, and our local first responders. In addition to disrupting one of the busiest weeks of the year, the

fire led to an extended power outage of the Nenana Canyon hotels and businesses and led to a partial evacuation and closure of the National Park. Alaska Complex Incident Management Team 2 took over management of the fire on Wednesday July 4, providing a much-needed capacity boost to local agencies. From the onset, the Borough worked to coordinate with cooperating agencies, support the evacuees, and share public information in a timely manner. The Tri-Valley school successfully served as a shelter for between 100-200 evacuees. The character of our community was on full display as local nonprofits and private residents stood up to support the evacuees during the first few days. Eventually, the Red Cross took over management of the shelter and alongside Salvation Army, supported shelter operations until it closed on July 7th. On Wednesday July 10, the Park fully reopened and Doyon/Aramark Joint Venture resumed bus tours into the Park. The fire was determined to be human caused and is still under investigation.

I want to extend a huge thank you to borough staff for their efforts in response to the fire. Our community should be very proud of the level of professionalism they displayed, working tirelessly to support sheltering, agency coordination, and public information aspects of the response.

Election

- The Denali Borough Candidate Filing period is open for the 2024 Regular Municipal Election. The filing deadline is September 12 at 4:00 PM.

Land Planning and Community Development

- Land Lease Application for borough land is now available on the Borough website. Applicants are encouraged to review the Land Management Plan (2022) for the parcel of interest, to consider compatibility with identified management intent. Existing leases will be managed following existing terms and conditions.
- We continue to work towards sharing our address database with the Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center, to better equip 911 call takers with the location information they need to dispatch our first responders.

Items of Interest

- Thanks to the Legislature and Governor Dunleavy, included in the FY 2025 capital budget are two big wins for the borough. The City of Anderson will receive \$100,000 towards a vacuum truck, an identified need in response to the winter groundwater infiltration and freeze-up issues. The borough will receive \$180,000 towards a vaulted toilet at Otto Lake park, dramatically improving sanitation for park users. The borough worked with the Lions Club to identify and plan for this exciting addition.
- The City of Anderson also recently learned of a \$2,000,000 award from the Department of Environmental Conservation towards the replacement of the piped sewer system; moving the community back to onsite disposal systems for 62 households. The design phase of the project will last until December 2025, with construction to follow. Construction is expected to take place during 2026 and 2027, completed by December 2027. In the meantime, the project also includes additional funding for the vacuum truck, which should better equip the City to manage groundwater infiltration in the meantime.
- In June, I had an opportunity to drive around Healy with DOT Denali District Superintendent Jason Luddington. We looked at local road issues, discussed DOT's summer maintenance and operations plans, and ongoing challenges. In addition to work on the Denali Highway, our local crews prioritized resurfacing on the worst sections of Otto Lake and Hill top road, filling potholes on Lester, Suntrana, and Coal Street, and producing grit for the winter out of the Carlo Creek DOT pit.
- Last month, I attended the annual Change of Command Ceremony at Clear Space Force Station. Outgoing Commander Lieutenant Colonel Stephanie Flowers transferred command to Lieutenant Colonel John Burton.

- Our neighbor to the north, Mayor Josh Verhagen organized an interior Mayors gathering and I enjoyed getting to meet with City of Fairbanks Mayor David Pruhs and Acting City of North Pole Mayor Chandra Clack. We had time to discuss local issues over lunch, and toured the demolition of the Polaris building in downtown Fairbanks.

Happy August.

- Chris