Please refer to Planning Commission Rule #25: Any action taken during this meeting is subject to reconsideration during this meeting or at the next. A request for reconsideration at the next meeting must be submitted in writing by a Planning Commissioner (who voted on the prevailing side) by the close of business the day following the meeting.

Work Session – Transportation Analysis and Recommendations

Audio Track 1

Opening Statements, Agenda and Consent Agenda(*)

Audio Track 2

APPROVED

HP2017-005: McGrath Road Upgrade – A request by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities for local planning authority approval of the McGrath Road Upgrade project. This project proposes to upgrade approximately 2.9 miles of McGrath Road from Farmer’s Loop Road to the Old Steese Highway with new surface and safety improvements like widened shoulders and guard rail improvements. The project is anticipated to require right-of-way acquisition.

Audio: Track 2

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. This project supports Goal 1, Strategy 1, Action C (“Ensure that road designs improve safety and minimize adverse impacts”) of the Transportation Section of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Plan.

   This project is expected to improve safety by replacing areas of guardrail that have become functionally obsolete, as well as all the improvements cited above. It will eliminate several sharp curves and construct shoulders for the entire length of the project.

2. Goal 1, Strategy 1, Action D) states: “Retain the Integrity of neighborhoods as the road network expands”.

   The expansion of McGrath Road will enhance safety in the neighborhoods it serves, as well as make better community connections possible by improving the Bicycle and Pedestrian separated pathway.

3. Strategy 3 states: “Make the Borough more pedestrian-friendly in urban and suburban areas and safer in rural and remote areas”.

   Standardizing the Bicycle and Pedestrian pathway increases safety for the user and improves pedestrian connections within the area.

The improvement to the multi-use pathway enhances safe circulation into road networks and encourages use of non-motorized transportation.

APPROVED

RZ2017-006: A request by Mark Nielsen to rezone Tax Lot 2801, T1N R2W, Section 28 from General Use 1 (GU-1) to Rural Estates 2 (RE-2) or other appropriate zone (located on the west side of McFadden Lane and south of Ester Dome Road) (Staff Contact: Stacy Wasinger).

Audio: Track 3

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The FNSB Regional Comprehensive plan assigns ‘High Mineral Potential’ land use category to the subject property. This designation envisions area that has limited public improvements.
   a. Although the land use designation does not specifically mention low-density residential uses as compatible, the applicant states that mining exploration did occur on the western half of the subject parcel “with little or no actual production... Little or no mining development or farming has occurred for 60 years.” The subject property has preliminary plat approval for a 15 lot subdivision and the owner intends to develop it as low-density residential. The current GU-1 zoning allows residential uses. Additionally, many of the surrounding properties are developed residentially.
   b. The GU-1 zone does not preserve the parcel for mining purposes and allows low-density residential development. The GU-1 zone allows many more intensive uses and all uses permitted in the RE-2 zone are already permitted on the subject parcel in the GU-1 zone. As stated in the application materials, the property owner intends this property to be developed as low-density residential and does not foresee mining activity on the subject parcel; the property has not been productive as mining land in the last 60 years. As such, the RE-2 zone is more compatible with the proposed use of the subject parcel by the property owner.

2. The current GU-1 zone is no longer appropriate for the subject property because surrounding properties are developed predominantly residentially or vacant. There are unoccupied mining leases in the surrounding area, but the subject parcel is not intended to be developed for mining uses.

3. The proposed RE-2 zone is consistent with FNSB Comprehensive Plan goals:
   a. Land Use Goal 1, Strategy 3; to work to reduce to the fullest extent possible the natural conflict that develops between private property right and community needs and interests.
b. Land Use Goal 3, Strategy 6; to provide a variety of residential land use opportunities.

c. Environment Goal 3, Strategy 7; to consider land development toward areas where natural systems will be least adversely affected.

4. The proposed RE-2 zone does not make any of the existing or proposed lots, structures or uses within the proposed rezone boundary nonconforming because the 15 lots proposed by the approved preliminary plat meet the RE-2 minimum required lot size of 80,000 square feet and the subject property is currently vacant.

5. The proposed RE-2 zone conforms to the public health, safety or welfare because:

   a. It is compatible with the existing surrounding land uses and will not allow the more intensive uses that are currently permitted in the GU-1 zone. Because all uses that are allowed in the RE-2 zone are already permitted in the GU-1 zone on the subject property, the rezone to RE-2 would not increase or detrimentally impact traffic.

   b. The RE-2 zone establishes a 35 foot front-yard and 25 foot side- and rear-yard setbacks. These setbacks will help provide fire separation between buildings on adjacent properties and allow additional privacy for each lot.

6. The rezone is not a spot zone because:

   a. It is consistent with the FNSB Comprehensive Plan goals Land Use Goal 1, Strategy 3, Land Use Goal 3, Strategy 6, and Environment Goal 3, Strategy 7. Although low-density residential development is not specifically indicated by the 'High Mineral Potential' land use designation, the applicant states that mining exploration did occur on the western half of the subject parcel “with little or no actual production... Little or no mining development or farming has occurred for 60 years.” The existing GU-1 zone does not reserve the subject parcel for mining and allows the subject property to be developed for low-density residential uses. A preliminary plat for a 15 lot subdivision has already been approved for the subject parcel.

   b. (1) The RE-2 zone benefits the property owner because it would allow for low-density residential development of the property with restrictions that do not allow more intensive uses currently allowed in the GU-1 zone; (2) The proposed RE-2 zone will have benefits for the surrounding residentially developed and vacant properties because it limits potential future uses to predominantly residential and establishes setbacks; (3) The proposed RE-2 zone would have benefits for the community because it would provide additional variety of housing options.

   c. The total area of the proposed rezone boundary is approximately 40 acres. The subject parcel is adjacent to existing RE-2 zoning to the east. This rezone extends this existing RE-2 boundary and creates an RE-2 zoned area of approximately 100 acres. This rezone would not constitute a reverse spot zone because it does not leave GU-1 parcels as small remainder.

RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL
ORDINANCE NO. 2017-46: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 4.32 FNSBC Regarding The Responsibilities of The Chena Riverfront Commission And FNSBC 18.104.010 Regarding Procedures For Rezonings, Conditional Uses, And Variances To Implement Chena Riverfront Commission Review For Properties Along The Chena River (Sponsors: Mayor Kassel and Assemblymember Davies).

Audio: Track 4

RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

New Business, Closing Comments and Adjournment.

Audio: Track 4

Further information may be obtained from FNSB Department of Community Planning at 459-1260