

City of Valdez

212 Chenega Ave.
Valdez, AK 99686



Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

7:00 PM

Special Meeting - Title 17 Revision First Reading

Council Chambers

City Council

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA - 7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Present: 6 - Mayor Sharon Scheidt
Mayor Pro Tem Alan Sorum
Council Member Dennis Fleming
Council Member Jimmy Devens
Council Member Olivia Foster
Council Member Austin Love

Excused: 1 - Council Member Todd Wegner

Also Present: 3 - City Clerk Sheri Pierce
City Manager John Douglas
Deputy City Clerk Elise Sorum-Birk

III. ORDINANCES

1. #24-01 - Repealing and Reenacting Title 17 of the Valdez Municipal Code Titled Zoning and Adopting Official Zoning Maps. First Readin. Public Hearing.

MOTION: Mayor Pro Tem Sorum moved, seconded by Council Member Devens, to approve Ordinance 24-01 Repeal and Replacement of Valdez Municipal Code Title 17 - the Valdez Zoning Code and Official Zoning Maps in first reading for public hearing.

Mayor Scheidt opened the public hearing on Ordinance 24-01.

Roger Kipar, Valdez resident, shared how he believed the Title 17 revisions would affect his business plans in a negative way. Specifically commenting on how changing the name from “avalanche zone” to “natural hazardous zone” would affect future business insurance costs and future business loans.

Jena McDonald, Valdez resident, spoke on the need to encourage short-term housing to support tourism and economic growth.

Kate Huber, Community Development Director, provided an overview of changes presented in the Title 17 revision.

Council Member Sorum encouraged implementation by future resolution of a cap short-term housing rentals.

Council Member Love requested verification on the flexibility for capping different types of short-term housing rentals. Director Huber confirmed it had been written

more generally to allow flexibility, and encouraged codification once council was ready to do so.

Council Member Foster asked if a grace period would be allowed during the initial permitting process, and how getting the life safety inspection would affect the Community Development department. Director Huber outlined the initial process, including a grace period prior to enforcement.

Council Member Foster asked how hotels and similar businesses would differentiate from the short-term housing rentals in the case of inspections. Director Huber outlined the established permitting process for hotels and similar businesses during construction, and certification for occupancy.

Council Member Love expressed concern over short-term rental operators putting off the process, and asked if it would be possible to set a reasonable deadline. Director Huber explained once the First Reading was complete, she would have a better idea of what the timeline would be and confirmed the deadline did not have to be included in Code unless Council expressed desire to do so.

Council Member Love asked how manageable the fine schedule would be for the Community Development Department, and how it would work. Director Huber stated they would be working with the Finance Department, who handles the Public Accommodation task, which would be the first tool to assist with monitoring; the appeals process was also outlined, along with other enforcement steps.

Council Member Love requested the data collected with the application process be reported back to Council to assist in future development of the program. Director Huber confirmed a two-fold process would be used to collect data and report the information to Council.

Council Member Love asked if there would be an update to the housing report. Director Huber outlined the current update to the report through the Prince William Sound Economic Development Organization, and stated a more intensive update of the Valdez area could be done if it was Council's desire.

Mayor Scheidt requested Mr. Kipar's comments be addressed. Director Huber explained the intention behind renaming the classification was to acknowledge other natural hazards within the community, including areas with erosion.

Council Member Devens moved to amend Ordinance #24-01 Section 17.08.030 Specific Use Standards, Section E Dwellings – Mobile Home by removing the section completely. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Council Member Devens expressed concern over the lack of an adequate public process following changes made to Chapter 17.08.030 Specific Use Standards which he felt specifically impacted the highest number of people most diversely of any addition which had been recently made.

Community Development Director Huber stated the provision discussed was added after the work session on November 29th, 2023 and included in the red-line drafts distributed publicly for the draft for adoption. Huber provided additional details on the public process that had taken place and public notices given throughout the development of the draft ordinance and detailed the approval process that had taken place with the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Council Member Foster stated she believed the driving factor behind changes made to the Specific Use Standards had been life safety, particularly due to specific builds in mobile homes built after 1976.

Council Member Devens noted the 1976 NIST Standards for mobile home wiring being changed from aluminum as the standard to copper as the standard had already been adopted in 1972 by Alaska and Nevada.

Council Member Devens moved to amend Ordinance #24-01 Section 17.08.030 Specific Use Standards, Section E Dwellings – Mobile Home to change the date from 1976 to 1972. Motion failed for lack of a second.

VOTE ON THE MAIN MOTION:

Yays: 5 - Scheidt, Sorum, Fleming, Foster and Love
Nays: 1 - Devens
Absent: 1 - Wegner
MOTION CARRIED

IV. ADJOURNMENT