

CORRESPONDENCE/INFORMATION

Commissioner Hanrahan asked the status of assembly ordinance regarding reduction or waiver of road standards. Staff stated that the assembly passed the ordinance on December 3, 1996.

Commissioner Tischer commended Mr. Duffy for the detailed information provided regarding Resolution 96-58.

Meeting recessed at 6:30 p.m. and reconvened at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

- A. Resolution 96-58: Recommending classification of borough-owned land located within a portion of Tract A, Section 7, and a portion of Tract A, Section 18, T17N, R3E, S.M. according to Alaska Supplemental Cadastral Survey 92-118, Butte area

Chairman Anderson stated that Planning Commission Resolution No. 96-58, classification of borough-owned land in the Butte area is a continuation of January 6 public hearing. There were no commissioners comments.

The meeting was opened for public hearing at 7:05 p.m.

Victor Trygstad stated that he is presenting a 320 acre land purchase application before the Planning Commission as Managing Member of Homestead Resort Properties LLCI, an Alaska real estate development company.

Mr. Trygstad provided two videotapes (approximately 10-15 minutes) featuring Jack Nicklaus' golf courses, construction quality, various golf course layouts, and adaptability to diverse lands around the world.

Mr. Trygstad stated that Homestead Resort's development concept plan is for a world class destination resort in the Mat-Su Borough, which would include a lodge/restaurant/conference facility, golf course, and residential development located throughout the golf course. The proposed resort site encompasses approximately 820 acres, representing a 320 acre borough parcel and Homestead Resort Properties private lands. The additional 320 acres is need to integrate the Homestead Resort's concept and planned facilities into an 18 hole golf course.

As part of the development objectives, Homestead Resort Properties is committed to the land and environment to maintain "an Alaskan experience" throughout the resort. This will be expressed through: dedicated natural areas; lot sizes one acre and larger; no visible intrusive development in open areas; and landscaping with emphasis on land restoration.

The Homestead Resort proposal has a trail system planned as part of its master concept. The resort trail system, Homestead Resort Golf Course, and Homestead Equestrian Center will be available for public recreation, enjoyment and increase recreational opportunities for the area.

Mr. Trygstad asked the commission to classify subject parcel as "general purpose" land for non-competitive conveyance as recommended by the borough manager.

John Duffy stated, for point of information, that the borough manager is recommending "lease option" as a matter of conveyance, not a sale. He asked Mr. Trygstad if the consultants report on the economic impact was available for the commission's review. Mr. Trygstad stated that he did not have the report available at the meeting, however, the report would be provided to Mr. Duffy "as early as January 21, 1997."

Mr. Trygstad reviewed an aerial photograph and map of the proposed 820 acres and provided information for the following: trails system with greenbelt perimeter around the parcel; easements; location of golf course; engineers providing an analyses and adequacies of available water on subject property; environmental issues; the developer will provide and maintain paved roads throughout the project; and residential housing will consist of single family homes and townhouses.

Chairman Anderson stated that questions and concerns from public testimony would be addressed by Mr. Trygstad after the public hearing portion and thanked him for his presentation.

Shawn Holliday, Vice-President, Wasilla Chamber of Commerce, spoke briefly to the joint resolution between the Greater Palmer and Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce's supporting the Homestead Resort Project. He stated that the valley is growing, but suffering from widespread unemployment; less funding from federal and state; budget funding is decreasing and taxes will increase. There needs to be developments in the valley to increase revenue and employment, e.g. a resort, golf course in Palmer and commercial centers.

Darcie K. Salmon, Mat-Su Resource Conservation & Development, Inc. (RC&D) presented Resolution 97-02, which supports development of a resort in the Butte area. He stated that Mr. Trygstad is willing to pay full market value for subject property, is not requesting funding, and has complied with Title 21. Mr. Salmon read RC&D's resolution supporting Mr. Trygstad's proposed development of a year-round destination resort in the Butte area.

Don Zimmerman, stated that he recently heard negative conversation regarding the proposed project and the developer being the only person benefiting from the project. Mr. Zimmerman stated that he benefited (commission from property sale) as well as several attorneys, title company and employees. He stated that free enterprise generates jobs and creates opportunities for everyone; puts borough land into private hands, and he supports selling the parcel to Mr. Trygstad.

Ted Cox stated that he lives on Butte Road and provided maps and an article written by DEC regarding landfills. The Butte community has repeatedly asked general questions about this project and Mr. Trygstad has been unable or unwilling to provide any answers. Questions include: number of homes to be built; access for the development; will groundwater be pumped to irrigate the golf course, impact on the surrounding wells; the golf course layout around the wetlands on the parcel; and marketing studies to determine feasibility of the project.

Mr. Cox stated that the commission should address these concerns and require the feasibility and potential impact on the surrounding neighborhood and to classify the land as "recreational," which is consistent with the Susitna Area Plan.

Commissioner Tischer asked Mr. Cox if he would be in favor of other types of development or was he against having the parcel go into private ownership rather than remaining as public land. Mr. Cox stated that he is not anti-development, and believes agriculture is consistent with current uses, as well as accommodating recreational uses.

J. R. Case stated that he lives near Maud Road; is apposed to selling subject parcel unless a completed plan shows this development is the proper use; and asked that environmental issues be addressed before construction.

Bob King, Matanuska-Susitna Convention & Visitor Bureau (MSCVB), President, reviewed MSCVB's letter supporting the proposed development and stating that the applicant is purchasing subject parcel at fair market value without asking for funding and recommends conveyance of subject property either by lease or sale. The project offers an opportunity of employment and tourism to the valley.

Sara Jansen stated that she supports the borough manager and planning department recommendations to lease subject property as "general purposes." This is a "compromising position" which could give the borough \$250,000 of purchase price with a penalty clause for non-performance. With this project, there is tourism potential which brings revenue into the valley. The borough needs a more comprehensive plan for disposition of its land and this is an opportunity to get public land into private hands.

Laurie Courtney stated that she lives in the Maud Road area and asked when considering the single best use for this parcel and deciding its classification, don't be swayed by a possible larger tax base. Residential development does not add to the tax base, homeowners as a group demand more government services than is covered by property taxes. The best use for this land is public recreational use. She asked the commission to vote against any other classification; support the Butte Community resolution; and thanked Commissioner Colver for his motion that originally gave the community an opportunity to be heard.

Victor Trygstad stated, for the record, that he has been an Alaskan resident for 26 years.

Jim Courtney stated that his family has lived near Maud Road for the last eight years. He stated that a vast majority of the Butte residents are apposed to the borough's attempt to dispose of one of the last public parcels in that area. It is the responsibility of the commission to determine the effects of the community and its natural resources when considering this proposal and determine the facts. He stated the following concerns: the assembly only wants tax revenue; application is incomplete without a development plan; and leakage of chemicals into the local salmon stream. "Please leave this parcel alone and classify it as recreational."

Commissioner Hanrahan asked Mr. Courtney the source of his information regarding "one of the last public parcels in the Butte area." Staff referred to a map of the area showing state, borough and subject parcel locations, which indicated other public lands in the Butte area.

Kay Slack stated support of borough manager's position to lease with the option to purchase. She moved to the valley in 1989 and worked with Mr. Trygstad to bring Big Brothers/Big Sisters program to the valley. It is discerning to sit in the audience and listen to the negativeness regarding this development. She lives near the landfill that has contamination and hopes that her home goes up in value because of a development, e.g. golf course over the landfill.

Don Zoerb spoke in support of the Butte Community resolution classification of subject parcel as "recreational." He discussed the memo written by John Duffy dated January 16, 1997 stating it is a "template" for the commissioners to followed and suggested taking time to review the application before taking action.

Dana Parks stated that his family has lived at mile .3 Maud Road since 1970 and is concerned with the undeniable loss of recreational opportunities if the lease or sale of subject property is consummated. He

traps, hunts, harvests firewood, skis, and snow machines in the area. He shared his experience and knowledge of golfing and stated that the proposed development is the wrong project in the wrong place, now and in the future. The terrain along with the many dust storms make it an unlikely place for golfing. The highest and best use for subject parcel and surrounding lands is for public recreation.

Sally Weiland stated that Ms. Slack and Ms. Jensen gave a good overview of the positive attributes the proposed project will have for the borough. Ms. Weiland read a letter dated January 20, 1997, from Palmer Economic Development Authority (PEDA) stating that "PEDA welcomes and endorses the private development plans envisioned by Homestead Resort Properties, LLCI and strongly encourages the commission to support this development as proposed."

Ms. Weiland stated that for many years people have utilized the recreational opportunities of the Butte area, however, if the property was to be sold to individuals, those recreational opportunities would be gone. With the proposed development, it will maintain recreational uses with trails around the subject parcel. She and her family support this project, it's a definite plus for the valley.

Margaret Runser spoke in favor of keeping subject parcel as public recreational land. She wants to see her children and grandchildren grow and enjoy the wildlife habitat that exist between Knik River and Lazy Mountain; and McRoberts Creek and Jim Creek. This parcel supports many wildlife and is the cross road for trails in the area. Any interruption of land along McRoberts Creek will affect eagle nest, owls, trumpeter swans, wolf packs, wolverine and fox.

David Witt stated that he moved to the Butte area to raise his family. The subject parcel and surrounding area is very unique to the values of the people living there and those visiting from Anchorage who enjoy recreational opportunities. The commission should take into consideration not just the revenue, but the desires of the community. He stated concern that supporters of Mr. Trygstad seemed to have reviewed "the plans" in detail and yet the public can't get a single detail on the plans. Mr. Witt supports the land being classified as recreational.

Jeff Jackman stated that he is a school teacher and has been a Butte resident for 14 years. His family uses the area for hunting, skiing, hiking, snow machining, 4-wheeling and frequently sees other families utilizing the trails. This land needs to be left for our children.

Jim Stocker spoke on behalf of the Butte Community Council. He stated that the community, as a whole, overwhelmingly objects to the entire project as stated in a petition of over 100 signatures. The community's only recreational area is the subject parcel and if sold, will be lost forever. Mr. Trygstad has approximately 520 acres and if he needs additional land, it should be purchasing from the private sector.

Mr. Stocker stated, for the record, "he doesn't care if its a state, federal or local problem, we do not have a taxation problem, we have a spending problem. If we sell off the 320 acres to meet a tax base, we will never be able to meet our tax base problems." He cited a paragraph in the 1985 Mat-Su Plan, under Butte Area, Land Management Intent, "disposal for private use is a low priority due to the present abundance of private land available in this area." The commission should recommend this parcel be classified as recreational or spend the next year or two reviewing and analyzing the proposal.

Mr. Stocker stated, for the record, "in deciding to sell subject parcel without a very thorough and thoughtful review, in his opinion, could leave the borough open for very costly litigation in the future. As a representative of the Butte Community, the community should have the **upmost** authority to classified these lands as recreational, this property belongs to the community and not to one developer."

Commissioner Tischer asked Mr. Stocker if the trails go through subject parcel, as well as parcels above and below and if recreational use goes through all parcels? Mr. Stocker stated, yes; however all the trails converge into the subject parcel.

M. E. Kilpatrick stated that he lives close to Maud Road, is against the lease/sale of subject parcel and recommends it remain as recreational.

Jim Murphy stated the following: subject parcel remain as recreational, the parcel is an island of public land and if sold, could be gone forever; in the best interest of the borough, if sold, be at fair market value. There are already nice developments in the area, such as Sky Ranch and Equestrian Acres with paved roads and Sky Ranch is 1/4 full and Equestrian Acres's master plan is only half implemented. Mr. Murphy asked to keep the area as recreational use for everyone to use.

Rick Guhl stated that he is apposed to the sale and asked staff the purchase price. Staff stated that the price has not been determined at this time; however, it would be sold at fair market value determined by an independent appraiser. Mr. Guhl stated that the assembly is elected to fulfill the will of the majority and selling this parcel is a big mistake.

Sara A. Guhl stated that she has lived in the Butte area for 12 years, uses the trails weekly as recreational and asked to leave the area as recreational.

Pete Nagel stated that over the last 18 years he has worked in land management, natural resource management, land ownership and lay of the land, and as landowner relation specialist in Alaska. He stated that he shares a lot of the concerns voiced by the members of the Butte and Lazy Mountain Councils. The borough is responsible to protect the quality of life in the borough and retain public ownership of land only as a last resort, e.g. schools. He stated that "we would not be here today if those that came before us had the philosophy that I have mine, you can't have yours" and spoke in favor of the proposed Homestead Resort.

Gina Courson stated that she lives in the Butte area and was concerned that Palmer and Wasilla Chamber of Commerce's and MSCVB were not at the last public hearing. She reminded the commissioners that the Susitna Area Plan states that if an area consist of 100 plus acres of Class I Wetlands, which subject parcel does, that it should be left to public ownership. She asked if the revenue received would offset road maintenance, schools and other facilities generated by this project.

George Bower stated that all the help and concerns for the residents of the Butte area is touching especially considering it comes mostly from people who live several miles away (e.g. cities of Wasilla and Palmer, Settler's Bay), perhaps Mr. Trygstad could build the project in their communities instead of in an area where this type of land use is not wanted.

Jerry Carries stated that he has been a Butte resident for five years and is concerned with the dust storms in the area, limiting the golf season to two or three months/year. He stated that there has been no tangible information regarding the development to determine the uses of trails.

Matt Bow stated that he currently resides in Anchorage and regularly uses Jim Creek for recreational purposes and is apposed to the proposed development.

Don Zimmerman, real estate agent, gave an overview of the number of real estate agencies and transactions in the valley for the past months. He stated concern of comments from residents not having the opportunity to purchase land for \$600-\$800/acre, when in fact they had an opportunity to purchase

80 acres, located in the middle of the proposed project for approximately that same amount.

Jim Murphy (added to his original testimony) stated that Anchorage has a lot of recreational areas (e.g. Kincaid Park, Chugach State Park) and the valley has limited land available for parks, except possibly Jim Creek. What's wrong with having a parcel of borough-owned land near Palmer that can be used for a park.

Diane Steele stated that her family moved here for "the good quality of life" without large developments, such as a golf course, forcing her to move further away. She asked the commission to consider members of the community instead of bringing in tourist.

Commissioner Tischer asked Ms. Steele how much land she has, and she stated 1-1/2 acres currently with plans for purchasing an additional 1-1/4 acres.

Jim Stocker (added to his original testimony) reviewed DEC's article on monitoring Butte area during the months of May through September exceeded federal health standards - with particulate matters off the Knik Glacier. Mr. Stocker asked Mr. Trygstad, "do you have a copy of the study done by DEC on the health hazards and problems in that area," Mr. Trygstad stated "he did not."

Sharon Lewis stated that she lives on Maud Road and would like to see the property remain as recreational. Mr. Trygstad's proposed development, following the lease purchase guidelines, would be better than having the parcel purchased by individual owners.

Eric Blomskog stated that he uses machinized vehicles on the trails year round, hunts, and uses high power rifles. Mr. Trygstad's proposed development will have restrictions put on the surrounding community and he does not support this sale.

Chairman Anderson stated that Mr. Trygstad has five minutes to address concerns from the public testimony.

Mr. Trygstad discussed the following: **Trails:** Mr. Trygstad stated that he is supportive of trails, public use of trails and is a trail user himself. Homestead Resort will provide a net gain in trails, including equestrian trails. **Community member:** Homesteaders Resort properties, as a company, is a member of the Butte Community, he owns 300 acres in the Butte area, and also is a community person. **Lot size:** Mr. Trygstad gave a review of the ratio of lot sizes per acre and stated that the development will be in a natural setting. **Environmental issues:** Environmental compatibility will be determined prior to purchase of subject parcel. The golf course can not be constructed unless environmental issues are satisfied. **Speculator:** Mr. Trygstad stated that he has been a resident of Alaska for 26 years, a resident of the valley for six years, and serves as President of Homesteaders Resort Properties, a limited liability company, an Alaskan company with Alaskan investors. He read a statement of values given to potential investors, which determines their involvement in the company.

Commissioner Tischer asked Mr. Trygstad if there was any reason he would not comply with his commitment to purchase subject parcel and if unable to comply, what would be the consequences. Mr. Trygstad stated that at a point there is feasibility and feasible financing to go forward with the development. He offered that there be a reversionary clause in the contract that "if he presented a feasibility to the borough, based on objective and clear standards, and he was allowed to purchase the property, that if at a later time he failed to do what he said he would do that there be a reversionary clause in the contract, and he would return the land and the borough would return his money." He stated that he is only interested in this property for the purposes of developing the Homestead Resort.

Commissioner Tischer stated concern with the dust storms affecting his resort. He stated that he has researched the affects of wind in the palmer area with subject parcel and because of the proximity of the 320 acre parcel is not affected by dust storms/high winds.

Commissioner McCavit asked Mr. Trygstad how he would handle residents using the trails for mechanized vehicles e.g. snow machines and 4-wheelers. Mr. Trygstad stated that the development is relocating the trail not doing a redefinition of its use.

Commissioner Kracker stated that there is an "apex" corner on subject parcel, allowing very little dust on that parcel.

Commissioner Hanrahan stated that one of the largest concerns of the community was not having information on the number of houses, size, etc. and asked Mr. Trygstad to explain those concerns. Mr. Trygstad stated that the timing of questions/concerns of the community couldn't be answered because a decision has not been made and hasn't gone through the planning process.

Commissioner Savage stated that assuming you could close on the property tomorrow, what is the development time frame and perhaps some of the steps involved, e.g. planning stage through the process. Mr. Trygstad gave an overview of the time frame which ranged from construction of the golf course in Spring 1997 to being delayed until Spring 1998, completed construction taking approximately two years.

Commissioner Kracker asked Mr. Trygstad if the development could be smaller, therefore utilizing less land. Mr. Trygstad stated that the development needs the additional 320 acres to accommodate Nickalus Design concept plan and that the surrounding lands are either very wet or have high ridges.

Commissioner Tischer asked Mr. Trygstad if he was prepared to provide the borough assembly and planning department with financial information that are normally offered by a perspective buyer. Mr. Trygstad stated that it's a cash sale and the investors in the company ask that their names not be disclosed. Commissioner Tischer asked Mr. Trygstad if he had a personal investment, and he answered, yes.

Commissioner Savage asked Mr. Trygstad if he was prepared to demonstrate to the borough that he has financial capabilities to purchase and follow through with the project. Mr. Trygstad answered, yes.

John Duffy stated concern that the proposal does not have a concept development plan or information of exactly what is going to occur. Earlier we talked about the economic impact of the development, yet that information is not available. The public and commission deserve an opportunity to review those types of things, as well as to see the concept, see how things relate and how they relate to the infrastructure of the parcel and how it relates to their community and immediate environment.

Mr. Trygstad stated that regarding the economic impact figures, he just received those figures this afternoon from the consultant and he will make those available at Mr. Duffy's office January 21.

Mr. Duffy stated that when the conceptual layout is received there needs to be time to review the plan and asked Mr. Trygstad to provide some kind of verification that the proposed project is possible.

Mr. Trygstad stated that he can not share the various design routing plans until the company decides on a final routing, which involves discussion with the Nickalus Design planners, land planners, engineers, and various environmental consultants to determine feasibility of the golf course and unless the subject parcel is purchased there will not be enough land to do the proposed project. He asked the commission

to make a definitive vote as to whether or not they support development.

Commissioner Savage stated that the commission is not looking for a detailed plan, but more of a planning concept with ideas of how the land will be developed.

Mr. Trygstad stated that he could show on the aerial map where the lodge and golf course club house are to be located.

Commissioner Savage stated concern that a person that is serious about developing a project this size should have some sort of a basic drawing that he can share with people who are trying to make a decision.

Commissioner Hanrahan stated that she would like to see on a piece of paper the plan Mr. Trygstad is proposing and also proving informational.

Commissioner Kracker stated that he is against the land being sold for something like farming and horse ranch, which brings no tax revenue and if it isn't sold to Mr. Trygstad, then make a park out of the property.

Commissioner Colver stated that the commission is uncomfortable with a verbal plan, they want to see the proposed layout; the egress and ingress access; how much traffic will be generated and by you not provided the very preliminary information, we can't make a determination or decision on the development.

Mr. Trygstad stated that he could show on the aerial photograph where the egress and ingress access is located.

Chairman Anderson closed the public hearing. The meeting ^{RECESSED} ~~adjourned~~ at 10:40 and reconvened at 10:45 p.m.

Chairman Anderson called the meeting back to order, thanked everyone for testifying and Mr. Trygstad for his information.

Commissioner Tischer shared a document provided by staff regarding an RFP from the Municipality of Anchorage to develop a public resort and golf and ski course. The RFP outlined specific items, such as financial information and concept development plan. This is the type of information/items that the commission would like to have in order to determine if it is ^{feasibility} ~~feasible~~ to designate a classification of subject parcel.

Commissioner Kracker stated that he would like more information on this proposal. If the parcel is not sold, then there needs to be a plan for its development, e.g. park, subdivided in private ownership or sold to a developer.

John Duffy gave an overview of the borough process for applicants purchasing land and referred to his memo of January 16, 1997. There has been other interest in the property, and once again we are recommending a noncompetitive sale. A concept site plan should be provided because there are other things that are of interest to the commission and the community.

Chairman Anderson asked Mr. Trygstad if he could provide a conceptual site plan. Mr. Trygstad stated yes, however, at a later time. He also stated that he has never been asked by the borough to provide a

site plan as part of the application process.

After lengthy discussion, Commissioner Hanrahan moved, Commissioner Kracker seconded to postpone until time certain, February 3, 1997. Voting on the motion, it passed unanimously.

The following were items the commission wanted addressed in the conceptual plan: ingress and egress to the property and main facility; basic footprint of the proposed structures; price range of residents and market segment, e.g. retired; a drawing, (not a economic analysis or housing development cost); parking area for the lodge; rough layout of fairways; and location of the trail head and trails.

Commissioner Hanrahan read the following information taken from Heritage Bank outline of a conceptual plan for RFP: "generalized black and white or blue-line drawings of all proposed improvements, these drawings and descriptions must identify the generalized golf course routing, Nordic ski course routing, building locations, foot and bike trails, parking layouts, bridges, landscape areas, ponds and utility corridors;" and the location of the trail head and trails.

Commissioner Colver moved, Commissioner McCavit seconded to require, prior to consideration of land reclassification, the developer or the purchaser a conceptual plan be prepared with proposed locations of trails improvements, access points and other improvements as directed by planning department staff. Commissioner Colver amended his motion, Commissioner McCavit concurred to have the items delivered to the planning department by January 28, 1997, for mailing to the commissioners on January 30, 1997. Voting on the motion as amended, it passed unanimously.

Chairman Anderson stated that Item C, New Business, Butte Community Council resolution, is contingent upon Planning Commission Resolution 96-58 and will be addressed at the next meeting.

DIRECTOR/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chairman Anderson asked John Duffy if he was able to attend the Talkeetna Chamber of Commerce meeting. Staff stated that he was unable to attend due to tonight's subject matter; however, he is working with the Chamber to reschedule that meeting, possibly January 28.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:35 p.m.


TIMOTHY L. ANDERSON, Chairperson

ATTEST:


PRISCILLA GOFF, Planning Clerk

(SEAL)