



**Northwest Arctic Borough  
Planning Commission Regular Quarterly Meeting Minutes**

June 27, 2014 - 9:00 A.M.

Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Chambers, Kotzebue, AK

**CALL TO ORDER**

Madam Chair Barbara MacManus called the meeting to order at 9:07 A.M.

**INVOCATION/MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Millie Hawley gave invocation.

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present During Roll Call:

Barbara MacManus	Calvin Moto Sr	Ernie Norton	Dale Stotts
Carol Wesley	Millie Hawley		

Absent

Janet Mills	Daniel Foster Sr.
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A quorum has been established to conduct business.

**INTRODUCTION OF STAFF AND GUESTS**

Noah Naylor	Charlie Gregg	Zach Stevenson	Al Beck
John Chase	Damian Phillips	<i>Robert Gransberry</i>	<i>Jennifer Smith</i>
Paul Karczmarczyk	<i>Phi Barnes</i>	<i>Calvin Moto II</i>	Elia Gomez
Vern Cleveland Sr. (Telephonic)	<i>Natalia Ruppert</i>		

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

The agenda of June 27, 2014 was presented for approval. Noah mentioned that National Park Service won't be able to attend today; remove from communications and appearances on the agenda. Noah also requested to switch communications and appearances and conditional use permits on the agenda.

**Commissioner Dale Stotts moved, seconded by Commissioner Millie Hawley to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **MINUTES APPROVAL**

Minutes of previous meeting dated February 19, 2014 were presented for approval. Member Stotts requested information regarding the Shell presentation that Mayor Joule has given on purpose of the Science Department.

**Commissioner Ernie Norton moved, seconded by Commissioner Millie Hawley to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **PUBLIC HEARING/COMMENTS FOR APPROVAL OF CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS**

- a) **Permit No. 113-03-14** Shungnak Tribal Council submitted a title 9 permit to construct a 2.6 mile gravel road that will provide access to a new landfill site for the community.

John Chase provided a summary of the permit application. Madam Chair MacManus verified the start date since it says June 2014. A major use permit will be required at a later date for the second material source which is a twenty day comment period. Member Stotts confirmed if DNR issue river gravel mining authority; no federal regulatory over site? Madam Chair MacManus raised her concern regards disturbance of the river; concerned about blocking fish. Is that liable for that amount of gravel being extracted; does it work?

**Member Norton motion to open public hearing, seconded by Member Stotts for Permit No. 113-03-14 for Shungnak. Motion passed unanimously.**

Member Hawley raised her concern regarding a solid waste plan, is that attached to the permit? Madam Chair MacManus raised her concern regarding where, how it will be used and organized; ought to have a plan as to where the road is going to. Member Stotts mentioned that Kiana is in a similar position; haven't sought out permits yet; land fill access road same time, it takes three to five years. In order to get any funding for a land site requires a design and DEC approval; also require DEC involvement for closure of a landfill. Member Wesley verified if the public noticed have been posted in all Shungnak locations?

**Member Hawley motion to close public hearing, seconded by Member Norton. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Resolution PC-14-03** *a resolution of the Northwest Arctic Borough Planning Commission approving Shungnak Tribal Council's conditional use permit # 113-03-14 and for related purposes.*

**Member Norton move to approve Resolution PC-14-03, seconded by Member Moto; passed unanimously.**

- b) **Permit No. 117-03-04** City of Buckland submitted a title 9 application to extract gravel from Kanik Creek quarry for Buckland water & sewer and wind-diesel project.

John Chase provided a summary of Permit No. 117-03-04.

**Member Hawley motion to open public hearing, seconded by Member Wesley; motion carried unanimously.**

Member Norton raised his concern regarding caribou migration during this period; although it is mentioned on number four. Member Stotts raised his concern regarding the blasting plan; is there a timeframe for STG. Member Hawley raised her concern regarding residents of Buckland; are they aware of the blasting plans, is it going to interfere with any harvesting activities? Member Moto mentioned that there is migration of caribou that go towards Seward Peninsula; is that the route or elsewhere? Also Member Moto is concerned about the ground structure; will it affect their area? With all the explosives it makes the ground unstable. Madam Chair MacManus verified the schedule submitted; is the date right? John Chase mentioned he had received two written comments; one from City of Buckland and one from STG. Folks wanted the two separate permits because of the confusion; therefore there will be two resolutions.

**Member Stotts motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Member Hawley; motion carried unanimously.**

**Resolution PC-14-05** *a resolution of the Northwest Arctic Borough Planning Commission approving City of Buckland conditional use permit #117-03-14, and for related purposes*

**Member Hawley motion to approve Resolution PC-14-05, seconded by Member Stotts; motion carried unanimously.**

**Resolution PC-14-06** *a resolution of the Northwest Arctic Borough Planning Commission approving STG Incorporated conditional use permit #119-03-14, and for related purposes*

Madam Chair MacManus verified the permit numbers presented; one permit to Planning Commission due to confusion of two different resolutions have been drawn up for the projects.

**Member Hawley motion to approve PC-14-06, seconded by Member Norton; motion carried unanimously.**

Break taken at 10:30 A.M.  
Reconvene at 10:42 A.M.

- c) **Permit No. 116-03-14** Native Village of Deering submitted a title 9 application for gravel extraction to improve landfill for the community.

John Chase provided a summary of permit application. Member Moto raised his concern regarding the waste pit which they have currently; when the wind blows the trash is all over. Another problem is the musk ox, they tear down the fencing although they are chased away the musk ox keep coming back. Member Moto discussed the low tide and that is when the salmon is coming in. He mentioned that the gravel on the west side they use dynamite to loosen the gravel and it shakes the village.

**Member Hawley motion to open public hearing for Permit No. 116-03-14, seconded by Member Stotts, passed unanimously.**

Member Stotts verified if the DNR activities for extraction. Although the size is not eligible for the DNR permit so the Planning Department would process the permit. Elia Gomez, NANA Regional Corporation, gravel point of contact; as far as the river mining she had mentioned prior to her involvement there was some dispute between NANA and State. She doesn't know if it has been resolved. Member Hawley asked is there is a plan in Deering to ban or lessen the use of plastic bags? ANILCA had sent canvas bags to all the Native Stores although the Native Village of Deering owns the store and concerned about cost.

**Member Wesley motion to close public hearing, seconded by Member Stotts, passed unanimously.**

**Resolution PC-14-04** *a resolution of the Northwest Arctic Borough Planning Commission approving Native Village of Deering conditional use permit #116-03-14, and for related purposes*

**Member Hawley moved to approve PC-14-04 seconded by Member Moto; motioned carried unanimously.**

## **COMMUNICATION AND APPEARANCES**

### **a) Alaska Department of Transportation**

Albert Beck and Paul Karczmarczyk provided a power point presentation. Five project in three different communities in the Borough.

Kotzebue that has multiple projects running concurrent with the active projects which will finish up this year. Primary work occurring is on the main runway and safety areas of the runway. Selawik Utility crossing repair that had been awarded to Drake Construction; have been there about a month ago and the community is by passing utility crossing driving on tundra and tearing it up to access the land fill.

Recently in Ambler on Tuesday, beautiful weather and high water. Grizzly Creek Bridge will have the culverts replaced, the third barge is on its way and the fourth barge is getting ready. Should be successful to build the bridge this year if not then if the water goes down then there will be a Bailey bridge over the road. Have signed the right of way for the project; signed between NANA, City and DOT; should be awarded next week or the following week.

Upgrading Ambler Sewage Lagoon road will start construction next year.

Kotzebue Cape Blossom Road is continuing design process and look into right of way acquisition needs; looking at an alternative route as progressing the area is close to the Air Force property. Geo-tech work, survey work, design approval this spring; couldn't get the people and equipment in time for bridge site at Sadie Creek. Would like to have a bid ready project late next year; contingent on getting right of way inquired with all the permits.

Noatak had additional erosion; still working towards airport relocation away from the community. Noatak had lost about twenty feet from the embankment; continue to monitor it. Currently in the eighteen and beyond funding years; not in the next four years of the funding program. Talking with Robbie Kirk mentioned that the surfacing is thin; making plowing and maintaining the runway surface difficult.

Progressing with Kiana, scoping letters out soon, FAA requested additional back up for proposed improvements and looking at installing a permanent access road to the material site; hoping FAA will participate. Possibly have funding in 2015 if available although it is scheduled for 2016. Would like a temporary use permit and then turn it over to the City. Community has been working about having access to this material site; have worked with what they have done with DOWL Engineering.

Ongoing Kotzebue Project, Brice is using a staging area. General Aviation expansion, trying to work with City to upgrade the utilities that area.

Selawik visit with Chase Nelson, DOWL/HKM site visit of area; main purpose to share the survey of base right of way maps recently. Replacing the existing the boardwalk; scheduled for 2017 because of the right-of-way which will be the biggest challenge in this project.

In Deering they have scored an appeb; proposing to install a snow fence. Hasn't started yet; upcoming project hopefully can do that and the snow equipment removal building sync together.

Although not a DOT project, while in Ambler they have looked at continued erosion they have looked at. The water main is exposed again, sound like Borough is addressing the concerns.

Madam Chair MacManus raised her concern as to what needs to happen to get that fixed? What does the City need to do?

Vern Cleveland raised his concern regarding the Selawik roads; is there an option to put gravel instead of boardwalks. Paul mentioned that is a good question; he will look into. Also Vern had asked who Ridge is contracting for the Ambler Project.

Member Wesley thanked DOT for looking at the Noatak erosion. At one time she had gotten footage and for 2013 they have lost thirty feet; although the channel changes every year but never know what is going to happen. She hopes DOT works harder for their airport to happen rather than later. One time they thought construction would have started a couple years ago and it keep getting pushed back. Thanks to Noah for informing others of the erosion. She mentioned she is willing to e-mail them photos also.

Madam Chair MacManus raised her concern regarding the Ambler Airport closing because of the soft surface, what is the plan? Will it be like Kobuk's?

Vern Cleveland raised his concern for Ambler Airport, where are you going to get gravel from? Better solution would to pave the runway.

Madam Chair MacManus raise her concern regarding the timeline of the Ambler Airport project; thought a couple years ago there was a permit that the Planning Department have approved.

Member Hawley raised her concern on how the Borough or local government get involved on getting the airport projects or concern on the list; what funding, priorities and why different timelines.

Madam Chair MacManus discussed the capital projects by involving letters of support sent to legislators and senators; the more they hear about this the more they push to go through depending on monies available. The villages also prioritize the capital projects although it takes a while.

Member Moto raised his concern regarding the proposal of construction of snow fence west of the Deering Airport; March and April is the most accumulative snow. How effective would the fence be on the west? Monies should be spent on ways to figure out to block off snow accumulation. He is concerned about the safety of a high fence with the aircrafts landing.

Charlie Gregg verified the distance on the airstrip to the erosion in Noatak; what measurements? Also in Selawik, will another easement be created? He mentioned they had to vacant some easements about five years ago for water and sewer; Borough is willing to work with DOT on that.

Member Stotts mentioned on the last meeting there was discussion in regards to the culvert failure here in Kotzebue southern end of the runway; was there further study on that? Have there been anything identified in regards to the hundreds of fish that died.

Paul also brought up with the Cape Blossom Road and potential deviating from one of the alternatives that came out of the environmental process. Would they have to go back to the drawing board and revise the initial segment? If the stakeholders and communities work together that would be helpful.

b) **Alaska Earthquake Center**

Natalia Ruppert, University of Alaska Fairbanks Earthquake Center provided a presentation through teleconference and power point. She gave an update of the earthquake activity that has been happening in Noatak Area. There are a couple sensors installed in this area; one in Borough office and one in Noatak. She mentioned all the activity in Noatak is unusual. The last one recorded in the area is 1981 a magnitude of 5.5, a little farther east but in general area; had quite of few of aftershocks also for a couple months. The last one was measured on June 16<sup>th</sup> at 5.7 magnitude. Natalia provided a brief history of activity in that area. After the April earthquake they didn't expect any activity and got surprised for the Nome activity a couple weeks later. What do we expect? A magnitude of 8 or not or is it going to quietly, gradually go down; usually don't see any major earthquakes in this region.

Member Wesley verified if we should worry about a big earthquake coming?

Madam Chair MacManus read something recently about fracking; is that something that can work here like what they do in Oklahoma?

Member Wesley thanked Natalia for meeting with the community of Noatak; they have noticed not many damages since the earthquakes although the building foundations are not stable. Also she mentioned that in North Slope they do fracking; is that why Noatak is having earthquakes?

Many locals have questions and concerns regarding the earthquake activity. Madam Chair MacManus mentioned that they have felt activity in Ambler a couple weeks ago and every now and then they feel activity; what record do you have of Upper Kobuk Area?

Natalia mentioned that with a magnitude of 5 can be felt all over Western Alaska in the Brooks Range; we can't be aware of when the next one will happen. They have no record of activity in that area.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None presented

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None presented

### **PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF COMMENTS**

Charlie Gregg mentioned good meeting and good information; thanks to AI for coming up.

John Chase thank you for working with him on the planning commission conditional use permits, thanks to DOT for coming to present. Thanks to Damien for working with Subsistence Mapping; last day is next Wednesday. Good time working with you; summer time, have a good 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

Damien Phillips thanked you; although leaving the area he will be working on the project until May of next year. Had a big rush to collect data on subsistence, then recently the archeologic areas. One more round in August which Lance will be working on; verifying the maps came out correctly. Look forward finishing that up next year.

Zach Stevenson echoed acknowledgement for Damien contribution on the project; thankful with the increased funding he will remain involved. Two main contributions he is grateful for; combine traditional knowledge and science to use for local and regional planning. Secondarily he also valuable to strengthen methods; used in subsistence maps to show where the species feed, raise their young and migrate over time. Thankful for his service.

Madam Chair MacManus raised her concern regarding mapping for Upper Kobuk?

Noah Naylor mentioned that they are looking for funding; the Assembly also asked that, will cost about two million to complete although will complete the current projects. Thanks to the planning staff, they work with all the departments when needed.

### **PLANNING COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS**

Member Norton thanked everyone for the presentations by the visitors, staff support and good luck Damien. Have safe travels back, thank you.

Member Moto mentioned after the last couple years of flooding, people are talking about an alternate road to the airport and need to find financing. It was funny in January to use a boat to a few times to meet the plane and haul passengers back to the village. The whole flats were flooded out; have to figure out a way to have an alternate road to the airport, needs to be looked at. Thank you for having me here today; think we accomplished what we hoped, hope you're satisfied what is accomplished. Thank the two gentlemen for their input. Good harvest from sea and land; been pretty good and he feels pretty good. His goal is to watch his grandson graduate from high school. Thank you for a good meeting.

Member Wesley thank you, good meeting again; thank you to the hard working staff, thank you to the commissioners for making time for the meeting, thank you to presenters. Good luck Damien with what you're going to be doing. She has a couple concerns for the meeting; when we do these drafts for public comment especially when they pertain to the villages, in the future its one thing to cc the village folks, tribe, and city government but because we are the ones to approve the permit. Hoping to see in the future especially when you solicited public comment the people in the villages' show that they post them in public places giving everybody a chance to comment. Another thing is the resolutions; she work for the tribe many years and she cast the resolution, meeting and agendas. In the future maybe can put the resolutions with the permit and on the agenda so that can save time and confusion. She know that the resolutions are strong, standing documents and they stand until rescind or revoked. Thank you, good meeting.

Member Stotts thanked everyone that presented, good luck Damien, glad you will continued tech support of the project. Glad Carol is okay with all the activity happening. Appreciate DOT and the updates and look forward to seeing them in Kiana.

Madam Chair MacManus appreciate the staff, good luck with Damien. Thanks to the presenters and commissioners that came. Glad we get things done. Also someone mentioned that they saw beluga went up past Ambler, she didn't see them although heard there were some by mouth of Kobuk River. Safe travels for everyone going back home.

### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

Noah mentioned that Regional Strategy is tentatively scheduled for October 13<sup>th</sup> and would like to meet about that time; Noah will get more information and share with the commissioners.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Member Hawley move to adjourn at 1:05PM, seconded by Member Moto; passed unanimously.**