

**COOPER LANDING ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
LOCATION: COMMUNITY HALL AND ZOOM TELECONFERENCE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 08, 2023
UNIT 395 VIRTUAL PRESENTATION 5:00 PM
SPECIAL MEETING 6:00 PM
APPROVED MINUTES**

1. UNIT 395 PROJECT PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION - Patrick Cotter, RESPEC; Chris Mertl, Corvus Design; Marcus Mueller, KPB Land Manager

2. Attendees: J. Cadieux, D. Story, H. Harrison, C. Degernes, K. Recken, L. Johnson, Y. Galbraith, P. Cotter, Ruby Willoya-Williams, Jonathan Tymick, Alvin Talbert, Megan Flory, Chris Mertl, Marcus Mueller, Robert Ruffner
 - a. Michael Deegan, Gary Galbraith, Bryan Atkins, Paul, Keith Mantey, Phil Weber, Lynnnda Kahn, Cheryle James, Jillian Konopa, David Nees, Christine Nees, Marilyn Gravenhorst, Kathleen Kamp, Vince Beltrami, John Almenrode, Kris Inman, Bryan Atkins

- i. P. Cotter began with an overview and explained that maps are just an element of the plan but there are other elements at play.
 1. 1000 acre parcel belongs to KPB.
 2. Contains a large portion of the new Sterling Highway which will divide the parcel in about half.
 3. Slopes and topography in some areas of the parcel also present development challenges.
 4. About half of the parcel falls within the Squilantnu Archeological District.

- ii. P. Cotter shared an explanation of the timeline using the KPB Land Planning Unit 395 Work Plan.
[\[https://www.unit395planning.com/files/ugd/d2dde5_b2b79a2473554aaeaf529ffd83f1d16e.pdf\]](https://www.unit395planning.com/files/ugd/d2dde5_b2b79a2473554aaeaf529ffd83f1d16e.pdf)
 - b. He said that some of the questions that guided the planning were, “What could this parcel be used for? What do the stakeholders want? What do the stakeholders not want?”
 - c. He said that a standalone project also tasked to the RESPEC group is the Affordable Housing report.
 - d. He called out the project website as a place to find more of this information. [\[https://www.unit395planning.com\]](https://www.unit395planning.com) The affordable housing report may be viewed by hovering on “goals and outcomes” in the bar at the top of the page then click on “documents”. Scroll down to find the Affordable Housing Report Draft.]

- i. P. Cotter said that what RESPEC heard is that the community has a big affordable housing issue and that there were also major desires expressed by community members to have the resources, recreation and wildlife held in place.

- ii. P. Cotter presented the preferred plan layout and development concepts.
 - 1. He said they used a two-pronged approach to the parcel.
 - a. The SE portion of the parcel to be used for recreational opportunities.
 - i. This area is limited for consideration for residential development because it would require an additional access road that would have costs and building challenges.
 - b. The NW portion is the preferred area for residential development because of road access, topography, as well an area eastward identified as a materials site.
 - 2. Phase 1 potential subdivision.
 - a. Appears to be buildable to typical road standards.
 - b. Potential for community septic which would allow smaller parcels by not needing the same setbacks as when each parcel has its own septic system.
 - c. This plan may allow for build out of a second phase to the northeast, nearer the materials site.
 - d. Riparian buffer and protection of wetlands is a part of the planning.
 - e. After the materials site goes through its expected lifespan it may be able to be turned into parking, shelter, trailhead, or provide potential for a bigger recreational facility on this parcel.
 - f. Looking out 20 years or longer in the proposal it may allow for a venue/stadium/grandstand which could be used for outdoor recreation events similar to Kincaid or Birch Hill etc.
 - i. Additional residential potential on the parcel south of the new highway once the steep knobs of potential hard-rock materials sites were flattened out.
 - ii. The loop trail shown is representative of many recreational options though the planners have not gotten very granular about the specific uses.
 - 3. J. Cadieux explained that the normal protocol for presentations facilitated by the APC is to allow the commissioners to speak and ask questions first and public after. She noted that Ruby Willoya-Williams, Kenaitze Indian Tribe representative, is also present and asked her to help begin reactions and questions. She also asked about project planner communications with USFS.
 - a. P. Cotter said that initial discussions with USFS have been good though the full project details presented tonight have not been shared in detail as they are very recent.
 - b. He continued by saying that the USFS talked about the road access and wildlife corridor in the northwest corner and how the USFS didn't want to see development in that area but otherwise he thought the plan represented the understood USFS interests.

- c. J. Cadieux asked about the trails drawn from the parcel onto USFS lands and also said that the 2.5 mile loop helps to show that the scale compared to the proposed area in question is not necessarily enough to support a trail system large enough for a stadium concept.
 - d. C. Myrtl acknowledged this and said that the trails are in line with management for the use of recreation types by the USFS in the adjacent areas but any grandstand type facility would be contained on the Unit 395 parcel.
4. Ruby Willoya-Williams, Lead Cultural Coordinator for the Kenaitze Indian Tribe introduced herself and said that she spends a lot of time in Cooper Landing working on the Sterling Highway MP 45-60 Project.
- a. She said this was the first time seeing this map and layout.
 - b. She said her concern at first was that it would affect the archeological district and had wondered if that was considered in planning and it appears that it has been.
 - c. She asked about land acknowledgements for the area in the project planning.
 - i. C. Myrtl explained that land acknowledgments will be included in the planning documents themselves. He said there is a fair bit of interpretation done in the area but that there will be potential for additional sites and information.
 - d. R. Willoya-Williams explained that interpretation at land use sites and acknowledgments are different.
 - i. J. Cadieux asked for the overlay slide showing the Squilantnu Archeological District.
 - e. R. Willoya-Williams said the Squilantnu Archeological District is huge and wonderful and that the bypass [Sterling Highway MP 45-60] project has been a battle for years because of the district and the amount of historical information present in it. She noted that it has been a place of gathering for the Kenaitze and other Dena'ina people as well as Riverine Katchemak peoples and other peoples pre-contact.
 - f. She explained her job is protecting the cultural and natural resources in the area and giving acknowledgement to the peoples and resources that existed pre-contact with other cultures.
5. J. Cadieux asked for commissioner questions.
- a. K. Recken listed several questions.
 - i. Who came up with Chunkwood Rd name and is that permanent? K. Recken additionally suggested it might be renamed by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe.
 - 1. P. Cotter said that he has seen Chunkwood as well as W. Juneau Rd. referred. He thinks a name from the Kenaitze Indian Tribe would be welcome.
 - ii. Who requested the resource development sites?

1. P. Cotter and J. Cadieux explained the material site on the north edge is in part driven by the Sterling Highway MP 45-60 Project and has come before the CLAPC during the project planning process.
 2. P. Cotter continued that the other two material sites were included to make sure they were considered in the Unit 395 planning.
 3. M. Mueller said that the material site to the north of the alignment was identified with test holes for the MP 45-60 Project. He said the two south of the alignment are bedrock features that the KPB was intending to reserve the hard rock values which are of regional importance to public infrastructure projects such as bridges etc.
 - a. J. Cadieux noted the importance of the timeline and sequencing to avoid potential conflicting uses such as hard rock mining and recreation.
- iii. K. Recken asked why hiking has been moved to the south?
1. P. Cotter said that during site visits the areas were identified as options but they are still conceptual. He said that any future design of trails would involve looking at grades and switchbacks etc.
- iv. J. Cadieux asked about the correlation of this project and forestry actions such as spruce bark beetle mitigation.
1. M. Mueller said that the main aim for areas like this is limited to minimizing “jackstraw” forests that will be problems for many years to come but that this unit may not have a priority since it doesn’t surround the community the same way as KPB lands around the rest of Cooper Landing. He added that forest health would be included in future considerations for the parcel.
- v. C. Myrtl said that the materials present in extraction sites are not yet known but regardless there will be restoration or mitigation measures needed for these areas after the extractive use and so knowing the long-term plan for these sites can allow things like housing or recreation to be included in the planning of the site’s long-term use.
- vi. J. Cadieux cited the existing CL Land Management Plan and asked for an explanation about habitat considerations and why the housing area is north of the highway and close to the wildlife corridor.

1. P. Cotter said that a lot of it was driven by buildability of the area and topography that is just outside of the identified wildlife corridor.
2. J. Cadieux asked about the Kenai Peninsula Brown Bear Project. Had they been able to speak with any of the biologists for input regarding the recommendation for either more expansive lots to allow passage through individual lots or denser lots to promote animals going around the entire area.
 - a. P. Cotter said they had not contacted authors at this point.
 - b. C. Myrtl said that when this subdivision was laid out it was with the aim of making it more-dense. He said the site itself is fairly dense vegetation and that utilizing an already established road is more conducive to affordable housing rather than having to pioneer an additional road.
3. K. Recken asked for clarification of lot sizes.
 - a. P. Cotter said that the lot sizes vary but are as small as 0.4 acres and up to but not quite 1 acre.
4. K. Recken said it is unlikely that any of these are affordable housing.
 - a. M. Mueller said that a lot of the questions on how to facilitate affordable housing would be in front of the borough during this process. We do know how the borough has done the in the past and that the conversation would need to include considerations of tools like local option zoning and others to make those priorities and decisions.
 - b. J. Cadieux said if any portion of this is built, for it to be affordable, it would need to be legislated by the borough.
5. C. Myrtl said that lot sizes can be adjusted but most of them are around 0.5 acres.
- vii. D. Story stated that he feels the process, while done with obvious care and consideration by planners, is still too short of an elapsed time in his opinion to have a good representation of stakeholder feedback and participation in the process for such a large piece of land with so many important features.
6. J. Cadieux asked for questions from the other attendees.

- i. L. Kahn asked how far the development would be from the west parcel boundary.
 - a. P. Cotter said it is just under one half mile.
- ii. L. Kahn asked noted the wildlife corridor is broad and asked for further consideration for human/wildlife interactions including potential for negative ones and whether there would be requirements regarding trash storage etc.
 - a. P. Cotter said that the lines in this map are conceptual but that the layout is intended as a land planning exercise. He said restrictions on use, trash storage, etc. would come from further borough planning processes.
 - b. K. Recken said she agreed with the concern about negative human/wildlife interactions.
- iii. L. Kahn asked where the development would be in relationship to the stream identified with the wetlands.
 - a. P. Cotter said that there are a number of requirements for setbacks from water bodies etc.
 - b. J Tymick noted via chat that an additional stream that flows north/south on the western side of the Unit is a likely wildlife linkage as the wildlife tend to follow drainages.
- iv. P. Weber asked when all this is supposed to happen?
 - 1. P. Cotter said that it is still being determined. As the plan is developed it will include land designation and zoning, road being brought up to standards, USFS agreements etc. He said he imagined the timing of these things will likely be longer than a year or so before they start being worked out.
 - 2. M. Mueller said that timelines are vague but that not much is immediate. He said that what comes out of this planning process will bring us to another drawing board where we get to make priorities. He said the materials site would be the first thing we see since it is related to the highway project. He said a trail system is another possible early result but the KPB is not in the trail building business. He said it does allow community-based proposals to take place and that timelines are almost inherently vague.
- iii. D. Nees asked about the blue line [Chunkwood Road] and whether that is going to be the sole access for the people in the subdivision?
 - 1. P. Cotter said that yes, it is the only access.
 - 2. D. Nees asked if that road is the only access will it become KPB maintained?
 - a. P. Cotter said yes.
 - 3. D. Nees said that it appears this plan provides about 40 acre lots, leaving 980 acres undeveloped. He said people fill out 0.5 acres very quickly with stuff like cars, boats, sheds etc.

and said you can't have that kind of density and expect it will work with wildlife. He added that if the goal is affordable housing this is not the way.

- iv. K. Inman said that you see bears on the road or trails because that is the easiest access and so you may want to reroute the proposed neighborhood trail so it doesn't dump them into the neighborhood.
 - 1. She also said that the restrictions that may be needed to mitigate wildlife issues should be further out front in planning so any potential landowners see those restrictions coming.
 - 2. She also asked why the second phase area is not the first phase area since it is further from wildlife and outside of the archeological district.
 - b. P. Cotter said because its access is provided by new road and has steep grades. Also, we have heard very different things from the community regarding what folk want. He said that everything is a bit of a balance and tradeoff.
 - 3. C. Mertil added that it has been made loud and clear by the community that there should be no additional access to the Unit 395 areas off the new highway alignment. The cost of an area not along existing road will be extremely costly.
- v. J. Konopa thanked planners for protecting the archeological sites, recreational access, and community septic considerations. She asked about how to ensure affordable housing is made affordable.
 - 4. P. Cotter said that the affordable housing study that was part of this looked at mechanisms that have been successful in other communities. See web page access earlier in these minutes.
 - 5. J. Konopa also asked about the materials sites and whether they would go into the building of these homes and whether the homes are prefab homes, other building types, or if that is still being figured out.
 - c. P. Cotter said when we talk about materials we are mainly talking about gravels and rock. Some may be used in the area. He said that the parcels are just raw land.
 - 6. J. Konopa asked if there would be options for commercial zones along the bypass?
 - d. P. Cotter said that they heard from the community that it did not want to have Cooper Landing West and did not want to have major commercial activities in this area.

- e. J. Cadieux noted that with borough land classification some in-home businesses are allowed in lands that have rural residential zoning rules.
7. David Nees asked for more information about land classification of this parcel.
- f. M. Mueller said that the KPB land management is multi-objective driven. He said when we look at adoption of this plan and how to roll it out, the adoption of the plan will include land classification recommendations, the plan would lead the classification and the classification would be adopted with the plan.
 - g. C. Mertl said that this plan will not solve the affordable housing problem. He said it helps to add volume to the market but it won't solve it on its own. He said there are, however, recommendations that have been used by other communities on how to implement mechanisms to address these issues included in the stand-alone report produced in this process. He said the KPB won't be able to do it on their own but will only be able to do it with community partnerships.
 - h. C. Mertl said there were many comments about not wanting housing in certain areas on the plan and asked where those commenters might rather have housing.
8. B. Atkins said this plan has a number of small lots with expensive road access. If it can't be accessed by the highway it doesn't really solve the issues.
- i. D. Story said that as a point of clarification the Affordable Housing Report generated as a component of this planning process is a stand-alone document intended to provide a digest of tools used to provide affordable housing used by other communities that may be able to be applied to Cooper Landing and other communities in the KPB.
 - j. He said that a need for Affordable Housing has been a refrain from this community for a very long time and has been a consistent theme in these public meetings. He said that he encourages everyone attending this evening to continue attending these and other community meetings to help organize solutions to these issues because they will not solve themselves.
 - k. M. Mueller said that the point he heard expressed is that the economics don't self-serve the needs of the

project. He said it is important to recognize the timing. He said his assessment is that the next area for residential development in Cooper Landing is not likely in Unit 395. He said the Tract C project included an assessment of four locations that might be more suitable including Campus Drive, Quartz Creek, Birch Ridge and Grouse Ridge and that one of those areas is more likely to be the next target location for development in Cooper Landing.

1. J. Cadieux asked M. Mueller to review the chat questions in today's Zoom. She also asked whether he had seen Vermont Act 250 and how it addresses ecologically sound development and planning.
 - i. M. Mueller said he had not.
9. D. Story said he would like attendees to note that affordable housing does not typically come from highest bidder land sales in areas like Unit 395. He said that some tools that can create affordable housing include things like local option zoning or other ordinance tools but not all members of ours or other communities here in Alaska are interested in the government telling them what to do. He said that when the KPB and project planners describe the ability to, for instance, convey a piece of land to a partnering organization which can then administer that land in a way that generates a result such as affordable housing – like the Cooper Landing Senior Citizens Corporation or other organizations described in the Affordable Housing Report - it is calling on communities to develop these for themselves in ways that make sense locally. He said that by presenting the costs and tradeoffs of developing a residential area in Unit 395 it helps to contrast whether it makes sense to pursue housing development in this area versus the areas described by M. Mueller earlier and identified in the previous land use plans for the area including the 1996 Land Use Plan. He said that we, as a community, will need to update a new land use plan soon as the dust settles from the bypass project and that all of these issues are things that that require our community members to come together and organize in ways like by attending these and Cooper Landing Community Club meetings and doing the boring but important work that can generate results like affordable housing.
10. J. Cadieux said that participating in these meetings regularly is really important. She said that when the agendas for these meetings are posted on the CL Crier they include the documents like the Affordable Housing Report

that can help answer these questions and shape the input participants can provide when they attend.

11. D. Nees asked if the high school site listed in the 1996 CL Land Management Plan is on KPB land. Answer: Yes, it is.
 12. C. Nees said it would be really nice to have all the board members present as it may draw more of the community. She also mentioned that it is her preference to have face to face contact for these types of meetings.
 13. J. Tymick said that the green area was identified as the natural corridor and that streams are a natural buffer and development may need to be limited to the west of the stream.
 - a. C. Mertl said they will note the wildlife corridor along the stream. He mentioned that there was desire for connecting trails to the subdivisions but that there is conflicting information now regarding wildlife following the trails.
 14. K. Inman reiterated the smaller subdivision is compatible with conservation design but don't kid yourself that it will continue to be so if the whole parcel is filled with additional small subdivisions.
3. CALL TO ORDER of the CLAPC MEETING: 7:30pm
 4. ROLL CALL – J. Cadieux, D. Story, H. Harrison, C. Degernes, K. Recken, L. Johnson, Y. Galbraith present.
 - a. P. Cotter, Jonathan Tymick Alvin Talbert, Megan Flory, Chris Mertl, Marcus Mueller, Robert Ruffner, B Atkins
 5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Y. Galbraith moves to approve as written. C. Degernes seconds. All approve by roll call vote.
 6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES for February 8, 2023 – L. Johnson moves to approve as written. K. Recken seconds. All approve by roll call vote.
 7. CORRESPONDENCE – none.
 8. PUBLIC COMMENT/PRESENTATION WITHOUT PREVIOUS NOTICE – none.
 9. REPORT FROM BOROUGH - none
 10. OLD BUSINESS none
 11. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Unit 395 Plan recommendations
 - i. J. Cadieux asked what commissioners would like to see in this plan.
 - 1. K. Recken said she would like to see the subdivision moved to the south of the highway.
 - 2. C. Degernes thanked RESPEC for listening and acknowledged that there have been different desires listed by different people at different meetings.
 - a. Likes the access coming from the existing Sterling Highway.
 - b. Would like to see the emergency access ramps removed from the design of the new highway alignment.
 - 3. H. Harrison said she knows that the community needs more residential development. She said it needs to make sense for a developer and the KPB to take it on and this plan doesn't look like it makes that sense. She said the other phase areas are so prohibitive they may never come to fruition and that there have been many other planned areas that don't come to fruition. She said we need to have a plan to make development happen.
 - 4. Y. Galbraith said that what it seems like is that this site is not the first development priority. She said there have been other areas that have been identified in the community and they may make more sense to move forward with than this area. She said she believes the steepness of the road is also a consideration for safety and access for CL Emergency Services.
 - 5. K. Recken asked for clarification from M. Mueller that there is an understanding from members of the community that KPB is interested in developing Affordable Housing and that that is not her understanding.
 - a. M. Mueller said that the KPB doesn't have any history of zoning development projects with the exception of Russian Gap. He continued that there may be the opportunity in the future. He said there are other areas, Seward for instance, that have similar needs and that there may be more ideas that come together and stick at this time vs previous attempts. He said a development partnership, with an investor for example, might work where the KPB puts up the land and the developer puts up the development.
 - i. K. Recken asked whether it comes down to the political climate. M. Mueller said that if

it makes sense to the assembly they will vote it up and if it doesn't it will be voted down. He said although Cooper Landing has been talking about affordable housing for a long time, it is just hitting the borough.

6. J. Cadieux asked C. Mertl and P. Cotter if there was any cost benefit estimates etc. for having elevated level recreational assets in this area in terms of benefit to the KPB to leave it for recreation rather than residential development.
 - a. C. Myrtl said it was not a full analysis but it does include the support of the recreational assets that are also compatible with the adjacent USFS land management. He said many of the uses are workable for seasonal and temporary use including the concept of a temporary or seasonal "stadium."
7. Y. Galbraith asked if it is possible to condense this down to whether the CLAPC supports the plan vs. the individual components of the plan.
 - a. D. Story said everyone needs to have enough time to process the presented plan and ruminate on the concepts without nitpicking the down the road details. He said it would be helpful to have some clarification regarding the mixed messages that planners have heard and perhaps provide those as the contrasting tradeoffs of the components of the plan.
 - b. H. Harrison asked if there would be some closure for the community. There has been so much community involvement will they have an opportunity to make further comment?
 - i. P. Cotter said he needed to confirm the timelines with the KPB.
 - ii. C. Mertl said that if the master plan is not the right direction that is the main thing that needs to be determined first.
 - c. K. Recken said thank you to RESPEC for all the work but she cannot support the housing where it is. She would like to know from M. Mueller if the process can be slowed down.
 - i. M. Mueller said it is important to know where we are at in the timeline. He said we have the master map that shows the major elements but the narrative of the elements has not yet been written. He said if the elements of the master plan/map are the

right results then the language of the plan can be written in a way that explains the considerations i.e. what do you do when you find an archeological resource in an area to be developed and other things that will inevitably happen as any project proceeds.

- ii. K. Recken clarified she was asking if the plan timeline to present a final product to the Assembly in May or June can be pushed back.
 - 1. M. Mueller confirmed it can.
- d. D. Story said that he does not feel comfortable making any kind of recommendation tonight and that it would make more sense to at the very least bring this back to the next CLAPC meeting before it would seem reasonable to make recommendations.
 - i. H. Harrison, Y. Galbraith, J. Cadieux agreed.
 - ii. J. Cadieux suggested it be brought to the Community Club and offered options with CLAPC including the April 5th CLAPC or a Work Session later in April.
 - 1. P. Cotter mentioned the “overemphasis” on wildlife.
 - a. H. Harrison supported P. Cotter.
 - b. D. Story mentioned better delineation of the tradeoffs.
 - c. B. Atkins asked why Unit 395 and described many of the problems he sees as the issues with developing that area.
 - iii. D. Story suggested RESPEC provide a digested version of the plan and the conflicts that planners have identified from community feedback that can be presented as a short presentation akin to information and announcements rather than an hours-long Q&A at the next meeting. He said the point would be to give time for this information to make its way out, for even more of the community to find the resources that already exist so that when people return to something like a work session they can already be informed of the plan, many of its

tradeoffs, and previous work surrounding things like affordable housing in the community and ideally be prepared to make informed comment then or during a public comment period.

- iv. J. Cadieux asked about whether we can put together a Work Session.
 1. P. Cotter said an in-person work session between April 5 and May 3 would work.
 2. J. Cadieux asked for the commissioners to email the preferred date between April 19th or 26th for the work session.

12. PLAT REVIEW none

13. INFORMATION and ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Commissioners please view the virtual training from KPB
- b. CooperLandingAPC email will be shut down by KPB directive
 - i. We will be allowed a transition so that community members understand how to communicate with CLAPC.
 - ii. J Cadieux has a new email address dedicated to CLAPC communication: Cadieux.apc@gmail.com

14. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

- a. Thank you to the planners and everyone for sticking it out.

15. ADJOURNMENT – H. Harrison moves to adjourn. Y. Galbraith seconds. All approve by roll call vote.

For more information or to submit comments please contact:

David Story, Secretary Treasurer or Janette Cadieux, Chair, P.O. Box 694, Cooper Landing, 99572 Contact the CLAPC by submitting your message here:
<https://www.kpb.us/planning-dept/planning-commissions/cooper-landing-apc/email-cooper-landing-apc>