

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board (CPAB)  
Notes from December 3, 2008 Meeting

Present

Doug Braddock, Bernardo Hernandez - FNSB Staff  
Bob Henszey, Matt Reckard, Jennifer Peterson, Merle Jantz

Status of the RFP

Doug Braddock advised the RFP was on the street, and had been advertised in the newspaper and posted on the American Planning Association website. Information was sent to a list of consultants, some of which were suggested by the CPAB members. It was also published with the Northern Alaska Spatial Data Users group, which is a large group of GIS people around town. Additionally, it was posted on Borough Bids on Line website.

Susan Todd reviewed it and sent back some interesting comments. Doug handed out copies of her comments to members. She had emailed earlier that she like the RFP but thought that Commission might want to consider going to the Carl Steinitz approach, which would look at how the land use would change with variable land use policies. The scenarios, rather than being based on growth, would be based on a number of different land use policies and then you would look at how that would affect actual land uses and model those. It was quite a different approach than what they've taken so far.

Bob noted that they were looking at the change in the population more than anything else.

Doug said he'd done some research on it and found that some jurisdictions have used the Steinitz approach while others based their alternative futures on population. The Willamette analysis they had looked at used the Steinitz approach. He thought through the discussions the members have had over the past year, we were always focused on population growth and he didn't recall talking about policy changes.

Bob expressed that perhaps that was because we were more concerned about growth than policy. Some other areas were all pretty well established, and their tool was policy rather than managing growth.

Doug said that may be, and was a good thought. He was just interested in what members might think about Susan's comments. We wouldn't want to make changes to the RFP at this point, and there haven't been any questions from any potential respondents

Merle asked if there were a number of RFP's out there. Do we know how many?

Doug said there was a list of potential contractors that it went to. Bernardo noted the USKH had mentioned to him that they were working on it. And Doug added that ABR was also interested. Bob said he sent it out to the Green Infrastructure group also so they would be aware of it, and may have someone there interested in it.

Bernardo said he hoped that in the land suitability analysis the railroad relocation issue might come forward. Doug said they could certainly ask for that to be specifically looked at also.

Matt said he felt the email from Susan was a very good point and perhaps they could talk to whoever was selected about it, without needing to change the RFP, but his impression was that they were just talking about population growth in difference scenarios and that policy was something they would be looking at in that.

Bernardo said they did want to make policy as the second half of it, when they do the Comprehensive Plan. That was when they would look at the data that has been accumulated and then they determine the policy, with the public. The policy would be working with communities, a lot of dialogue. People want to see their community grow based on the information they will have. Susan was saying as a priority – what would happen to a community if you had a strict policy of no-growth, or unlimited growth. He felt that was two different questions.

Merle said he thought the difference was that the policy expected would be more community based, or more area specific, rather than, this is the Borough's policy which now is no growth or whatever. Rather, what do we do with this piece of ground or this area.

Matt said he was saying, when looking at variables, should different policies be variables. When you go out to the communities with all this information and ask them what kind of policy would they like to see, one of the first questions I would have to ask is, if I take this policy, what happens? What difference does it make? If we can't answer that question, then what.

Bernardo said he thought what it does is assume there is a no growth policy. An assumption that is built in, that's not discussed. They will see existing zoning, how much land is in private ownership and what's in public ownership; all these factors will be in the land suitability analysis so what can you do with that available land?

Merle said he thought, consistent with what Bernardo was saying, land suitability would drive the policy as to what we do with that land. Bob said he thought that also. Merle said what they find out about a piece of land, whether in Ester, North Pole or somewhere else, drives what policy is placed on it. Ester might want to modify that policy with a no growth situation, or North Pole might want to modify that policy with only industrial uses. These were only examples.

Bernardo said as planners, we would probably go in there and say, this is what makes sense to us. The planners and planning department will have a role in the development of policies. So we need to offer these communities what we think is best, and have all the back up and reasons why. We have a lot of competing values; on one hand we have competing values for economic development, the other hand we have competing values for rural areas, outlying areas, quiet, peace, good traffic flow and so forth. So we have to craft something that takes in a lot of competing values.

Merle said he could see that presentation saying, okay this area is pretty good stuff so we ought to have a high density development process here; this isn't so good, so have a

low density development here; this is lousy so we ought to steer that toward open space, or something like that. That was the type of thing he saw coming out of this.

Bernardo said that's what they are hoping will come from this. And tying in with green infrastructure to say over the long term, over next 50 to 100 years, we need to think in terms of providing clean air, clean water for future years. Sustainability has to be built into the policy and that's where the open space and green infrastructure plays in with the suitability for the development part of it. So, this could be left open for further discussion with contractors, if you want.

Doug said he figured when Phase II was done we would probably get some of this anyway. They were somewhat linked together and in reality, it was going to be not only based on population but somewhat on policy also. He believed it would just happen, because it has to happen.

Matt agreed, and said it's not only policy. He could see a lot of things happening. The price of energy is high. Whatever your policy is, that's going to encourage people to live closer to work and so forth.

Merle said another factor he hoped would come out of this was the opportunity to create individual requirements for a subdivision application, based on the type of terrain or quality of the land and so forth. If you have a good quality piece of land you don't need as much information as a rotten piece that would have to have specialized sewer systems and so forth. Then we could start customizing Title 17 requirements to the type of land we see.

Bernardo said he was in agreement with that and there might be some areas where they would want to see cluster type development, rather than the cookie cutter type of subdivision over these marginal lands. He believed they could do both types of things.

Bob said transportation needed to get in there also, as some point. Bernardo noted that DOT was working on the update for long range transportation plan but it consisted of lists of projects that were just lists. There is no rhyme or reason, no vision behind them, no policy behind them; just a list.

Merle said transportation planning, until now, has been reactionary. Get a bunch of new house in an area, traffic gets bad, add on this street, it gets on the list, and try to do something. Instead of trying to figure out things ahead of time.

General discussion followed. Doug requested that if anyone asked a member any questions about the RFP that was a potential respondent, that they be referred to him or to General Services. It was somewhat of a legal issue.

Matt asked how many people would be on the selection committee. Doug said it was probably good to have 5. Bernardo explained that everybody reviews the RFP's – read and score them – then scores are accumulated together and determine which one reaches the top.

## CPAB Priorities - Discussion of Next Action Items

Bernardo felt that GU-zoning was an important issue that needed working on. He explained some of the problems with the General Use zone and floodplain issues.

Jennifer said floodplains were discussed at previous meeting and she would like Bernardo's opinion on something that was said. The concept was that there's no political will in the Borough, particularly at the highest elected official level, to deal with GU-1 so we shouldn't even start.

Bernardo said he didn't know if that was the case. There wasn't a year and a half ago. He then brought the problems and issues forward at a Directors meeting and every Director agreed, relaying their own stories of things that had happened. But the decision makers said no, because they thought it was too big a battle to fight and to win, on the Assembly. That was last year and things have changed. Since then we've had a major flood, the second flood in this community, with many properties and millions of dollars involved. Of the 41 properties flooded, only 1 had a flood plain permit. Administration has been approached with suggested changes to implement Title 15 ordinance.

Merle said that the Title 15 rewrite Committee might be coming forward with a recommendation that GU-1 be changed to a minimum of 40 acres. So if you want to do any subdividing whatsoever, it takes a rezone. That would be less of a fight then trying to rezone all of GU-1. Anyone on lesser acreage would be grandfathered if it goes through, but if they wanted to subdivide that same property later, they would have to get a rezone.

General discussion followed. It was decided that General Use Zoning would be next project. Merle suggested that at some point they get together with Title 17 people and let them help also. Bernardo said he would like members to bring anecdotes to the next meeting about GU-1 and why it's bad. See what's wrong with GU; where is it a problem. Matt suggested they look at how sensitive these problems were to the lot size. There is GU-1, GU-5, GU-40 and so forth. What might be bad for smaller acreage may not be the same issue with larger parcel. Bernardo felt they should then discuss putting numbers behind the problems; dollars involved.

### Agenda for next meeting

#### GU Zoning:

- Discuss Anecdotes
- Discuss Lot Size Relationship
- Discuss Financial Relationship with GU Zoning

### Next Meeting

January 7, 2009