

**COOPER LANDING ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
LOCATION: ZOOM TELECONFERENCE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2022
6:00 PM
UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL – J. Cadieux, C. Degernes, K.Recken, L. Johnson, Y. Galbraith, H. Harrison, D. Story present.
 - a. Members of the public present: T. Gossard, M. Brennan, H. Pearson, Dakota Truitt, KPB Land Agent, Nancy Carver, KPB Planner, Brenda Ahlberg, KPB OEM Dir., S. Holland, A. O’Hara, R. Lynn, E. Holsten
 - b. Oath of office for D. Story (re-do)
3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – L. Johnson moves to approve. C. Degernes seconds, all approve through roll call vote.
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES for January 05, 2022 – H. Harrison moves to approve as written. K. Recken seconds, all approve through roll call vote.
5. CORRESPONDENCE
 - a. Letter from resident requesting no road access to Unit 395 from new highway alignment
 - b. Confirmation from DOT that the final selection of designs for the western interchange between Sterling Hwy new alignment and existing “town road” Sterling Hwy will be the Tight Diamond ramp design.
6. PUBLIC COMMENT/PRESENTATION WITHOUT PREVIOUS NOTICE - none
7. REPORT FROM BOROUGH
 - a. DOT&PF Sterling Hwy MP 45-60 Project will not be reporting this month. Please see posted informational flyers on the Crier.
 - b. Brenda Ahlberg – KPB Emergency Manager
 - i. Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is in its final stages and the KPB is seeking public comments before February 25th. The CLAPC will finalize its comments for the March 16th Cooper Landing APC meeting.

- ii. Original CWP plans were done in 2006 and 2009 for some but not all areas of the borough. In 2019 the KPB received a grant that has allowed a more comprehensive plan to be drafted.
- iii. A core group of land managers, public and private have been a big part of providing input to this new plan.
- iv. Special recognition given to Riley Shurtleff from Cooper Landing Emergency Services for his help providing input and access to information for the planners.
- v. Please contact Brenda Ahlberg with any specific questions.
 - 1. 907-231-6505
 - 2. bahlberg@kpb.us

8. OLD BUSINESS - none

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. KPB Forest Management Project: Dakota Truitt, KPB Land Management Agent, presentation of the KPB Timber Harvesting Program for Wood Utilization and Forest Management of KPB Beetle-impacted Forests.
 - i. The KPB is sharing info about the beetle infestation and seeking community input.
 - ii. Selective timber harvest has been identified as a good tactic for addressing the infestations.
 - 1. The KPB hopes to draft ordinance allowing authorization of timber sales as a management tool for spruce bark beetle (SBB)-impacted forests.
 - iii. Short term goals
 - 1. Authorization for timber sales
 - 2. Initiate active forest management utilizing local labor
 - 3. Grant exploration and application.
 - iv. Long term goals
 - 1. Develop a forest management plan that promotes forest health and fire resiliency across land manager boundaries, improves habitat and maintains access for residents and tourists.
 - 2. Promote reforestation in affected areas and create forestry infrastructure that allows for sustainable industry and market rather than the boom and bust experienced with the last SBB infestation.
 - 3. Improve quality of land and reduce economic and ecological costs to Borough residents.
 - v. K. Recken asked about the species that would be used to reforest.
 - 1. D. Truitt said that managers have ongoing attention to and participation with university studies to see which species can work in addition to young spruce.

- vi. J. Cadieux asked about the use of succession species such as hemlock which may not be affected as easily and whether climate change is factored into the planning. Can spruce forests survive in this changing climate?
 - 1. D. Truitt said the research from past years suggests that there will be a significant ecotone change for the Kenai Peninsula in the future, possibly not allowing a return to spruce forests in some areas, which is why determining the planning, research and community values is important to create a forest management strategy to address the changes the peninsula faces. Yes, hemlock may be a species considered for re-forestation where appropriate.
- vii. D. Truitt said that Cooper Landing is a challenging area for timber harvest, fire history, and forest management.
 - 1. The goal of this program is to develop an ordinance that authorizes timber sales as a management tool. Next tier down is fuel mitigation. Next tier is no action.
- viii. Presentation information claims:
 - 1. There have been ~21,000 acres of forested land between Cooper Landing, Kenai, and Soldotna affected by the SBB in 2020 with 120,000 acres Peninsula-wide.
 - 2. Spruce volumes currently average 0.5-1 merchantable cords per acre and 6-20 cords of fuel wood per acre of dead, dying, and susceptible to SBB.
 - 3. There is a significant portion of area of KPB lands in and around Cooper Landing that is affected by SBB.
 - 4. 4000 acres of lands with dominant spruce component in various stages of infestation.
 - 5. Focus begins with right-of-ways and community areas affected by hazard trees.
 - 6. Timber volume and value estimated
 - a. ~10,500-21,000 cords of merchantable value
 - b. ~126,000-420,000 cords of fuelwood volume
 - i. Proper valuation helps to create inertia for the management program objectives.
 - 7. Recent AK timber sales have valuations of ~\$32/cord for spruce sawlogs and ~\$22/cord for fuelwood
 - a. Mat-Su Borough, AK Division of Forestry and Chugach NF are currently selling spruce logs for fuelwood or other purposes for \$10/cord or less.
 - b. By allowing sales now for a significant reduction of value for that timber it means not paying for much more expensive treatment such as fuels reduction or risking loss of forest ecosystems.
 - 8. Comparing the costs of timber sales to the costs of treatment regimens or the costs of emergency response

such as occurs with wildfire shows that management tools such as timber sales are cost effective way to manage the SBB affected forests.

9. Intent is to use all revenue from timber sales for reforestation projects including the studies and activities needed to support forest management infrastructure.
- b. Grant Exploration
 - i. BLM Fuels Mitigation \$150,000 per application
 1. May include fuel mitigation projects around the Cooper Landing school.
 - c. The main goal in the short term is a new ordinance authorizing forest management. Such an ordinance is needed to allow
 1. Management of any land classification
 2. Broad prescription types
 - d. Other opportunities for public involvement include
 - i. Open houses at the Kenai River Center
 1. March 2, 2022
 2. March 22, 2022
 - ii. CLAPC Meeting
 1. May 4, 2022
 - iii. KPB Planning Commission
 1. May 9, 2022
 2. June 13, 2022
 - iv. KPB Assembly Hearings
 1. May 17, 2022
 2. June 21, 2022
 - v. [More info can be found on slide 26 of the CLAPC Meeting Presentation.pdf in the supporting documents.]
 - e. D. Story asked what the mechanism for public input is once the ordinance authorizing timber sales is passed.
 - i. D. Truitt said adjacent landowners would be notified of timber sales near their properties.
 - ii. D. Story noted that one of the challenges of public notification experienced now is the three-week notification schedule which can effectively bypass public meetings such as the APCs which generally meet once a month or less.
 - iii. D. Truitt emphasized the importance of hiring a forester who provides on the ground accountability for contractors and can support local landowners etc.
 - f. K. Recken asked about the timeline and the need for more public engagement.
 - i. D. Truitt said the focus right now is to stand up the ordinance that will allow for using timber sales as a management tool.
 - g. J. Cadieux asked about the research on forest regeneration and whether fire as a management tool is being considered.

- i. D. Truitt said yes. Much of the research suggests that prescribed fire is the most effective tool for spruce regeneration but the KPB does not have the crew to utilize this tool. She continued saying that partnering with other groups such as the Chugachmiut fire crew or other fire crews is an option.
- h. J. Cadieux mentioned that many of the tracks placed by forest managers result in OHV use. There have been problems of campfires unattended once folks start accessing these forestry tracks thus increasing fire risk.
 - i. D. Truitt said that there are many methods to limit resource destruction from such use. Prescriptions of harvest by ice roads limits direct damage and while making closing and remediating access roads a part of contract obligations are examples of ways to limit such issues.

10. PLAT REVIEW - none

11. INFORMATION and ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Draft Kenai Area Plan Amendment AS 38.04.065 and Draft Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan Amendment AS 41.21.506 for Moose Pass parcel conveyance to KPB. Public comment period open till 2/25/22.

12. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS - none

13. ADJOURNMENT – L. Johnson moves to adjourn, Y. Galbraith seconds. All approve by roll call vote. 7:30pm

For more information or to submit comments please contact:

David Story, Secretary Treasurer or Janette Cadieux, Chair, P.O. Box 694, Cooper Landing, 99572 CooperLandingAPC@gmail.com