



Kenai Peninsula Borough
Planning Department

MEMORANDUM

TO: Wayne Ogle, Assembly President
Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Members

THRU: Charlie Pierce, Borough Mayor 

FROM: Max Best, Planning Director 

DATE: March 1, 2018

RE: School Site Selection – Kachemak Attendance Area

According to KPB 2.40.060, Public buildings and structures, the Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Commission reviewed the revised Kachemak Selo School Site selection during their regularly scheduled February 26, 2018 meeting.

A motion to approve the revision of the School Site Selection – Kachemak Attendance Area passed by unanimous consent.

Attached are the unapproved minutes of the subject portion of the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM I. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. School Site Selection – Kachemak Attendance Area

Memorandum & Staff Report reviewed by Marcus Mueller

PC Meeting: 2/26/18

Back in 2014, the Kachemak Selo School Site Selection Committee evaluated two school sites. The selection committee recommended the site nearest to town to the School Board. In late 2017, staff had looked at maps and spoke with geologists concerning slope stability. Kachemak Selo is located near sea level and the Swift Creek drainage. Above that were Voznesenka and Razdolna which was some 1,000 feet in elevation above. They found evidence of landslides and landslide debris throughout the Swift Creek Valley including right above and under the selected site. From that they looked at the possibility of revising site selection to the other site which was discussed with the community.

MAY 8, 2014 SITE RECOMMENDATION

On May 8, 2014 the School Site Selection Committee made a school site recommendation to the School Board for the Kachemak Attendance Area. The recommended location was within US Survey 1108, approximately 750 feet north of Kachemak Selo Subdivision, and also referred to as the “Yellow Site” or Site #1 on the site evaluation matrix.

NEW FINDINGS & REVISION

A matter of concern has been discovered with respect Site #1 (yellow site), which is believed to be avoided at Site #2 (blue site). Site #1 is positioned in the Swift Creek valley. There is evidence of landslides and landslide debris flows both at Site #1 itself as well as up the Swift Creek valley. This evidence was discovered through a staff level review of high resolution LiDAR topographic information and a review of on-site test hole information in December 2017. The site evaluation matrix has been revised to reflect the close proximity to natural hazards and related potential for soil erosion at Site #1, downgrading each measure to a score of 1 on the evaluation matrix for that site. This revision affects the site scoring and results in rank scoring of Site #1 below the rank-score of Site #2. Site #2 (blue site) now ranks highest on the site evaluation matrix.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AT COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The new findings and resulting proposal to change site selection recommendations were presented at two community meetings held at the Kachemak Selo School on February 7 and February 16, 2018. The alternative of investing into a formal geologic study to better quantify and assess the nature, scope, and periodicity of landslide and debris flow activity was discussed. The added time and expense of a study were of concern. It was additionally recognized that a funding mechanism was not currently in place for such a study. The safety of students over the life of the school was recognized as being of highest importance. Through community review and discussion, a general consensus was reached that revising the recommendation in favor of Site #2 was acceptable to the community.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Site #2 is located approximately 1 mile east of the current elementary school on a moderate sloping terrain. Soil investigation revealed a deep-bedded silty-sand underlain by a hard-pan gravel layer.

Site soils are poor by regional standards but are considered acceptable relative to the locality and are also believed capable of supporting a structural foundation. The terrain includes approximately 8-10 acres of generally useable area including area which may be useful for trails and outdoor education. The southerly facing site is within an open valley field which has views out across scenic Kachemak Bay. No utilities are available at this site and would need to be brought in. A field road runs from the locally maintained light duty road system, which would need to be built up to match local roads having adequate durability for construction activities and local transportation. The location is currently in private ownership and used as hay land. Community representatives indicate support for the borough working with the property owners to secure a school site.

RECOMMENDATION FOR SITE ACQUISITION

Purchase of a school site with improved legal access is recommended. A purchase agreement could take the form of an option to purchase with prerequisite provisions to address access improvement standards, surveying, and title matters, subject to assembly approval and appropriation of funds. The alternative of purchasing a parcel boundary with an unimproved access by paper right-of-way would factor access improvements to other cost centers at a later time.

SELECTION REVISION PROCESS

This site recommendation revision process is using a proxy method that does not involve reconvening the original members of the Site Selection Committee, many of which are no longer active in the same capacities. Instead an administrative lead has been taken through borough staff, in consultation with KPBSD and borough administration. Two community meetings held on Feb 7th & 16th, introduced and vetted the recommendation and received the express support noted. This recommendation is being submitted through the borough's planning commission and assembly to affirm each body's concurrence with the recommendation. These steps are representative of the original site selection committee under the process outlined in KPBSD's Planning Guide for New School Construction (July 2007) and the Department of Education and Early Development's (DEED) Site Selection Criteria and Evaluation Handbook.

END OF MEMORANDUM AND STAFF REPORT

Vice Chairman Ruffner opened the meeting for public comment. Seeing and hearing no one wishing to speak Vice Chairman Ruffner closed the public comment period and opened discussion among the Commission.

Commissioner Isham assumed the population was growing. Mr. Mueller replied that the population was stable. The school population in Kachemak Selo has ranged from a high of 90 students to a low of 60 students. Right now it was around 70 students. Commissioner Isham asked if the increase in population was the justification for this or if it was just for need. Mr. Mueller replied that the justification for the need for this school has to do with the inadequacy of the facilities that are there. They have outlived their useful life.

Commissioner Venuti asked who the borough would be purchasing the land from. Mr. Mueller replied that it would be purchased from private landowners. The name of record was Fred Reutov. From conversations within the village it sounds like there was some extended interest in the property. He stated that they would be working with whoever is associated with the property. They would start by first discussing where the stakes would be placed and what the provisions for access would be.

Commissioner Venuti asked if there was an estimate of what the cost might be. Mr. Mueller replied that there wasn't a good estimate. The numbers that he has been using to buy the 8-10 acres with a road was around \$300,000.

Commissioner Ecklund asked how many people were at the February meetings. Mr. Mueller replied that there were about 8-10 community members who attended the February 7 meeting and 16-20+ people with the borough mayor in attendance at the February 16 meeting.

Commissioner Bentz asked what the elevation was of this site. Mr. Mueller believed it was about 80 feet. Commissioner Bentz asked what the estimate would be for the life of the building for the school. She asked if there was a standard for how long these school buildings are expected to last. Mr. Mueller replied that school buildings are constructed on a 50 year standard but in reality they go longer than that. The current school facility is a renovated house without a good foundation.

Vice Chairman Ruffner asked if they were looking for a recommendation or a motion to support the new site selection. Mr. Mueller replied that they would like a recommendation in support of the memo. Vice Chairman Ruffner asked if this was time sensitive. It sounds like it needs to go on to other bodies and he wasn't sure where the planning commission fits into this process. Mr. Mueller replied that the reason it was coming before the planning commission was that it was in substitution of reconvening the site selection committee. The site selection committee calls for two planning commissioner members, two school board members, two community members, and two staff members. Of that about half of them are no longer in those capacities. He suggested through the memorandum was that the body as a whole consider this.

Vice Chairman Ruffner stated that it was clear now what action staff was requesting. He understood that this was one of the two sites that already went through that whole formal process before but didn't score as high. Yet, now after revisiting it, it moves a little higher because some hazards were associated with the other one. Mr. Mueller replied that was right. He stated that the matrix documents were from the Department of Education's selection criteria process. The two scores for the two sites are really close. Prior to the revision, Site #1 scored two points higher than Site #2. The major difference between the two sites in the original scoring was that the near site was closer to town so the kids could walk there more easily. Site #2 was a better site but cost more because the roads and utilities are installed. There was a convenience preference on the one turns out to have safety concerns and the other site has a higher cost factor that isn't as easy to walk to.

MOTION: Commissioner Ecklund moved, seconded by Commissioner Isham to approve the revision to the School Site Selection – Kachemak Attendance Area.

Commissioner Foster stated that he had some knowledge of this situation and agreed that the original site that was chosen was only nice because it had a real nice flat area. This subject site was by far the best for a school. He thought this was a good choice and supports this revision.

Vice Chairman Ruffner thought there was some funding available but they will need more. He thought the grant money was getting to the end of its life phase given how long this has been going on. Mr. Mueller replied that the funding situation was such that the Department of Education has put up funding in the amount of \$10 million towards this project. The term of that comes up at the end of this year except that there was a bill in the House right now that would extend the term of that funding for two years based on the general economic climate of the State. There is a local match that was required which would be in the amount of \$5.5 million so the borough has to come up with that amount in cash, in kind or however. Current discussion would be to bring a bond proposition in front of the Assembly to go on next October's ballot. The bond proposition would require voter approval which would requires a borough wide proposition. The \$5.5 million comes out to about \$1.50 per \$100,000 on the mill. He stated that it was a wait and see to see if they can bring together all the funding that was needed for this.

Vice Chairman Ruffner asked what the whole financial package might be. Mr. Mueller replied that \$16 million as a total project is what that have to work with. The building size was projected to be 18,000 square feet. He felt that they will put as much square feet out there as possible when the money and the contracting come together. The logistics are difficult as it is a project that will be done by water.

VOTE: The motion passed by unanimous consent.

BENTZ YES	CARLUCCIO YES	ECKLUND YES	ERNST YES	FIKES YES	FOSTER YES	ISHAM YES
LOCKWOOD ABSENT	MARTIN ABSENT	MORGAN YES	RUFFNER YES	VENUTI YES	WHITNEY YES	11 YES 2 ABSENT

AGENDA ITEM J. SUBDIVISION PLAT PUBLIC HEARINGS

Chairman Ecklund reported that the Plat Committee reviewed and conditionally approved four preliminary plats.

AGENDA ITEM K. OTHER/NEW BUSINESS

AGENDA ITEM L. ASSEMBLY COMMENTS - None

AGENDA ITEM M. LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS - None

AGENDA ITEM N. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Best reported the following actions from the last Assembly meeting of February 20, 2018.