

Dear Assembly Members,

Please do not approve **Resolution 2015-034**, reclassifying land off of Griner Avenue for a fire training facility. We fully support the Anchor Point Fire and Emergency Medical Service Area, however we feel this is not a good location. Neighborhood concerns are well documented in the Planning Commission minutes through letters and testimony. A better location may be just before mile 162 of the Sterling Highway. The Borough already owns parcels 16913228 (13.64 acres) and 16913229 (1.4 acres). These lands have good access directly to the Sterling Highway, are fairly flat, and adjoin a large gravel pit. We respectfully request this resolution not be approved, and that the Borough and APFEMS work with the community to identify other potential locations, such as mile 162.

Regards
Ken Swisher



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AGENDA ITEM F. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Proposed Government and Recreational Classifications of approximately 40.00 acres of Borough Land Located in the Anchor Point Area, Pursuant to KPB Code of Ordinances, Chapter 17.10.080.

STAFF REPORT

PC Meeting May 26, 2015

Overview: In 2006 the Anchor Point Fire & Emergency Service Area began searching for land suitable for two tank fill sites and an emergency response training facility. In 2015 a portion of subject land was identified as being suitable for an emergency response training facility.

Pursuant to Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) Code of Ordinances, Chapter 17.10.080(F), the KPB Land Management Division received a petition to classify 13.5 acres± of borough owned land in the Anchor Point area as **Government**. The adjacent 26.5 acres± is proposed for a **Recreational** classification.

Petitioner: Anchor Point Fire & Emergency Service Area. (petition attached)

Description of Borough Land Proposed for Classification: The land proposed for classification is located approximately one mile southeast of Anchor Point at the end of Griner Avenue and more particularly described as the SW¼SW¼, Section 2, T5S, R15W, S.M., Alaska, containing approximately 40.00 acres (KPB Parcel ID No. 169-101-54). See attached map.

Government Classification

The north 450 feet of the SW¼SW¼, Section 2, T5S, R15W, S.M., Alaska containing approximately 13.5 acres.

Recreational Classification

The South 870 feet of the SW¼SW¼, Section 2, T5S, R15W, S.M., Alaska, containing approximately 26.5 acres.

Basis for Proposed Classifications: Classification provides direction for the management of KPB land.

Government Classification

The Anchor Point Fire & Emergency Service Area identified 13.5 acres of land for an emergency response training facility. The scope of training facility includes an emergency apparatus driving course, mobile modular class room with needed amenities, and prop building to include mock searches, ladder training, and live fire exercises. A government classification and subsequent facility will support the current and future needs of the Anchor Point Fire & Emergency Service Area.

Recreational Classification

The adjacent 26.5 acres is proposed to be classified as Recreational. The management intent is to allow low impact recreational opportunities for the community while maintaining the landscape value of the wetland area. A recreational classification will support the management intent for this parcel.

Proposed Classifications:

Government Classification

Government means lands that may be or are required for use by a federal, state or local governmental entity. Such uses include existing and future school sites; sites for service area facilities; or, any governmental use determined to be beneficial to the public.

Recreational Classification

Recreational means land located in an area where the potential for recreational use exists. This may include both indoor and outdoor uses such as gun ranges, archery ranges, camping, golf courses, snow machine trails, cross country trails, skiing, boating, fishing or which may provide access to those activities. Recreational does not include use of lands for amusement parks. Site conditions for any authorized use

must be appropriate and suited for such uses. Recreational lands disposed of to private parties must allow public use unless specifically waived by ordinance. If recreational lands are for sale or lease then restrictions may be imposed for appropriate uses given conditions and surrounding use. Not all activities are suitable for all sites.

Public Notice: Public notice was published in the Homer News, April 23 and 30, 2015. Public notice is sent to all land owners and/or leaseholders within a one-half mile radius of the land proposed to be reclassified, applicable agencies, and interested parties. The notice consists of a cover letter, map, and list of land classification definitions. Written public comments were requested to be returned by 5:00 p.m., May 11, 2015 to be included in the Planning Commission mail-out packets.

Public Comment: As of the writing of this report, fifteen written comments were received and one petition with 26 signatures. All comments were opposed to the proposed classifications. Public comments expressed concern about health and breathing issues for several neighborhood members that require oxygen, noise and air pollution from dust, exhaust, and smoke due to the increased traffic on Griner Avenue and from the firefighting training exercises of the proposed facility, and negative impact to wildlife and the adjacent neighborhood. A copy of all public comments to date is attached. Future comments received by the Planning Department will be presented at the Planning Commission Hearing.

Anchor Point Advisory Planning Commission (APAPC) Review:

The APAPC has not met for more than a year. Currently there is a lack of membership to hold a quorum. As part of a comprehensive planning effort the APAPC conducted several meetings from 2001 to 2003 and on January 11, 2003 the APAPC held a special public meeting and recommended a recreational classification for the entire 40 acres. At that time the recommendation from the KPB Planning Department included consideration for a government classification for a future government/public facility. The comprehensive planning effort was never formalized into a land use plan. Regarding this site's recreational use and potential for a school site, see letter of September 10, 2002 from Joanne Collins, Chair, attached.

Findings of Fact:

1. **Site Inspection:** A site inspection was conducted by KPB staff on March 20, 2015.
2. **Land Status:** In 1982 the Kenai Peninsula Borough received a State Patent for subject land.
3. **Site History:** In 2002 UNOCAL was issued a Temporary Land Use Permit to drill an exploratory gas well known as "J" Pad. At that time UNOCAL also upgraded Griner Avenue for heavy commercial vehicles for access to "J" Pad. Operations were completed the same year without further pursuit. By mutual agreement a 300' x 400' gravel pad remains in place from the exploratory operations. In 2002 a timber sale was conducted for the northern portion of this land and was replanted (Pursuant to Ordinance 2000-50).
4. **Topography:** Subject land is relatively flat. According to the National Wetland Inventory Map, the southern 2/3 of this parcel is classified as "Relict Glacial Lakebed". This wetland is described as shrubby vegetation with small patches of stunted woodland. The northern 1/3 would be considered uplands.
5. **Soil:**
Portion proposed to be classified as Government (North 450 feet of subject land):
35%± of this land is classified as "Qutal Silt Loam", somewhat poorly drained with a depth to water table about 20 to 30 inches, very limited for septic tank absorption and somewhat limited for a small commercial building site.

Portion proposed to be classified as Recreational (South 870 feet of subject land):
65%± of this land is classified as "Starichkof and Doroshin Soils", very poorly drained with a depth to water table at about 0 to 10 inches, very limited for septic tank absorption and very limited for a small commercial building site.

Source Data: Web Soil Survey, provided by the U.S. National Resource Conservation Service.
(Note: Soil information is not site-specific and does not eliminate the need for onsite testing and sampling)

6. Water Table: Nearby well depths range from 37 feet to 85 feet according to the State's Well Log Tracking System (WELTS).
7. Surrounding Land Ownership: Surrounding land ownership includes borough land to the north and west, private land to the south, and state land to the east.
8. Surrounding Land Use: No comprehensive land use plan has been developed for this area. Surrounding land use includes residential and large acreage parcels of undeveloped land. A residential subdivision lies to the northwest and another to the southeast. The subdivisions include single family homes. Parcels adjoining subject land are large acreage parcels of undeveloped land. The State land to the northeast had once been earmarked for an airstrip, however, in 1994 the Department of Transportation indicated they had no plans to build the airstrip (Kenai Area Plan). The southern portion of subject parcel is occasionally used for berry picking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and snow machining but no predominate use has been established. Borough land that borders the west boundary of subject parcel was once recommended for a Residential classification with a Resource Management overlay and borough land that borders the north boundary of subject parcel was once recommended for a Residential and Recreational classification (Anchor Point Advisory Planning Commission minutes of January 11, 2003).
9. Access: Access to this site can be gained from a gravel road along the northerly boundary. This access is the easterly extension of Griner Avenue which the borough granted as a 60ft. wide public right-of-way. Griner Avenue is a borough maintained road. A 50' wide section-line easement exists along the west boundary of this land. Clearings from old seismic lines also cross this land.
10. Utilities: An overhead electric power line crosses the western portion of this land. Electric and telephone utilities are within 600 feet. No other utilities are available at this time.

Analysis:

Analysis for a Proposed Government Classification (North 450 feet of subject land)

Site Selection for an Emergency Response Training Facility

Proposed Site Operations: The scope of training facility includes an emergency apparatus driving course, mobile modular class room with needed amenities, and prop building to include mock searches, ladder training, and live fire exercises (see attached petition for classification and memo of July 17, 2014 from Fire Chief Dycus). This site is also large enough for future facility expansion and with expanded groundwork this site could provide a staging area for temporary housing for "hot shot" crews for an area wide emergency. This site could also facilitate mutual agency training, i.e. Ninilchik Emergency Services, Alaska State Troopers, etc.

Existing Site Characteristics: This portion of subject parcel is approximately 13.5 acres and undeveloped. This site has an existing 300' x 400' gravel pad (2.75 acres) and is adequate area for an emergency apparatus driving course. This site is surrounded by an existing 10ft. high earthen berm that provides a visual screen from adjacent properties. Access to this site can be gained from the extension of Griner Avenue, a borough maintained road. Electric and telephone utilities are within 600 feet.

Proposed Site Location and Surrounding Land Use: This land is located in a rural area and surrounded by large acreage parcels of undeveloped land with one residential subdivision to the northwest. This subdivision includes ten improved parcels that are approximately 1½ to 2 acres with

single family homes. The location of this proposed facility site would allow Anchor Point Fire/EMS to remain in their first response range while training. This location provides a viable nexus to the current Anchor Point Fire Station as it is less than two miles away. Currently the closest prop building for fire training is at the end of the Homer Spit.

Cost of Property Acquisition: Because this land was acquired through the borough's municipal entitlement, there will be no expenditure of funds to purchase this property. The existing gravel pad and the 10ft. high gravel berm that surrounds this site provides additional value to this site at no cost to the borough. The Anchor Point Fire & Emergency Service Area initially pursued an alternative site from a private party at Mile Post 164 but was unable to come to terms due to cost.

Analysis for a Proposed Recreational Classification (South 870 feet of subject land)

KPB staff cites Goal 4.10, Objective 2 of the Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan as being in accordance with the proposed recreational classification which states "To plan for future recreational use of borough land which has recreational value."

This portion of subject parcel is approximately 26.5 acres, undeveloped, located in a rural area, and surrounded by large acreage parcels of undeveloped land with one residential subdivision to the southeast. This subdivision includes six improved parcels that are approximately 5 to 10 acres with single family homes. The public's use of this land has been minimal but includes berry picking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and snow machining. No predominate recreational use has been established. Clearings from old seismic lines are still visible. These clearings provide for "trails" that are used for crossing this land. Such trails have no official status. A recreational classification would be compatible with the surrounding area.

Conclusions:

Proposed Government Classification (North 450 feet of subject land)

Based on the findings of fact and analysis this site has characteristics that would support the proposed site operations for an emergency response training facility and falls within the definition of a government classification. The proposed training facility and operations would be compatible with the surrounding land use as adjoining lands are mostly large acreage parcels of undeveloped land.

Proposed Recreational Classification (South 870 feet of subject land)

Based on the findings of fact and analysis this land has characteristics that would support recreational use. The management intent is to allow low impact recreational opportunities for the community while maintaining the landscape value of the wetland area. Such management would be compatible with the surrounding land use and falls within the definition of a recreational classification.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Based on the findings of fact, analysis, and conclusions, KPB staff recommends that the KPB Planning Commission recommend adoption of the resolution classifying subject land as Government and Recreational as shown on Attachment 'A' of the Resolution.

END OF STAFF REPORT