

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH

Planning Commission/Platting Board Meeting Minutes

7/8/2025

The regular meeting of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Planning Commission/Platting Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 8, 2025 by Chair Jos Govaars, and the roll was called.

CALL TO ORDER - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – ROLL CALL

PRESENT: ARNOLD, D-SVENSON, GOVAARS, GUBATAYAO, MEDFORD, SHAW

ABSENT: GAGE

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Frank Maloney, Associate Planner Alethea Johnson, and Platting/Zoning Clerk Crystal Vail

SPECIAL ORDERS

none

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES – PC Meeting Minutes of June 10, 2025

M/S: SHAW/GUBATAYAO to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2025 Planning Commission meeting as presented.

Upon roll call the vote on the MOTION was:

YES: ARNOLD, GUBATAYAO, MEDFORD, SHAW, D-SVENSON, GOVAARS

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED

CORRESPONDENCE

Two On the Table documents were submitted regarding a zoning violation of a travel trailer being used as a residence on a property located on Yorktown Drive, City of Ketchikan.

Two On the Table documents were submitted regarding Case 25-040.

One On the Table document was submitted regarding Case 25-046.

PERSONS TO BE HEARD

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ PUBLIC HEARINGS

none

NEW BUSINESS/PUBLIC HEARINGS

GOVAARS described the procedures for public hearings and appeals of decisions of the Planning Commission/Platting Board. He read that the agenda was published on July 3, 2025, and hereby entered into the record.

Case 25-046 is a request for a conditional use permit (CUP) to allow a small-scale seafood processing plant to operate on property located at 2535 Tongass Ave, City of Ketchikan

Planner Johnson presented information regarding Case 25-046. Planning staff recommended postponement of this case because of a recent discovery that the property had issues with legal and physical access.

The commissioners had no questions for planning staff.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The applicant's representative, Amanda Welsh, was present. She said she was surprised to learn of the problem with legal access to the lot. She explained the proposed process of the seafood processing and the anticipated hours of operation, including occasional night work on the water side of the building. She stated that the owners were in the process of obtaining permits with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for proper licensing and the City of Ketchikan for wastewater disposal.

Commissioners asked and Ms. Welsh answered questions about the following:

- Odor control – the applicant will follow DEC regulations regarding air filtration and odor control
- The processing will happen indoors, contained in the building.
- It has been recommended to upgrade some lighting to LED bulbs. If the lighting becomes problematic, maybe a shield can be used to direct the lighting.
- There is no plan to use a generator. The current electrical system supports the proposed use. The noise generated from the operation will align with normal harbor sounds.
- The applicant has contacted the local Harbormaster regarding proposed use of the drive down dock.

Chris Parks, General Manager Tongass Trading Co., spoke about the easement that exists on the waterside of the subject property. He explained the problems his business is having with the easement in question. He explained Tongass Trading Co. has two thirds ownership in the easement and Key Bank has one third ownership and they are in a maintenance agreement for their percentage of the easement. The rest belongs to the City of Ketchikan. He said that over time the area has been developed with a larger parking lot, a drive down dock, a tour bus lot and a store front which has increased the traffic substantially. The easement has not held up well to the increased traffic and there are only two property owners that are in an agreement to maintain the road and many more property owners use it heavily along with the public. Tongass Trading Co. has requested that the City of Ketchikan take this area over and make it a city street. The City's proposed circumstances are for Tongass Trading Co. to first fund a project to bring the street up to grade. This is cost-prohibitive for Tongass Trading Co. to take on by themselves. He is asking the City to explore other ways to split the costs between the adjoining property owners. He stated his support for the proposed seafood processing facility if they either entered into the maintenance agreement for a fair percentage or fenced their property and only access it from Tongass Avenue.

D-SVENSON asked and Mr. Parks clarified that Tongass Trading Co. was supportive of the proposed new business if they took part in the maintenance agreement or limited access to a curb cut on Tongass Avenue.

GUBATAYAO asked Mr. Parks how much traffic his business generates. Mr. Parks responded that they generate quite a lot of traffic for their business. He said his concerns about adding businesses in the area increases traffic on an easement that was not designed to withstand a lot of use.

Ms. Welsh returned to the podium and asked the commissioners to consider placing a condition on the approval of a zoning permit to find access to their lot before the permit is granted.

Director Maloney stated his understanding is that the applicant will need to find legal and physical access to their property before any kind of permit should be issued.

M/S: SHAW/GUBATAYAO to adopt Resolution 4522 A

M/S: SHAW/GUBATAYAO to Postpone Case 25-046 until the first Planning Commission meeting of August 2025.

DISCUSSION

MEDFORD wondered if there was any recourse if an odor issue was identified by neighboring property owners. He was concerned about the issue of access and wondered if there were other lots in this area which unknowingly had the same issue of no access.

GUBATAYAO asked if the CUP had to be perpetual.

Planner Johnson explained the option of addressing concerns by placing conditions on the CUP. She explained that granting a CUP for a limited time puts an applicant on a short timeline where there is uncertainty as a business and placing conditions on a CUP allows it to be revoked if the conditions are not met.

Upon roll call the vote on the MOTION to postpone was:

YES: ARNOLD, D-SVENSON, GUBATAYAO, SHAW, MEDFORD, GOVAARS

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED

Case 25-047 is a request for a conditional use permit (CUP) to allow a mobile food vendor to operate on property located at 1101 Tongass Ave, City of Ketchikan

SHAW disclosed his conflict of interest as he is part owner of the applicant's entity. GOVAARS excused him from the public hearing and from taking any action on this agenda item.

Planner Johnson presented information on Case 25-047. Planning staff recommended approval of the CUP.

Commissioners asked and Planner Johnson answered the following questions:

- If the area becomes congested with business and people, the effects will be on the property owner only.
- There are currently two mobile food vendors at the site. One is permitted with a CUP, one is not permitted with a CUP so it can only be operating two or less hours per day.
- Although it is not required, there are no restrooms or running water on site for patrons.

PUBLIC COMMENT

none

M/S: MEDFORD/GUBATAYAO to adopt Resolution 4523 A

DISCUSSION

GOVAARS stated his support for new businesses and he was though there was access to a bathroom nearby.

D-SVENSON stated her support.

GUBATAYAO stated that in one year they could reevaluate because it is a one-year CUP.

Upon roll call the vote on the MOTION was:

YES: GUBATAYAO, D-SVENSON, ARNOLD, MEDFORD, GOVAARS

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED

GOVAARS called for a recess from 6:51 p.m. to 6:53 p.m.

Case 25-040 is a request for a variance to allow an existing residence to remain and encroach into the rear yard setback on property located at 2542 South Tongass Highway, Ketchikan Gateway Borough.

Planner Johnson presented information on Case 25-040. Planning staff recommended approval of the requested variance.

Commissioners asked and planning staff answered questions about the following:

- The letters of opposition don't provide details of why, except that the City of Saxman and Organized Village of Saxman don't support approval of any variances.
- The variance requested is very minor.
- The encroachment doesn't seem to impact any neighboring property.
- A permit was not applied for during construction of the home.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Valerie Stanley, the applicant, was present and explained the timeline for acquiring the property to development of the house in question.

M/S: D-SVENSON/SHAW to adopt Resolution 4524 A.

DISCUSSION

SHAW reiterated his respect for the City of Saxman and the Organized Village of Saxman and stated the minor nature of the encroachment is why he supports granting the variance.

D-SVENSON confirmed that one corner of the building is encroaching, not the whole side of the building.

GUBATAYAO stated it looked as if the placement of the home was in a suitable location.

GOVAARS stated that issues like these are a reason it is important to get an As-Built Survey when beginning building projects.

Upon roll call the vote on the MOTION was:

YES: MEDFORD, SHAW, D-SVENSON, ARNOLD, GUBATAYAO, GOVAARS

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED

Case 25-049 is a request by the City of Ketchikan for an amendment to the zoning code to allow residential use of mobile buildings on construction sites with a one-year Conditional Use Permit (CUP) in the Mobile Building Restricted (MBR) overlay zone within the City of Ketchikan limits.

Planner Johnson presented information on Case 25-049. Planning staff recommended forwarding the Assembly a recommendation of approval of the zoning code amendment.

Commissioners asked and planning staff answered questions about the following:

- Slide in campers for the bed of a truck are not allowed because they do not contain all of the amenities for residential living such as a kitchen or wastewater disposal hook up.
- To expand the options of trailers being used, and potentially include slide in campers, the criteria could be that the trailer has access to proper water, sewer and power.
- The applicant would be required to state how they plan to dispose of wastewater into a Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) approved system.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Chapman, property owner, stated that he is happy to see this amendment moving forward.

M/S: SHAW/MEDFORD to adopt Resolution 4525 A

DISCUSSION

GUBATAYAO stated her support for the amendment, she is glad we are trying to extend the support system so more people may be able to construct a home.

SHAW thanked the City of Ketchikan for submitting the request.

Upon roll call the vote on the MOTION was:

YES: D-SVENSON, GUBATAYAO, MEDFORD, SHAW, GOVAARS, ARNOLD

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED

CONSENT AGENDA

Case 25-043 is a request for a final plat to adjust the property boundaries of Lots 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12, Block 1, Trust Land Survey 2002-3, Berry Patch Subdivision, Ketchikan Recording District; located at the 100 block of Bunchberry Lane, Ketchikan Gateway Borough

Case 25-044 is a request for a final plat with a subdivision variance to create one lot from Lots C 2 And D 2, Block 9, USS 1381, Ketchikan Recording District; located at 615 Pickering Way, City of Ketchikan

M/S: SHAW/GUBATAYAO to approve the Consent Agenda of July 8, 2025

Upon roll call the vote on the MOTION was:

YES: GUBATAYAO, D-SVENSON, ARNOLD, MEDFORD, SHAW, GOVAARS

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED

REGULAR BUSINESS

None

REMARKS

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Maloney reported on the following subjects:

- Comprehensive plan draft has been forwarded to the members of the working group.
- Comprehensive plan draft will be presented to the public for comment on July 14, 2025
- The Board of Adjustment upheld the decisions of the Planning Commission for Case 25-030 and Case 25-031.
- Planning Commission Rules of Procedure are being updated and will come forward in a future work session.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

GUBATAYAO gave a Historic Commission report, including updates to the Pioneer Hall and work to designate the Yates Building as a historic site. The Historic Commission is also working on a memorial for the Aleut population who lived in Ketchikan during World War II.

MEDFORD thanked staff for working on the cases.

D-SVENSON asked about a potential appeal of Case 25-040. She asked if it was an appealable decision because it was such a minor request.

ADJOURNMENT

M/S: SHAW/D-SVENSON moved to adjourn.

With no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.



Jos Govaars, Chair
Planning Commission/Platting Board



Crystal Vail, Platting/ Zoning Clerk
Planning Commission/Platting Board