

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH

Planning Commission/Platting Board Special Meeting Minutes

9/29/2025

The Special Meeting of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Planning Commission/Platting Board was called to order at 5:30 p.m., Monday, September 29, 2025 by Chair Jos Govaars, and the roll was called.

CALL TO ORDER - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: MEDFORD

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Frank Maloney, Associate Planner Talya Stek, Associate Planner Alethea Johnson, Platting/Zoning Clerk Crystal Vail, and Economic Development and Lands Manager Peter Amylon

OTHER PRESENT: Meg Friedenauer (in person) and Holly Smith (via Webex) of Agnew::Beck

CORRESPONDENCE

none

PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Michelle Zerbetz-Scott, citizen of Ketchikan and member of the Pioneers of Alaska, commented on the draft comprehensive plan. She urged the Planning Commission to consider historic preservation and expressed her disappointment over the lack of inclusion and representation of historic preservation in the draft plan.

Connor Pope, executive director at Rendezvous Senior Day Services, commented that he saw only a small sample size of non-profit organizations involved in the comprehensive plan process. He expressed his hope for more non-profit groups to be involved.

Kathleen Light, director of the Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council, expressed that a large portion of the non-profit sector did not get the notifications that the meetings during this process were happening. She mentioned that people may have been thinking about the landslide and may have missed the notices. She commented on the lack of inclusion of the arts community and organizing the sections better, an example is not including housing in the “quality of life” section because it has it’s own chapter. She pointed out that the public review draft had various math and spelling errors.

Nina Hopps, citizen of Ketchikan, commented that the updated version still has errors, including the misnaming of places in Ketchikan. She was feeling as if this version was incomplete. She mentioned that meeting the deadline is less important than fixing the errors.

Stephen Reeve, citizen of Ketchikan, stated he appreciated the background work that went in to creating the new draft plan but the plan lacks solutions. He gave the tourism section as an example of lacking solutions.

GUBATAYAO and D-SVENSON asked questions to Mr. Reeve about the Tourism Strategy Plan and the process of the Comprehensive Plan being a “living” document. Mr. Reeve answered that he understood that the Tourism Strategy was a separate document and that his opinion was that the Comprehensive Plan needs a better definition of the future that Ketchikan wants.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Work Session to Discuss the Recommended Revisions to the Public Review Draft of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough 2035 Comprehensive Plan

M/S: SHAW/GUBATAYAO to enter into work session to receive a presentation from staff and hold a discussion on the public comments and recommended changes to the draft of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough 2035 Comprehensive Plan

DISCUSSION

none

Upon roll call the vote on the MOTION was:

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

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED

The Planning Commission entered work session at 5:54 p.m.

Talya Stek, Associate Planner, introduced Meg and Holly of Agnew::Beck and stated she had been the point person for the Comprehensive Plan Update process. She has been receiving comments, creating social media outreach and working with groups and the contractors to get to the stage of the public review draft.

Director Maloney presented information regarding the process thus far and reviewed the timeline. He stated that although the draft was imperfect, that is part of the process. The point of the public review draft is to garner further comments and cause another revision before a public hearing. His presentation and questions from Commissioners included information on:

- The Comprehensive Plan is visionary, and the Strategic Plan is the action plan
- Typically, a Comprehensive Plan is created before a Strategic Plan.
- The Comprehensive Plan is a living document that can be updated if conditions change.
- The partnership items in the Tourism Strategy have not been able to be implemented and need to be revisited.
- The Planning Commission will recommend which actions to implement.

Meg Friedenauer and Holly Smith presented information on the Comprehensive Plan process including a working schedule to finalize and adopt the plan. The commissioners asked questions and they answered regarding:

- Summary of comments; how many were received, how they were organized and incorporated into the draft plan.

- Technical Improvements and Corrections; consistency, corrections and usability were considered in the draft plan.
- Proposed substantive revisions in the areas of Style and Design, Implementation language and recommended revisions to each topic area. GAGE requested adding language to the transportation chapter to support ADA transportation to and from the airport. SHAW requested adding a strategy to incorporate an emergency transportation plan to move people around the island in circumstances similar to the landslide where the main road was shut down. D-SVENSON requested assurance that any place names added to the maps are historic to our area.

The work session took a recess from 6:52 p.m. to 7:02 p.m.

Upon resuming the work session, Meg Friedenauer and Holly Smith continued their presentation and held discussion with the commissioners on the following subjects:

- Balancing quality of life and the economic development of tourism
- SHAW requested there be a specific acknowledgement of how nonprofit organizations add to local economic stability.
- Commissioners expressed mixed opinions that the Culture, Wellness and Education chapter should be changed to Quality of Life.
- SHAW suggested strengthening the language regarding consolidation of Borough and City governments. Meg gave an example of how it could be written and provided a counter point for the commissioners to consider which included speaking to the City before placing the strategy in the draft. After more discussion, the consensus of the commission was to revise the strategy to explore government consolidation.
- Moving forward, the suggestions and requests for edits will be incorporated into a Public Hearing Draft that can be set for review from the public at a future meeting. During the public hearing it can be edited if needed and then forwarded to the Assembly for their adoption process.
- SHAW requested to ask Peter Amylon questions about the Strategic Plan. Peter answered that the Strategic Plan was developed by the current Borough Manager. The Borough's Annual Policy Session includes an update to the Strategic Plan. Commissioners clarified that the Comprehensive Plan is the vision and framework for future development and growth of the community, and the Strategic Plan identifies the action that can be taken to accomplish the vision.

The work session ended at 8:12 p.m.

Upon exiting the work session, the commissioners considered the following motions:

M/S: SHAW/D-SVENSON to split the Quality-of-Life chapter into two chapters 1) Health and Wellness and 2) Culture and Education

DISCUSSION

GOVAARS clarified that the proposed motion would create 2 chapters and asked if that is reasonable to the contractors. Meg answered that it was possible.

SHAW commented that being able to spread out the non-profit sector into multiple sections encompasses how important it is to key parts of the community.

GAGE commented that Quality of Life spans a wide range of subjects.

Upon roll call the vote on the MOTION was:

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

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED

Associate Planner Stek asked the commission for direction on when to set the public hearing for the next draft.

M/S: SHAW/D-SVENSON to hold a special meeting of the planning commission on October 28th, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. for the purposes of a public hearing of the draft Comprehensive Plan.

DISCUSSION

D-SVENSON asked if this was a regular meeting date, she commented that she thinks a year is sufficient time for the public to review and be involved in the process.

Commissioners discussed that moving forward with the timeline and making sure the public has enough review time is important.

Upon roll call the vote on the MOTION was:

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

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED

REMARKS

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Maloney remarked that this process is going just like it is supposed to, the remarks, reflections and suggestions are all supposed to happen and is part of the process of finalizing the plan.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

ARNOLD commented that he wished that the representatives from other groups involved will show up to the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

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

With no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Jos Govaars, Chair
Planning Commission/Platting Board

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