



Petersburg Borough

12 South Nordic Drive
Petersburg, AK 99833

Meeting Minutes Planning Commission Regular Meeting

Tuesday, May 12, 2026

12:00 PM

Assembly Chambers

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:00PM.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT

Commission Chair Chris Fry
Commission Vice-Chair Heather O'Neil
Commission Secretary Sarah Fine-Walsh
Commissioner Joshua Adams
Commissioner Thomas Kowalske

ABSENT

Commissioner Mika Cline

Commission Chair Fry excused Commissioner Cline from this meeting.

3. Acceptance of Agenda

The agenda was accepted as presented.

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil.

Voting Yea: Commission Chair Fry, Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil, Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Commissioner Adams, Commissioner Kowalske

4. Approval of Minutes

A. April 20, 2026, Meeting Minutes

The April 20, 2026, Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved.

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil.

Voting Yea: Commission Chair Fry, Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil, Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Commissioner Adams, Commissioner Kowalske

5. Public Comments

None

6. Consent Calendar

- A. Acceptance and scheduling of an application from Suzanne Webb for a conditional use permit for a home occupation at 500 Unimak St.

Accepted as public hearing item for the June 9, 2026, meeting.

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil.

Voting Yea: Commission Chair Fry, Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil, Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Commissioner Adams, Commissioner Kowalske

7. Public Hearing Items

- A. Consideration of an application from Brian and Carol Kandoll for a variance from the side yard setback requirement to rebuild a shop with covered deck approximately 6' from the property line.

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil.

Commissioner Adams said this sounds straightforward to him.

Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh stated the variance criteria is persuasive, the concrete foundation is already in place and predated the current setback standards. It would be a burden to have to change the concrete foundation. She stated the reasons are persuasive and the variance should be approved.

Voting Yea: Commission Chair Fry, Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil, Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Commissioner Adams, Commissioner Kowalske

8. Non-Agenda Items

- A. Commissioner Comments

- Tower overlay
 - Sample Overlay Ordinance
- Data center

The Commission reviewed multiple proposed tower locations both within and outside Service Area One to consider designated communication tower overlay zones and discussed the most effective approach for drafting an ordinance.

Myrl Hammer spoke on her own behalf, bringing attention to towers by water sources. She stated that water absorbs and reflects radio frequency and could have unintended ecological consequences.

Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh started the discussion regarding drafting an ordinance for data centers, expressing a preference to allow only small-scale, edge, closed-loop facilities and to limit the Borough to a single data center at any given time.

Commission Chair Fry suggested that, rather than capping the number of facilities, it may be more effective to define limitations based on power consumption.

The Commission discussed data centers, including considerations related to water usage, power consumption, waste disposal, heating and cooling systems.

Director Cabrera spoke to say the Power & Light department is working to draft an ordinance to address the power issues.

Commissioner Kowalske shared his thoughts on towers, what he has learned recently and safety concerns.

The Commission discussed tower monitoring and who is responsible for such.

David Beebe spoke on his own behalf, discussing the capture of waste heat and providing additional information related to health studies.

Susan Martinez spoke on her own behalf regarding closed-loop data center systems and their significant water consumption. She expressed concerns regarding system flushing and how the waste will be disposed of. She also expressed her thoughts on AI.

Judy Ohmer spoke on her own behalf, expressing a desire to see noise restrictions implemented for data centers.

B. Staff Comments

- Zoning Practice

Director Cabrera mentioned there will be a meeting in June and asked if there would be a quorum. The Commission agreed, they would attend.

C. Next Meeting is June 9, 2026

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:42PM.

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil.

Voting Yea: Commission Chair Fry, Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil, Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Commissioner Adams, Commissioner Kowalske