



Petersburg Borough

12 South Nordic Drive
Petersburg, AK 99833

Meeting Minutes Planning Commission Regular Meeting

Tuesday, August 11, 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 Mika Cline
Commissioner Thomas Kowalske

ABSENT

Commissioner Joshua Adams
Commissioner Jim Floyd

Commission Chair Fry excused Commissioner Adams from this meeting.

3. Acceptance of Agenda

Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh moved to amend the agenda to add a discussion item under Commissioner Comments regarding comments to the Borough Assembly about a previous Commission decision that has been appealed to the Assembly. Seconded by Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil.

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

Motion was approved as amended.

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commissioner Cline.

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

4. Approval of Minutes

A. Meeting Minutes 7/14/2026

The July 14, 2026, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commissioner Cline.

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

5. Public Comments

Kirsten Dupree spoke on her own behalf regarding the proposed cell tower overlay zoning. She asked what steps a homeowner would need to take if the overlay included their property and whether the proposal would be subject to a public vote. Commission Chair Fry explained that the map is currently a proposal intended to identify potential cell tower zoning overlay locations. The goal is to develop the proposal further and gather public feedback. He noted that the designated areas were identified by the Commission as potentially suitable locations for towers, but public input is needed before any decisions are made. Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil explained that the property owner has a right to not sell or lease to a tower. If you are within the overlay boundary you have a right as a property owner to say no.

Mary Evens speaking for herself asked the Commission to pause the data center process to allow time for due diligence and community discussion.

Becky Knight representing herself spoke regarding the data center ordinance. She has concern regarding privacy and data breach. She urged the Commission to authorize a moratorium on all such centers until the community can develop policies on them.

David Bebbe spoke representing himself regarding the telecom tower ordinance.

6. Consent Calendar

None

7. Public Hearing Items

- A. Consideration of an application from Wes Davis and Ken Howard for a minor subdivision at 1004 and 1006 N NORDIC DR (PID: 01-002-230/229).

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commissioner Kowalske.

Commissioner Kowalske mentioned the minor adjustment with this subdivision and he has no opposition.

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

- B. Recommendation to the Borough Assembly regarding an application for a special use permit from Kito's LLC dba Kito's Public House at 200 CHIEF JOHN LOTT ST (PID: 01-007-382).

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commissioner Cline.

Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh noted that the 1992 approved special use permit was non-transferable and since the business sold, the new owner must get a special use permit for themselves. She sees no reason to deny it.

Commission Chair Fry mentioned it's an existing use and sees no problem with it.

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

- C. Consideration of an application from Aaron Buller and Rachel Welde for a variance from the front yard setback requirement at 705 HAUGEN DR (PID: 01-006-836).

Aaron Buller owner of 705 Haugen Drive spoke representing himself. He submitted a building permit originally with the intension of building the stairs on the side of the building but later realized it would impede on the privacy of the tenant with windows facing the stairs. He changed the plans to move the stairs to the front of the building which requires a variance.

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commissioner Cline.

Commissioner Kowalske questioned the parking. Aaron Buller responded that there would not be any parking in front in the stairwell. They have already made parking on the right side of the building as well as a driveway on the 8th street side.

An amendment to the motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh amending resolution 2026-803 to change references of one-foot to seven foot.

All in favor.

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

An amendment to the motion by made Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh amending resolution 2026-803 to include Finding 4. The seven-foot encroachment would not be problematic if no parking is allowed in front of the staircase that could encroach onto the sidewalk.

All in favor.

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

Voting on original motion as amended.

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

- D. Consideration of an application from David Thynes (agent) for a minor subdivision at 1206 and 1208 N NORDIC DRIVE (PID: 01-002-202/200).

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commissioner Cline.

Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh mentioned this seems straightforward and is in favor of this.

Commissioner Kowalske hasn't heard any opposition.

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

8. Non-Agenda Items

A. Commissioner Comments

1. Communications Facility Overlay Ordinance

Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh appreciated Kirsten Dupree comments regarding the cell tower overlay zoning. She is fine with reducing the size of those parcels to give more of a setback to residences.

The Commission discussed the proposed ordinance.

2. Data Center Ordinance

Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh requested that a moratorium on data centers be placed on next month's meeting agenda as an action item.

3. Comments to the Borough Assembly regarding a previous Commission decision that has been appealed to the Assembly

Commissioner Cline stated that the Title Network motion did not receive a second at the previous Planning Commission meeting and is now being appealed to the Assembly. She asked whether the Commission could submit comments to the Assembly supporting the Commission's decision, explaining the basis for that decision, and requesting that the decision be upheld.

Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh with help from the Commission drafted a letter to be submitted to the Borough Assembly.

Motion made by Commission Secretary Cline, Seconded by Commissioner Fine-Walsh.

All in favor.

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

B. Staff Comments

Zoning Practice

Director Liz Cabrera stated there will be a meeting in September.

C. Next Meeting is September 8, 2026

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:18PM.

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commissioner Kowalske.

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