



Petersburg Borough

12 South Nordic Drive
Petersburg, AK 99833

Meeting Minutes Planning Commission Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 13, 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
Commissioner Marietta Davis
Commission Secretary Sarah Fine-Walsh
Commissioner Joshua Adams
Commissioner Mika Cline

ABSENT

Commissioner John Jensen

Commission Chair Fry Excused Commissioner Davis from the past 2 meetings, Commissioner Jensen from the past two meetings as well as himself from the previous meeting.

3. Acceptance of Agenda

Commission Chair Fry mentioned public hearing item A. Consideration of an application from Central Council Tlingit Haida for a minor subdivision at 1200 Haugen Drive will be postponed to the March meeting because of a presentation they will be doing in February to answer questions.

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

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

The agenda was accepted as amended.

Motion to made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh

All in Favor Voting Yea: Commission Chair Fry, Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil, Commissioner Davis, Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Commissioner Adams, Commissioner Cline

4. Approval of Minutes

- A. December 9, 2025, meeting minutes

The December 9, 2025, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

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

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

5. Public Comments

None

6. Consent Calendar

None

7. Public Hearing Items

- A. Consideration of an application from Central Council Tlingit Haida for a minor subdivision at 1200 Haugen Drive (PID: 01-012-010).

Postponed to March meeting

- B. Recommendation to the Borough Assembly regarding a vacation of a portion of the North 9th Street right-of-way.

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

Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh mentioned the staff findings were persuasive and consistent with comments from adjacent landowners that this would be beneficial to them.

Commission Chair Fry and Commissioner Adams agreed that this seems straightforward.

Lizzy Thompson spoke confirming that she submitted the vacation application. She also stated that she, Harold Medalen, and Craig Curtis are interested in purchasing the property; however, the other neighboring party is not interested.

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

C. Recommendation to the Borough Assembly regarding a rezone of a proposed lease lot at the end of Dock St. from un-zoned to Industrial with Marine Industrial overlay. (PID: 00-000-000)

Harbormaster Glorianne Wollen spoke in support of recommending the rezone to the Borough Assembly.

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

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

D. Recommendation to the Borough Assembly to pursue a land exchange with Tidal Networks for the Rory Rd property for publicly owned land for the purpose of relocating a planned communications equipment tower to a lower impact area, such as the shooting range.

Greg Browning resident of Papke's spoke on behalf of himself in support of the land exchange. He does not want to see a tower in his neighborhood.

Tom Kowalske spoke representing himself, he is in support of a land exchange to relocate the planned tower.

Judy Ohmer spoke representing herself as well as the 230 residents who have signed a statement of concern regarding the location of towers. She encouraged the Planning Commission to pass this recommendation to the Borough Assembly.

Sarah Holmgram spoke representing herself as well as being a real estate business owner in town. She would like to see the Planning Commission recommend to the Borough Assembly a land swap. From a real estate point of view, towers will hamper people in that vicinity from selling their property.

Rebecca Knight spoke representing herself with concerns regarding tower locations. She is in favor of a land exchange.

Nicole McMurren spoke representing herself, she is curious why we are working so hard to accommodate something that she's not hearing a groundswell of support for.

John Murgas spoke representing himself. He commended the Kvernvik's for their well written letter in the packet. He would like to see towers in alternate locations.

David Beebe spoke representing himself. He spoke of his past experience on the Planning Commission and founding principles and meaning of government, of the people, for the people and by the people. He urged the Commission to table this resolution (minor subdivision) for reasons of abandoning ethics in violation of the public trust.

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

A proposed amendment to the motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh to add language to the recommendation at the end of the sentence - such as the shooting range or the Borough owned land on the Falls Creek Road past the mill.

Director Liz Cabrera mentioned the Borough doesn't own that land, it's State owned.

Proposed amendment to the motion receives no second.

A proposed amendment to the motion made by Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil to recommend to the Borough Assembly they look into acquiring from the State some land at Falls Creek that would suffice for an alternative location of the Papkes tower. Seconded by Commissioner Adams.

Discussion.

Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil made an amendment to the amendment to Recommend to the Borough Assembly to pursue a land exchange with Tidal Networks for the Rory Rd property for publicly owned land for the purpose of relocating a planned communications equipment tower to a lower impact area. Seconded by Commissioner Secretary Fine-Walsh.

Voting on the amendment to the amendment Yea: Commission Chair Fry, Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil, Commissioner Davis, Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Commissioner Adams, Commissioner Cline.

Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh further made an amendment to the amendment to remove the words "publicly owned" from the recommendation. Seconded by Vice Chair O'Neil.

Voting on the amendment to the amendment:

A Recommendation to the Borough Assembly to pursue a land exchange with Tidal Networks for the Rory Rd property for land for the purpose of relocating a planned communications equipment tower to a lower impact area.

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

Voting on the motion as amended.

A Recommendation to the Borough Assembly to pursue a land exchange with Tidal Networks for the Rory Rd property for land for the purpose of relocating a planned communications equipment tower to a lower impact area.

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

8. Non-Agenda Items

A. Commissioner Comments

- Continuation of discussion on recommendation to Borough Assembly regarding Wireless Communication Facilities

Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil read into record a proposal for an actionable item for next month's agenda. The proposal would change and add language to ordinances 19.44.020, 19.32.020, 10.36.020 dealing with principal permitted uses to add line items titled "Communication Equipment, Commercial Wireless Communications Facilities, Broadband and 5G, 6G.

Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh stated that the Commission is working on a proposal for zoning changes. The current Borough code is pre cell phone and does not contemplate communication towers. She encouraged the community to give feedback and comments.

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

Commission Chair Fry spoke to say that the Commission is barred from making decisions based on the potential health risks of any transmitter by the federal government.

Commissioner discussion.

Jackie Tyson spoke representing herself she has concerns about the tower planned to be constructed by her home at Papkes.

Greg Browning spoke representing himself. He questioned how a second service area would work as far as Papkes lack of service and the taxation change.

Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh spoke to say what folks are looking for is a new service area not an extension of service area 1, because it would affect taxes and building codes.

Judy Ohmer spoke on behalf of herself mentioning during a Borough Assembly meeting, they were talking about a new service area 2 being created and the manager said it would take 3 years.

Tom Kowalske spoke representing himself referring to documents he gathered from the Environmental Health Trust along with Children's Health Defense sued the FCC and won. He encouraged the Commission to read the decision.

Emergency Services Director Aaron Hankins spoke to say, currently, as far as he is aware the building official, fire marshal, nor Police officers have jurisdiction outside of service area 1.

Commissioner Discussion.

Scott Newman representing himself he encouraged the Commissioners to not use the Borough of Haines ordinance as a starting point but to look at other communities' ordinances like Juneau who have two attorneys on staff at every meeting.

Nicole McMurren spoke on her own behalf with concerns that Tlingit and Haida has not proven the need. In attempt to serve the loudness of the community, we are trying to do something very large too quickly.

Tara Lucas spoke representing herself she feels we are being cornered by the towers and likes the idea of the alternative cables.

Discussion.

Commission Chair Fry called a special meeting January 23, 2026, from 10AM - 12:00PM in the Assembly Chambers to discuss initiation of an amendment to Title 19, Zoning, to address Wireless Communication Facilities.

Voting on the original motion Nay: Commission Chair Fry, Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil, Commissioner Davis, Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Commissioner Adams, Commissioner Cline

Commissioner Adams spoke regarding his idea of reducing parking mandate from 2 vehicles per unit to 1 vehicle per unit. He also spoke regarding creating a historical commission that is already in Borough code.

B. Staff Comments

- December Zoning Practice

C. Next Meeting is February 10, 2026.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:20PM.

Motion made by Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Seconded by Commissioner Cline. Voting Yea: Commission Chair Fry, Commission Vice-Chair O'Neil, Commissioner Davis, Commission Secretary Fine-Walsh, Commissioner Adams, Commissioner Cline