Planning Powers for Alaska Communities

EXERCISING PLANNING POWERS

The responsibilities of the council or Assembly, planning commission and planning and land use authorities can be summarized in the following roles of authority in the local planning process for communities with planning powers.

- Establish a planning commission which shall provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and public input on the development of the comprehensive plan.
- Adopt a comprehensive plan
- Periodically review the comprehensive plan
- Administer and enforce the comprehensive plan

City Council or Borough Assembly shall be the only entity with the authority to adopt plans for an entire community.

Exhibit 1: One of a series of exhibits that illustrate the comprehensive planning process.

COMPROMISE PLANNING

It is impossible to plan for a community as a whole without considering the interests of individuals and groups who will be affected by any plan. The planning authority should take into account the interests of all those who will be affected by any plan.

- Identify the key issues that need to be addressed in the planning process.
- Work with the community to develop a comprehensive plan that meets the needs of all stakeholders.
- Implement the plan through appropriate land use regulations and development standards.

LAW IN USE REGULATIONS

Laws are regulations that are used to implement the comprehensive plan. The laws that are adopted by the Alaska Planning Commission are:

- Zoning ordinances: Zoning ordinances that are intended to control the use of land and regulate the density of development.
- Subdivision regulations: Subdivision regulations that control the development of new subdivisions.
- Tree preservation ordinances: Tree preservation ordinances that are intended to protect the existing tree canopy.

AUTHORITY

Planners and planning authorities have the authority to establish planning and land use regulations consistent with the comprehensive plan.

- Interagency agreements with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, among others.
- Land use restrictions, including the protection of wetlands, forests, and other natural resources.
- Development standards, including setback and lot size requirements.

Glossary of Planning Terminology

- Land use regulations: Land use regulations are rules that govern the use of land and are adopted by the planning authority.
- Comprehensive plan: The comprehensive plan is a document that outlines the vision for the future of the community and is adopted by the planning authority.

- Planning powers: Planning powers are the authority to plan and control land use in a community.

- Alaska Municipal Planning Law: The Alaska Municipal Planning Law is a state law that establishes the planning powers of municipalities in Alaska.

- Planning Commission: The planning commission is an advisory body that provides recommendations to the planning authority.

- Planning and land use regulations: Planning and land use regulations are rules that govern the use of land and are adopted by the planning authority.

- Planning authority: The planning authority is the entity that has the authority to plan and control land use in a community.

- Planning and community development: Planning and community development is the process of planning and developing communities in a way that promotes the well-being of all residents.

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