



Photo by Nils Hahn

DON'T COME TOO CLOSE— A herd of musk ox stays close together to protect newborn baby musk ox from potential danger.

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Questions dog "Z" planners

By Sandra L. Medearis

Local musher Kirsten Bey, one of only a half dozen people taking the opportunity to review the Nome Planning Commission's show-and-tell zoning display at Old St. Joe's, received assurance that no matter in what zone she had her kennel presently, that use would be grandfathered in as a nonconforming use. The new zoning plan, stemming from a state-ordered land use plan approved by the City in 2005, will not outlaw property use already in progress, even a nonconforming business, unless the owner or operator abandons that use for two years.

"We are interested in existing businesses, promoting them, even allowing expansion to an adjacent

lot that the person already owns," Eileen Bechtol said. "Current uses that do not conform to the new districts can continue." Bechtol is a professional planner contracted by the City for the zoning effort and other land use tasks. But Bey's follow up question along with queries from Alaska Gold Co. land manager Nikolai Ivanoff signaled that the planning panel has yet more work to do on the thoroughly hashed-over zoning plan.

How the grandfathered use was recorded and verified, Bey wanted to know. Bey could get affidavits from her neighbors or take dated photos with a digital camera, Bechtol offered, but also said the

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NJUS shovels stay in the shed

By Sandra Medearis

While East Front Street is blocked off this summer for state transportation crews to iron out the spine-jarring waves and troughs, there will not be a lot of disruption or dirt piles on other streets, because Nome Joint Utility System has cancelled the summer's water and sewer upgrade projects.

The reasons for shovels staying in storage are multifold, but generally involve money. NJUS is still attempting to resolve issues with funding agencies for work last summer involving reimbursement for projects. Add that to state Department of Environmental Conservation changing the scope of work planned for this summer in reducing the work they were willing

to fund from \$2.7 million to \$1 million flat.

Because of these two dollar issues, NJUS is left without sufficient matching money for other funding. Additionally, a lot of equipment that NJUS would be able to rent in other years has been tied up with mining construction at Rock Creek.

The capper is that NJUS staff has found deficiencies in some of the pipe received last year for continued upgrade work, a problem that has to be worked out with the vendor and their supplier.

"We are not going to put questionable pipe in the ground," the utility's manager, John Handeland, said Monday.

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LEPC coordinator gives SERC wake up call

By Diana Haecker

During a recent Alaska State Emergency Response Commission Association meeting in Anchorage, Nome's Local Emergency Planning Commission coordinator Charlene Saclamana unveiled deficiencies in Alaska State regulations dealing with requirements to report hazardous chemical storage and transportation.

In the light of large amounts of

hazardous chemicals and explosive components stored at the Alaska Gold Company's staging area at Satellite Field, Saclamana took issue with the lax reporting requirements by state regulators. Lax in the sense that mining facilities are exempt from submitting Tier 2 reports to local emergency services. Also, Tier 2 reports only have to be updated once a year.

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Photo by Diana Haecker
SPILL— A dust control liquid called EnviroKleen was spilled after vandals broke the valves of the 250-gallon totes stored at the Kawerak lot at Seppala Drive. The area was secured, but the liquid further spilled into the city's sewer system after a load of sand was dumped on the spill puddle.

Vandals spill dust control liquid

By Diana Haecker

Vandals broke into two containers filled with a road dust suppressant liquid called EnviroKleen and caused a 550-gallon spill of it on a Kawerak-owned lot on Seppala Drive across from the Kawerak Inc. office building.

Four white plastic totes filled with EnviroKleen are sitting on the gravel lot and were waiting to be spread on Nome roads by Kawerak to keep the dust down. But sometime between the weekend and Wednesday, vandals came along and broke into two of the white plastic containers. An accident can be ruled out since the oily fluid only escaped after the nozzle was tempered with, the cap removed, the valve opened and a seal punctured.

According to the material safety data sheet, the substance is not hazardous. The liquid is used on gravel roads to keep the dust down.

Nome building and maintenance inspector Pat Hahn noticed

the spill on Wednesday, June 13, at lunchtime. "I noticed that the liquid had spread to the road and notified the police," said Hahn.

The spill had been reported to NPD a day before, but a wrong address was given and the police didn't find the actual site. When the police responded on Wednesday, the officers used NPD's spill response manual. "They went down the check list and soon found soon that it wasn't a hazardous spill," said Hahn.

The Department of Environmental Conservation was notified immediately and a DEC field agent, in Nome on different business, came to take a look at the spill of the harmless fluid. Hahn said that he and the city manager send a formal letter to Kawerak with the request to clean it up.

The cleanup effort, however, gave Hahn more chagrin as he noticed that sand dumped onto the puddle only resulted in the fluid being spread to the road and ultimately pushed into the gutter.

"Most of the product went down the sewer drain," Hahn said. "Once it's in the sewer, it's totally out of our control," said Hahn. The MSD sheet cautions to keep spills out of sewers or open bodies of water, as it is insoluble in water.

A press release from the Nome Police Department said that one 250-gallon tote costs \$15,000. Kawerak's engineer and transportation director Sean McKnight said the spill amounted to 550 gallons, but that the loss in dollar amounts hasn't been finalized yet. Kawerak bought 95 totes of the liquid for village dust control and kept four totes to put on Nome streets in addition to the city's dust control with 20 tons of a cheaper dust control product, calcium chloride.

The police ask the public for help and if anyone has information to call NPD at 443-5262 or the crime line at 443-7804.

•”Z” Planners

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planning group would look at the issue. The new zoning district plan will not allow new dog kennels in general use, residential, commercial or open space districts. New kennels can occur in industrial or resource development districts with NPC permission as a conditional use.

Following up on dogs, Cari Miller noted that nothing in the plan addresses where mushers can run dog trails.

“That’s a private property issue,” Bechtol said.

Bechtol has been working with the Nome’s Planning panel for over two years as they have diligently worked in meeting after meeting, work session after work session for many hours on the zoning issue to come up with zoning maps, zoning districts, permitted and conditional uses and grandfathered use rules. The maps have shading and hatch marks to carry out the NPC’s stated aims in drawing up the zones: public health and safety; safeguarding property values, creating uniform regulations for all, reducing nuisances and saving land for desirable future use. In illustration, bulk fuel storage can be possible in industrial or resource development areas. New correctional facilities can operate only in general use, commercial or resource development districts and only then with NPC approval. And good but curious news for many of us collectors: outdoor storage, including junk, as an accessory use to any permitted or conditional use in the district is OK in all districts except resource development (needs NPC permission) and open recreational space where it is totally outlawed.

Pat Booth of Icy View attended the open house, had read the plan and had this to say on that subject: “I think the plan is fine except that it is going to allow private residences to continue to have junk. The City gives people a chance once a year during Clean Up Week to have junk hauled away free. There is no reason for people to have their own private monofills and dumps in their yards. That clause needs some work.”

The plan says that the non-commercial storage of junk in a residential area cannot pose a public safety, nuisance or a hazard. And, the old adage applied, Commissioner Charlie Weiss said Monday. “People have a tendency to want to store things they think will have a use in the future, say an old snow-machine for parts, that look like junk to other people. We’re not prohibiting that, but you can’t have a commercial junkyard in residential zones.”

The plan divides Nome and its surrounding areas into seven districts: general use, residential, commercial, industrial, resource development (mining) and open space recreation. Each zone has OK permitted uses and conditional uses. A

person wanting to establish a conditional use must fill out an application, come to Nome Planning Commission, hat in hand to receive a yea or nay after a public hearing. Additionally, zone districts have uses that are outlawed outright.

For example, in residential districts, single family, multiple family, duplex and mobile home residences are permitted. However, residential use of an upper floor above industrial use is conditional and acquires NPC approval, but on premise dwelling for an owner or caretaker of a commercial use is permitted. In a general use district, all the preceding are permitted. Moving to the commercial district column, all the preceding dwelling uses are conditional and require NPC approval process except dwelling on the premise of a commercial use for an owner or caretaker.

Alaska Gold Co. is a large landowner with much of its holdings falling into the resource development districts. Ivanoff has come to the NPC meetings frequently to exercise his interest in overseeing the planning process to point out where the company does not plan to mine and discuss whether certain Alaska Gold sections would better serve future uses after mining for residential areas, bicycle trails or parks if designated residential or general use. Planners wanted to get it right and welcome public input they said, because when the plan went into law at the end of the year or sooner, changes would not be made easily, most probably needing attorneys on both sides for land use changes.

NPC has explained the plan on radio and selected members of the panel have presented at Nome Rotary and Nome Chamber of Commerce. Commissioner Charlie Weiss attended the show at Old St. Joe’s to answer questions.

The commission presented the 54-page plan at a joint work session with Nome Common Council on June 14 following June 13’s come-one, come-all open house at Old St. Joe’s. Only councilwomen Mary Knodel and Mary Bourdon attended. Councilmen Randy Pomeranz and Stan Andersen did not attend. Councilman Jerald Brown was present, as he is also a member of NPC. Councilman Jon Larson was out of town. Knodel had read the packet and made several comments.

Interested people have until June 30 to send comments to City of Nome, members of NPC, or Bechtol in Homer. The zone plan will be slated to go to the Council for formal approval at the end of the summer, early fall.

Send comments to the City at Box 281 or deputy@ci.nome.ak.us

Bechtol can be reached at bechtol@pobox.xyz.net.

Planning commission members are Chairwoman Irene Anderson, Jim Adams, Jerald Brown, Gregg Smith, Tom Sparks and Charlie

Weiss. Zoning maps are available online at <http://www.nomealaska.org>

Bechtol praised the members of the planning commission, saying, “I have always felt that planners are true public servants.”

And in Nome, they are, receiving only a small stipend for their services, unlike Council members who receive health insurance paid up for themselves and their families along with state retirement credit to read packets, attend meetings prepared and discuss issues in open public process, in addition to a stipend. The late attorney Bryan Timbers served on the commission and worked on preceding coastal and land use planning as well as on the zone plan.

“I don’t think we could have done it without Bryan,” Bechtol said.

After discussions on how to delineate boundaries in areas where there are no streets, NPC decided to call on Bristol Engineering of Anchorage to draw up a map that will include lines along legal mining claims.

•NJUS

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The funding for the sewer and water is the smaller problem NJUS and its board is facing this summer, as they continue to make the rounds on state and federal piggy banks to fund the burgeoning costs of the new Snake River power generation plant, now at \$30 million, more than twice the projected cost at ground breaking.

Several months ago the utility needed about \$5 million to finish the project, against which they received \$1.7 million through legislation, still to be signed off by Gov. Sarah Palin.

NJUS has additional requests in to Denali commission for \$2.25 million and is waiting for a grant announcement from the federal USDA High Energy Cost Community Program for which Nome easily qualifies.

In the meantime, the board has mulled over funding sources for the interim.

The utility can extend its line of credit at the bank, which would have an interest rate of 6.5 percent

or take out a loan from DEC at 1.5 percent. The potential there is \$3 million from the drinking water fund for work at the pump house part of the power house upgrade plus \$1.5 million from the clean water fund to compensate for 2004 work on water and sewer upgrades to the airport. Taking the 1.5 percent loan from DEC would seem obvious, but the board has been resisting for several reasons.

With the DEC money in the hopper, the Denali Commission might think there was no need for additional money, that the utility was fat. Utility ratepayers could end up paying for the loan in that case.

“If we sign on the dotted line, we had better have (the grant money) lined up,” board member Berda Wilson said. “I want to have our eyes wide open to what the long term effect is. I think if we go with this loan we will stay with this loan.”

“The board was stymied. “How the hell else are we going to pay for it?” board chair Jim West, Jr.

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NSEDC to keep valuable assets in agreement to dissolve Norton Sound Ventures

By Laurie McNicholas

Last week Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation’s board of directors approved a negotiated agreement to dissolve Norton Sound Ventures, an NSEDC subsidiary, and divide its assets among its owners. NSEDC owns 59.52 percent of NSV. Individuals based in Washington State own the remainder through various corporations and partnerships. The NSV’s assets include large fishing vessels used to harvest a variety of species in the Bering Sea and rights to harvest specific percentage amounts (quotas) of crab.

The board also approved development of a management agreement with Rip Carlton to manage part of NSEDC’s crab quota and with the Poulsen group to manage the remainder, reports Chief Executive Officer Eugene Asicksik. He said Carlton formerly served as skipper of vessels owned by NSV.

The board’s approval of the NSV agreement at a special meeting June 11 in Nome brought closer to conclusion a process that began in late July 2006 when the board decided to dismantle NSEDC’s investment management subsidiary, Norton Sound Investment Corp. For the previous five years, NSIC had held NSEDC’s investments in Glacier Fish Company and NSV, along with other holdings and investment accounts. The board also decided in July 2006 not to renew a contractual agreement with Steve Rieger to manage NSIC and its assets.

•NJUS

continued from page 4 asked.

The utility is in a fix on increased costs for power plant construction because while they had to slow down work waiting for funding to squeak through, the price of steel, copper, cement and even transportation shot into the ozone. While material orders waited on his desk, vendors changed their prices and would not honor original quotes, Handeland said.

Research of studies done by construction organizations in Alaska bears out the astronomical increase in materials, due in part to the high cost of fuel and increased energy costs for production.

The loan from DEC was on the agenda for Tuesday’s regular NJUS board meeting.

There was some good news Monday. NovaGold was in the process of signing a compact that day to pay \$3 million for NJUS to extend heavy-duty transmission and distribution lines to Rock Creek for a potential 10-megawatt draw. Large purchases of power will help defray fixed costs for NJU consumers. The work would start the next day after the contract arrived from Fairbanks, Handeland said.

Rieger subsequently was hired by the board on a temporary basis to help negotiate a dissolution agreement among all partners in NSV. He and Asicksik met with the principal Seattle members on May 22 in Seattle and presented a proposed agreement to the executive committee of NSEDC’s board on May 24. Because the corporation’s bylaws require approval by the full board of directors for transactions of more than \$1 million, the board met June 11 in Nome to consider the proposed agreement. Rieger described highlights of the agreement, emphasizing that it would not become final until all parties had approved a version that incorporates any future changes.

“If you count all that NSEDC put into NSV and got out of it, the value of the investment has approximately tripled, so it was a good investment,” Rieger stated. He said the largest NSV assets in the proposed agreement are the crab quota share (rights to harvest specific percent-

ages of the crab in several offshore Bering Sea fisheries) and next is the cod freezer-longliner *Glacier Bay*. He noted that the proposed transaction also has NSEDC ending up owning the vessel *Aleutian No. 1*. “They are the premium vessels of those NSV either owned in part or had access to,” Rieger emphasized.

Asicksik said if the agreement is finalized, NSEDC will own 70 percent of *Glacier Bay*—45 percent directly, and another 25 percent indirectly through the corporation’s 50 percent ownership of Glacier Fish Company.

A part of the proposed agreement calling for NSEDC to buy out 50 percent interest in the *Pacific Star* generated the most concern at the meeting. Jon Zuck said it is his impression that the *Pacific Star* is not very effective as a crab vessel. Zuck serves as harvest manager of NSEDC’s community development quota of various Bering Sea fisheries. Asked by board chairman Dan Harrelson of White Mountain

to identify the biggest risks in the proposed agreement, Asicksik said he has the most concern about the purchase of the *Pacific Star*. Rieger explained that the price for the vessel and its crab quota is reasonable in the context of the entire negotiation, the vessel can be leased or offered for sale, and the crab quota that comes with it has value and can be leased.

Rip Carlton described the *Pacific Star* as a Cadillac among crab vessels, but noted that it drinks a lot of fuel. Board members Joe Garnie of Teller and Walter Seetot of Brevig Mission expressed concern about the vessel’s fuel consumption in a time of high fuel prices. Don Stiles of Nome said he is leaning toward approving the dissolution agreement and deciding on the issue of the *Pacific Star* later. Dean Peterson of Golovin expressed concern about timelines in reaching a dissolution agreement before Bering Sea fisheries open in August.

Noting that NSEDC may not be

interested in acquiring two other vessels owned by NSV, the *Ocean Olympic* and *Alaska Beauty*, Rieger said if none of the partners want to buy them, they can be offered for public sale and all partners can split the proceeds. He said the one-page summary of the proposed agreement provided to each board member reflects the spirit of the agreement reached at the Seattle meeting.

The board approved the proposed NSV dissolution agreement by a vote of 11 to two. Seetot and Harvey Sookiayak of Shaktoolik voted against the agreement. Absent from the meeting were Paul Ivanoff of Unalakleet and Sam Mokiyuk of Savoonga.

Following the meeting, Asicksik and Rieger reviewed highlights of the agreement with this reporter and clarified comments they made during the meeting. Their explanations are reflected in this story.

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26	A&E	59
27	Turner Classic Movies	44
28	ESPN	34
29	ESPN2	35
30	Lifetime	23
31	Spike TV	38
32	TV Land	45
33	Nickelodeon	50
34	The Learning Channel	55
35	MSNBC	66
36	CNBC	65
37	The Weather Channel	71
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June 18 through
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Tournament

Tuesday, June 26
7 p.m.

Polar vs BOT (N)
Polaris Bar vs Luck Shot
Natives (S)

8:30 p.m.

Polar vs BOT (N)
AMI vs Breakers (S)

Wednesday, June 27
7 p.m.

Subway vs Breakers (N)
MC Hammers vs Bering
Air (S)

8:30 p.m.

Outsiders vs BOT (N)
Luck Shot Natives vs
Breakers (S)