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**CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
RESOLUTION NO. 2001-02**

A RESOLUTION OF THE SEWARD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION, PROVIDING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL REGARDING THE JESSE LEE HOME PROPERTY

WHEREAS, in 1995 the City of Seward filed a foreclosure action on the Jesse Lee Home property (Lots 15A and 15B, Jesse Lee Heights Subdivision Addition No. 4) for unpaid assessments and associated penalties and interest. Following that, the City and the property owner entered into a settlement agreement that would have discharged the property assessments if restoration and redevelopment of the historic structures on the property were completed. That agreement expired on September 30, 2000, the restoration and redevelopment of the Jesse Lee Home has not been accomplished, and the City is now in a position to complete the foreclosure process and obtain the property; and

WHEREAS, the Kenai Peninsula Borough has also initiated foreclosure on the Jesse Lee Home property for delinquent property taxes; and

WHEREAS, the Jesse Lee Home for Children was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995 for the critical role it played in serving the health care and educational needs of Alaska's native children orphaned during a wave of devastating epidemics, and because the home fostered many children who have distinguished themselves in a wide variety of fields; and

WHEREAS, John Ben (Benny) Benson Jr. designed Alaska's flag while residing at the Jesse Lee Home, and the site was honored as the location for the first official raising of the Alaska state flag on July 9, 1927; and

WHEREAS, the Jesse Lee Home, which opened as an orphanage in 1926, has remained vacant, and abandoned since 1965. The two remaining structures are in poor condition, and a 1999 report, prepared by Nelson M. Franklin, PE, of Franklin & Associates Consulting Engineers, on the condition of the buildings stated that the structures should be considered unstable; and

WHEREAS, the Jesse Lee Home has been consistently cited by Seward residents as a high priority for historic preservation, however, many residents also feel its salvation is beyond the scope of a small community, and that its status as a state historic treasure and home of the Alaska flag design should be recognized; and

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WHEREAS, the State Legislature has introduced a bill which would enable the State to acquire the Jesse Lee Home property, and manage it in a way that recognizes its contribution to the State's history; and

WHEREAS, the Seward Historic Preservation Plan recommends that the City continue to monitor the status of the Jesse Lee Home and support efforts to save it, and the City Strategic Plan encourages the recognition, rehabilitation and preservation of historic sites and buildings; and

WHEREAS, the property is currently zoned multi-family residential which allows for a wide variety of uses including: single and multi-family housing, hotels and motels, nursing and retirement housing, senior and teen centers, and schools.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Seward Planning and Zoning Commission that:

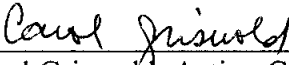
Section 1. The Seward Planning and Zoning Commission hereby recommends that the City Council complete the foreclosure process and obtain a Clerk's Deed for the Jesse Lee Home property which includes Lots 15A and 15B, Jesse Lee Heights Subdivision Addition No. 4.

Section 2. The Commission further recommends that the City: (i) Continue to support the concept of State ownership of the Jesse Lee Home property; (ii) Acknowledge the historical significance of the Jesse Lee Home, and work to save the remaining structures if possible; (iii) Attempt to obtain grant funding for engineering and environmental studies on the property in order to gain a better understanding of the condition of the property; and (iv) further evaluate potential uses for the property in order to make a determination as to whether there is a public use for the property, or potential for public/private partnerships.

Section 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Seward Planning and Zoning Commission this 6th day of March, 2001.

THE CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA




Carol Griswold, Acting Chairman

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AYES: Griswold, Hohl, Keil, Larson, Sterling
NOES: None
ABSENT: Martin, Smith
ABSTAIN: None

ATTEST:



Patrick Reilly, City Clerk

