Fishing Group Wants Gear Shop On Near Island

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Casey Kelly/KMXT

A group of local fishermen are looking to construct a warehouse and gear shop on Near Island. But the project hinges on the city council approving the sale of property to them. KMXT’s Casey Kelly has more.

Boat owner Jay Stinson is leading a group that wants to buy a lot on Near Island, on the same road as the Near Island Research Center and the Kodiak Fisheries Industrial Technology Center. At last week’s city council meeting, Stinson said the property would house a warehouse and possibly a retail space for fishermen looking to mend nets and repair gear.

(Stinson 1 :39s “…professional help if need be.”)

Stinson said new rules since September 11th have made it harder for fishermen to find good places to do gear work. He said a facility like the one he’s proposing would benefit Kodiak’s economy.

(Stinson 2 :28s “…operations in Dutch Harbor.”)

But Councilman Charlie Davidson, who has opposed development projects on Near Island in the past, wondered if the property was zoned for the type of work that Stinson and his partners are planning. Stinson told the council that this was a good location that would fit in well with the surrounding buildings and landscape.

(Stinson 3 :46s “…and design of the property.”)

But Davidson remained unconvinced.

(Davidson 1 :47s “…would be more appropriate.”)

Councilman Tom Walters said he didn’t see a problem with putting a warehouse there. He said Kodiak is a fishing community, and he supports anything that keeps it that way.

(Walters 1 :35s “…and zoning, let ‘em build it.”)

Councilman Terry Haines, a fisherman, agreed with Walters.

(Haines 1 :40s “…I would support this.”)

The ordinance passed in the first reading by a 4 to 1 vote with Davidson the only no vote. Next month the council will take it up in second reading and hold a public hearing. If it passes then, the sale of the property will be approved.

The property, which is about 24-thousand square feet, has been appraised at 4 dollars 25 cents per square foot. City Manager Linda Freed says it is zoned commercial.

I’m Casey Kelly.

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