

Session 21-09, a Regular Meeting of the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Catherine Ulmer at 5:01 p.m. on September 22, 2021 in the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall located at 491 E Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS ULMER, ERICKSON, MATTHEWS, SIEKANIEC, PITZMAN (arrived at 5:40 p.m.) AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE STONOROV

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS ZIMMERMAN AND ZEISET (both excused)

STAFF: PORT DIRECTOR/HARBORMASTER HAWKINS
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY

AGENDA APPROVAL

Vice Chair Ulmer asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

ERICKSON/MATTHEWS MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

Commissioner Matthews clarified with staff if the order of backup items under New Business, Item A: PHC Bylaw Amendments was correct.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. August 25, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Ulmer asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

SIEKANIEC/ERICKSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Port & Harbor Staff Report for September 2021

Port Director Hawkins spoke to his written staff report and responded to questions regarding the following topics:

- Meeting with Senator Lisa Murkowski and Abbie Lyons to request their support of the Port Expansion project and getting the Corps of Engineers to start the general investigation, which requires authorization and funding.
- Planning meetings with Homer Marine Trades Association for the upcoming Seattle Pacific Marine Expo.
- Status of land leasee Brad Faulkner; he is now current on his outstanding balances and has a subleasee that wants to make improvements to the lot.
- Completed setup of new handheld radios, repeater, and registered channel using grant funding from last year.
- Incident where coal deposits on the beach caught fire.
- Petro Marine staffing issues that kept the second fuel dock closed most of the season.

B. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

Port Director Hawkins gave a verbal report that HMTA held a round-haul meeting at Bayweld that comprised of the organizers.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- A. PHC Bylaw Amendments
- i. DRAFT PHC Bylaws
 - ii. Current PHC Bylaws – Adopted June 28, 2021

Vice Chair Ulmer introduced the agenda item by reading the title.

At the request of Commissioner Matthews, Deputy City Clerk Tussey read through the draft bylaws section-by-section explaining what had changed and the reasons for the proposed amendments. She pointed out which sections were due to the new City Code amendment for boards and commissions, specifically the revisions to teleconferencing, attendance, and vacancies, and what were general housekeeping updates. Ms. Tussey explained how bylaws require two readings, so a motion would be needed to introduce the amendments and then the commission would hold a final reading and approve them at their next meeting.

MATTHEWS/ERICKSON MOVED TO HOLD A SECOND READING ON THE PROPOSED PORT AND HARBOR ADVISORY COMMISSION BYLAW AMENDMENTS AT THE OCTOBER 27TH REGULAR MEETING.

Commissioner Matthews inquired with staff on if the PHC's bylaws should include a business plan for the Harbor Enterprise. Deputy City Clerk Tussey explained the purpose of the bylaws for the commission as an advisory body to City Council, and their strategic plan and goals would be a more appropriate document for a plan of that nature.

There was discussion between the commissioners, Ms. Tussey, and Port Director Hawkins on how the harbor's Standard Operating Procedures are primarily for City staff and that the PHC's Strategic Plan is the most appropriate document. Ms. Tussey used the Economic Development Advisory Commission's strategic plan as an example of how the PHC's Strategic Plan can be revamped to be more comprehensive similar to, but not be, a business plan. She reminded the commission that while they are connected to a department that operates as an enterprise, they themselves do not act as a business since the commission's role is advisory to a municipal government body.

Discussion continued on clarifying the process of how City Council provides direction to the commission.

VOTE: YES: ULMER, ERICKSON, SIEKANIEC, MATTHEWS

Motion carried.

Commissioner Pitzman arrived at 5:40 p.m.

- B. Spit Parking Plan
- i. HDL Memo Re: DRAFT Homer Spit Parking Study Phase 1 – South Side of Harbor

Vice Chair Ulmer introduced the agenda item by reading the title and opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioners shared their input on the HDL Spit parking study with Port Director Hawkins. The following comments were made and discussed:

- Majority of the paved parking recommendations would have a 10-year return of investment; this was calculated based on the last three years of parking lot occupancy.
- Questions on how the percentage of occupancy for selected parking lots was calculated; some of the commissioners did not agree with the capacity amounts as they seemed too low, and since those percentages are being used to calculate the projected income we could be paying off the improvements sooner.
- Comparing what Seward and Whittier do for parking; commissioners voiced support of similarly establishing vehicle size limits for some of the lots where RV's can take up more than one spot and block in other vehicles (which has been a problem), and the parking fees Homer charges are half the price of the other towns.
- Paving and impervious surfaces versus gravel lots in regards to storm water management:
 - A storm water plan for paving the lots is not required but we would need to deal with it.
 - The study does not get into details about how to deal with the drainage dip that goes along the roadway (which many people get hung up on) but a plan would be made on where to direct water if underground infrastructure was installed.

- A vegetative swell, which works as a filter for working towards the harbor, would be acceptable over using devices like a filtered drain and underground infrastructure.
- Clarifying that the current lots are not true “gravel” lots; they are completely unimproved Spit cobble and sand. Any plans to improve the lots into gravel lots would create a good surface that could be maintained.
- With 44% of our parking happening in the State Right-of-Way (ROW), it’s important to be having conversations with the Alaska Department of Transportation (ADOT) on how we can set up the ROW areas for parking use.
- Request that HDL look into which lots would be best for RV-only parking.
- Justification for the number of pay-to-park pedestals if we were going to use the pay-by-phone option.
- Project prioritization: implementing paid parking at the current lots, followed by improving the lots with gravel (particularly Lots 9 and 10 and new parking areas) because it would get paid back faster, then later improving all the parking lots by paving them.
- Clarification on what parking fees could constitute as revenue, and what would need to be set aside for parking lot improvements; not all of the theoretical parking fees would be considered revenue to the enterprise and would ADOT allow some of those funds to be used for parking enforcement.
- If turning the lot that’s currently used for dredging material staging into a new parking lot would cause issues; Mr. Hawkins explained how that lot would no longer be available in their contract and that they would be able to put the dredged materials directly onto the beach. Concerns were raised on it impeding into the shipyard haul-out during the shoulder seasons.

MATTHEWS/ERICKSON MOVED TO FORWARD THIS PARKING STUDY TO CITY COUNCIL WITH THE REQUEST FOR DIRECTION TO STAFF TO DEVELOP A PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION WITH ADOT&PF TO ADDRESS PARKING IN THE ROW, EXPLORING RESTRICTIONS, AND USES FOR ROW PARKING FUNDS.

Commissioner Matthews explained her reasoning for the motion; City Council had voiced interest in seeing the results of the parking study and her thought was to share the preliminary parking plan with the request for direction so they as an advisory body know what their next request would be of Council.

Commissioner Siekaniec inquired if they wanted to wait until the final plan was done before sending it to Council. Mr. Hawkins suggested that they wait, that the final draft would include their comments from tonight, and once the final draft is in front of Council there may still be more work to do. In response to Commissioner Matthews’ question, Mr. Hawkins clarified that there was not funding left for further revisions after additional input is received after Council.

Commissioner Erickson asked why the 30 Acres area was excluded from the study. Mr. Hawkins responded that there were not enough funds to include that in the study but that it’s a good question; do we want to pull that into the study as well? He opined that focusing on just the south side may lead to an impact on the north side. Commissioner Siekaniec commented that a study may not be needed for the other side since they could just do the parking study for the one side and then implement many of the same changes to the other side.

Commissioner Ulmer suggested more paid motorhome parking.

Commissioner Siekaniec commented that he did not see a reason to wait then, because if City Council has some comments too and it all requires money then he doesn't think it matter on when it goes to Council, unless there's major changes coming.

Commissioner Matthews requested that HDL clarify where they came up with those occupancy percentages before the information gets sent over to City Council.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey explained the next steps in the process. Port and Harbor staff would write a memo to accompany the meeting minutes (which includes all of their comments) to be backup materials to the draft parking study. Commissioner Matthews reiterated her intention behind the motion was if we need to ask Council to direct staff to do something next, it could be done through this process and voiced in the memo to Council.

VOTE: YES: SIEKANIEC, ULMER, ERICKSON, PITZMAN, MATTHEWS

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Student Representative Appointment Info for Hannah Stonorov
- B. Port & Harbor Monthly Statistical Report for August 2021
- C. Water/Sewer Bills Report for August 2021
- D. Crane & Ice Report
- E. Dock Activity Report
- F. PHC 2021 Meeting Calendar

Vice Chair Ulmer opened the floor for discussion on the informational materials. She welcomed new Student Representative Stonorov and asked her to share any questions or comments if she had them.

There was brief discussion with Port Director Hawkins regarding the statistics and water usage. Vice Chair Ulmer agreed to follow up with Commissioner Zeiset to see if he'd be available to give the report, otherwise she would attend. Commissioner Matthews agreed to give the October/November report. Deputy City Clerk Tussey clarified that with their last bylaw amendment their regular meeting in December will be on the 8th, not the 22nd.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Port Director Hawkins commented that he will follow back up with Senator Murkowski's office and Corps of Engineers staff regarding keeping the pressure on support for the Port Expansion project. He spoke to the recent boatyard activity and current status on the derelict vessel North Pacific. At Commissioner Siekaniec's request, Mr. Hawkins explained how the Port and Harbor makes money off of haul-outs in the boat yard area.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey commented that the City Code amendment the PHC reviewed at their last meeting was approved by City Council. She reminded the commission to report any absences or needs to attend via Zoom to the Clerk's Office no later than two hours prior to a meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Student Representative Stonorov thanked the commission for having her and letting her listen in. She hopes to have comments at the next meeting.

Commissioner Siekaniec thanked everyone.

Commissioner Pitzman apologized for running late.

Commissioner Matthews spoke to her recent progress on determining if the harbor would be eligible for some of the economic improvement grants that are coming down the pipeline through the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD). Discussion ensued between the commissioners and staff on potentially holding a worksession in the following weeks to meet with Tim Dillon with KPEDD and what the worksession would entail. Commissioners voiced their interest in learning more about funding opportunities and that they would be available the evenings of October 4th or 5th.

Commissioner Erickson had no further comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Vice Chair Ulmer adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 27, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. and is scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.



RACHEL TUSSEY, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: October 27, 2021