

CALL TO ORDER

Session 24-09 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:08 p.m. on May 13, 2025 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS AREVALO, ISAAK, NOOMAH, YOUNG, MARKS, DICKINSON, ZUBEK

STAFF: MAYOR LORD, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ENGBRETSSEN & DEPUTY CITY CLERK APPEL

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Marks requested a motion and second to approve the agenda as presented.

ISAAK/AREVALO MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

A. EDC Unapproved Minutes of March 11th & April 08, 2025 Regular Meeting

Chair Marks requested a motion and second to approve the meeting minutes.

ISAAK/NOOMAH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 11TH & APRIL 08TH MEETING MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. EDC Staff Report

Community Development Associate McDonough reported on the following:

- Attended the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Industry Overview Forum in Kenai
- Comprehensive Plan update
- Zoning Code update
- KPEDD is updating their Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Volunteered at the Kenai Peninsula Sport Rec and Trade Show
- Completed a grant application for Bridge Creek Watershed

B. Chamber Director Report
There was no report provided.

C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report
Meeting minutes were provided. There was no discussion.

D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report
Chair Marks stated the Executive Director went before City Council and presented a full report and data. She encouraged Commissioners to access the KPEDD website and look at the data that was presented.

E. HERC Update
Community Development Director Engebretsen stated there is a public meeting scheduled next week. Contractors will be doing soil and lead testing in the big building. The State of Alaska will be supporting the City further when looking into remediating the building. There is more focus being put on the smaller building as it's currently unsafe for public use.

F. Housing/Guiding Growth Update
Commissioner Noomah spoke about the following topics discussed during a community meeting on April 29th:

- Balancing the needs to preserve open spaces while still meeting needs for housing
- Brief presentation on GIS technology
- Use of technology in planning and preserving spaces
- Benefits of density in town core areas
- Need for more public open spaces in town

G. Planning Update
There was no update provided.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Commission Priorities Discussion with Mayor Lord

Mayor Lord spoke on the following topics:

- Making good use of time and resources
- Utilizing current plans and action items as a touchstone
- Every Advisory Body should be using an economic business lens
- Other Advisory Bodies have direct ties to their designated scope- LAB for Library, Port and Harbor for Port and Harbor, etc.
- Condensing and identifying priorities to advise Council
- Strategic planning list
- Communication between Council and Commission, Council Member Liaison

- Joint session bringing all advisory bodies and Council together in one room
- Important points/recommendations should come to Council in memo from Staff Liaison

B. New Community Center Discussion

Community Development Director Engebretsen introduced the discussion topic regarding the preferred location for the new Community Rec Center. The Commission brought up points including the following:

- Clarifying why this location is considered 'preferred'
- Possible use as a long term catalyst for spurring other development
- Utility set up cost
- Environmental Groups- Current wetlands in that location
- Staying above the tsunami line
- Proposed programming, amenities, etc
- Land could serve a better/different purpose
- Doesn't allow for more development downtown for businesses

C. Annual Bylaw Review

The Commission determined there were no needed changes to the Bylaws.

D. Election of Chair & Vice Chair

ISAAK/DICKINSON MOVED TO VOTE VERBALLY.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

ISAAK NOMINATED COMMISSIONER YOUNG FOR VICE CHAIR.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

COMMISSIONER MARKS NOMINATED HERSELF FOR CHAIR.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

A. City Manager's Report

March 24, 2025 City Council Meeting

Chair Marks noted the informational materials. Chair Marks volunteered to deliver the May report to City Council.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Community Development Director Engebretsen said it was a great meeting and she appreciates everyone's open and honest comments, whether the Commission agrees or not.

Deputy City Clerk Appel thanked the Commission for the meeting and stated the June 10th meeting would be her last time clerking for the EDC.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCIL MEMBER (If Present)

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Dickinson stated she is resigning from the Commission due to time constraints.

Commissioner Young thanked the clerk and Commissioner Dickinson for their service. He also thanked Commissioner Isaak for the nomination and stated he is grateful for the opportunity to serve as Vice Chair.

Commissioner Isaak thanked the clerk and Commissioner Dickinson for their service. She stated she is excited for Commissioner Young to serve as Vice Chair. She also commented that she is really appreciative of the comments everyone contributes during the meetings.

Commissioner Arevalo commented that she likes the robust conversations and the Commission will miss Commissioner Dickinson.

Commissioner Zubek commented that she is leaving this meeting reinvigorated and excited to be part of the Commission. She congratulated Commissioners Young and Marks on their appointments to Vice Chair and Chair and stated that she will miss Commissioner Dickinson.

Commissioner Noomah stated he is grateful to everyone and that he also wanted to bring up that he thinks Homer has a little bit of a land hoarding problem and he thinks that adjusting incentives in the future is going to be really important for getting people to let go of some land they've just been sitting on.

Chair Marks commented that Commissioner Noomah's observation was interesting and she thinks if Homer can get a lion's share of people to say that it's ok to be in favor of some economic growth in a responsible way, then the city can focus on development and promoting a positive view.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, June 10, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers and via Zoom Webinar.

ASHLEY APPEL, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I

Approved: _____