

Session 21-07, a Regular Meeting of the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Steve Zimmerman at 6:00 p.m. on July 28, 2021 in the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall located at 491 E Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS ZIMMERMAN, ZEISET, MATTHEWS, ULMER, ERICKSON, AND PITZMAN

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER SIEKANIEC (excused)

STAFF: PORT DIRECTOR/HARBORMASTER HAWKINS
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY
SPECIAL PROJECTS & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR CARROLL

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Zimmerman asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

ULMER/ZEISET MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 23, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Zimmerman asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

ULMER/ZEISET MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Port & Harbor Staff Report for July 2021

Port Director Hawkins spoke to his written staff report, noting the following topics:

- Meetings with Interchem broker regarding another Sulphur shipment; likely to take place in 2022 after some organizational setbacks.
- Updates to the marine terminal operator license and Federal Maritime Commission status.
- Introduction to Offstreet Parking's company software; an update to the pay kiosks to help track parking permits as the harbor expands pay-to-park on the Spit.
- Project planning to bring natural gas into the City-leased building currently occupied by Sea Tow and the City's water tank storage.
- Logistic meetings with Berard Transportation, a company hired to take apart the Agrium plant in Nikiski and transport it to Louisiana.
- Large number of tourists and high levels of activity on the Spit.
- Mobile billboard messaging by the Load and Launch Ramp providing information and warnings on the China Poot Bay tide rips due to recent accidents and fatalities; this is part of a multi-agency messaging effort.
- Upcoming repairs to failing pilings and concrete finger floats with Bellingham Marine; the docks are to the point where they either need to be fixed or condemned, and won't last another year.
- Change in the cleaning schedule of the condenser screens at the Ice Plant.
- Request for an update on the lobbyist's efforts.
- Purpose for closing the road shoulders to parking with pilings; it's against state law to park in the right-of-ways and it is a pedestrian hazard.
- Status on the new pay-to-park in the Ramp 2 lot; concerns were raised about the lack of notification to employees and issues with access; Mr. Hawkins said they've received a large amount of positive feedback, full compliance, and there are still some unloading spaces.
- Update on jet ski use in the harbor; Mr. Hawkins noted they complied with all loading and launching rules and did not receive any complaints or reports of negative impact.
- Reports of vehicle break-ins and theft near the Southcentral Radar and A Bus Named Sue restaurant; was likely reported directly to HPD rather than through Harbor Operations; usefulness of cameras that are installed, while not located in every spot of the Spit.

B. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

Commissioner Zeiset provided a verbal report. Bayweld Boats is planning to host a "Poker Run" on the water August 14th where boats have to access different locations throughout the bay, and then meet back at their shop for a gathering. Local radio ads are playing that support the port expansion project. Port Director Hawkins added that the HMTA needs to renew that radio ad.

In response to Chair Zimmerman's question, Mr. Zeiset stated that HMTA does plan on attending the Fish Expo in person this November 18-20th. He encouraged attendance and volunteerism at the booth.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- A. City of Homer Draft 2022-27 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
 - i. DRAFT 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Plan
 - ii. “Everything You Always Wanted to Know about the CIP” FAQs
 - iii. CIP Project Nomination Form

Chair Zimmerman introduced the agenda item by reading the title and deferred to Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll.

Ms. Carroll reviewed what the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is, the process for providing feedback to her and City Council, and what action staff is requesting from the commission at this meeting.

Port Director Hawkins commented on legislative requests and voiced his suggestions for project prioritization. He then referred to the list of Port and Harbor-specific projects in the CIP and suggested removing the Truck Loading Facility Upgrades at Fish Dock project, his hesitation on using the word “replacement” in regards to the Wood Grid project since it’s getting to the point of being beyond repair, and adding Steel Grid Improvement project.

In response to Commissioner Pitzman’s question, Mr. Hawkins clarified the importance of having items on the list and why they don’t need to be in order of priority.

Commissioner Matthews inquired if a communications and public safety project could be added for the installation of new cameras for the harbor. Mr. Hawkins and Ms. Carroll explained the existing public safety components in the CIP, how none are geared towards the harbor specifically, and requested clarification on what Ms. Matthews’ suggestion would entail. Ms. Matthews shared real-life emergency and theft scenarios where having cameras in various parts of the harbor, such as near the Load and Launch Ramp, the parking lots, beach areas, and boardwalks would have been immensely helpful.

Ms. Carroll noted that the CIP structure may change in the near future as departments set up their budgets to align with a capital budget. This would later lead to projects being prioritized for the use of reserve funds, and projects like the one suggested by Ms. Matthews would fit into that.

There was brief discussion between staff and commissioners regarding action to be taken.

ULMER/MATTHEWS MOVED TO RECOMMEND PORT OF HOMER: NEW LARGE VESSEL HARBOR PHASE 2 AS OUR #1, AND BARGE MOORING & LARGE VESSEL HAUL OUT REPAIR FACILITY AS OUR #2 FOR THE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY PROJECTS.

Commissioner Pitzman questioned if the suggestion to remove the Storm Water Master Plan needed to be included in the motion. Chair Zimmerman noted that their priority sections would just move to the top, displacing that project as a priority.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

MATTHEWS/ULMER MOVED TO RECOMMEND WE REMOVE THE TRUCK LOADING FACILITY UPGRADES FROM THE CIP AS RECOMMENDED BY PORT DIRECTOR HAWKINS.

Chair Zimmerman asked if there was any discussion or whether the commission wanted to add anything to that motion.

PITZMAN/ZEISET MOVED TO AMEND TO ADD THE STEEL GRID REPAIR PROJECT TO THE CIP.

There was no discussion.

VOTE (amendment): NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE (main motion as amended): NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

MATTHEWS/ULMER MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL TO ADD PORT AND HARBOR SECURITY CAMERA AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM FOR THE WEST SIDE OF THE HARBOR PROJECT TO THE CIP.

There was discussion on funding from the 2021 budget for camera system design work and the need for funding to construct it and an explanation from Ms. Matthews on what her intentions were behind using the term communications. Ms. Carroll provided suggested verbiage for the motion and clarified what the next steps would be if the commission were to recommend this project to Council for the CIP.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Zimmerman asked the commission if there were any other recommendations for the CIP.

Commissioner Ulmer commented on the Homer Spit Trailhead restroom and opined that the project needs to be prioritized more in the CIP. Discussion ensued on it currently being a Priority Level 3 and where the outhouses that currently serve that area are located.

ULMER/MATTHEWS MOVED THAT THE HOMER SPIT TRAILHEAD RESTROOM BE MOVED UP TO A PRIORITY LEVEL 2.

Commissioner Pitzman commented that while he doesn't disagree that it should be prioritized, he would rather see the System 5 restrooms improved first, which is also set at a Priority Level 3.

ZEISET/PITZMAN MOVED TO AMEND THAT RAMP 8 RESTROOM BE MOVED TO A PRIORITY LEVEL 1.

There was no discussion.

VOTE (amendment): NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

Commissioner Matthews asked for clarification on if some of these projects would ever have to be co-funded from harbor enterprise funds, or if it would be exclusively from capital or City general funds. Ms. Carroll responded not necessarily and explained how their recommendations are on prioritization, that Council can make capital preparations for projects, and where reserves come in is to assist funding a harbor enterprise-specific project, such as when matching funds are needed.

VOTE (main motion as amended): NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

Port Director Hawkins commented on the Old Main Dock Removal and Disposal project and the importance of leaving it on the CIP. He sees it as a mitigation project and the high need for its removal before it collapses on itself. Commissioner Pitzman noted that one utility of the old dock was how beneficial it was to educational low tide beach walks. There were comments made of it being a marine habitat at this point.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Port & Harbor Monthly Statistical Report for June 2021
- B. Water/Sewer Bills Report for June 2021
- C. Crane & Ice Report
- D. Dock Activity Reports
- E. PHC 2021 Meeting Calendar

Chair Zimmerman opened the floor for discussion on informational items. Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners Matthews and Ulmer regarding which City Council meetings the CIP will be discussed at, and the Council meeting dates that commissioners are scheduled to report. It was clarified that Ms. Ulmer will be reporting at the August 9th Council meeting.

There was discussion on statistics, particularly the stall wait list and public assist numbers. Port Director Hawkins commented on how the levels of activity in the harbor facilities are changing; there is no longer a lag after Memorial Day weekend and they are seeing peak use/activity every weekend.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Tussey commented on the City Clerk's Office update regarding meetings being conducted in-person and by Zoom, and that a draft ordinance to amend City Code to allow teleconferencing will be coming before the commission at their next meeting.

Port Director Hawkins responded to an earlier comment regarding the concern of using Port and Harbor funds for CIP projects, noting that City Code protects the reserves from being used to fund City projects. He shared with the commission that the Port and Harbor was able to secure grant funding to move their radio base station up onto Skyline Drive and significantly improve the harbor's handheld radios.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY COUNCILMEMBER

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Zimmerman commented that it was good to see everyone in person, and welcomed new commissioner Ian Pitzman.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Zeiset thanked Commissioner Pitzman for joining and said it was good to see everyone.

Commissioner Pitzman voiced his appreciation for being on the commission and shared his reasoning for serving.

Commissioner Erickson commented it was nice to see everyone and appreciated being together.

Commissioner Matthews shared her experience with donning a wet-suit and moving an 80 foot log out from the front of her boardwalk that was causing damage to the property.

Commissioner Ulmer thanked Commissioner Pitzman for serving on the commission and commented how it was nice to see everyone in person and not via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. 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: August 25, 2021