

CALL TO ORDER

Session 25-09 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:02 p.m. on June 10, 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, MARKS, DICKINSON, ZUBEK

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER YOUNG (UNEXCUSED)

STAFF: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ENGBRETSSEN & DEPUTY CITY CLERK APPEL

AGENDA APPROVAL

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

ISAAK/DICKINSON 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

Shelly Erickson, city resident and Recreation Champion, provided some background information for the Recreation Center. She commented some important factors in the selection of the proposed location including walkability from the schools, ability to have city utilities, room for expansion, and property is already owned by the city. She also mentioned there is an established fund through the Homer Foundation where the community can donate to help fund the brick and mortar building.

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

A. EDC Unapproved Minutes of May 13th, 2025 Regular Meeting

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

DICKINSON/ZUBEK MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 13, 2025 MEETING MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

A. Mike Illg, Community Recreation Manager – Rec Center Location Presentation

Mr. Illg introduced himself and spoke to the Commission on the following topics:

- Community recreation is primarily housed out of Homer High and Homer Middle

- Most programs have to be held at HERC, which has been condemned
- Majority of programs are taught by contracted instructors
- APRC doesn't have space or time to absorb community rec programs more than they already do
- The New Community Recreation Center has been the #2 project on the City's CIP list for a long time- in response to tax payers' requests
- The Community Rec Champions are encouraging the Commissions to envision the space and see the potential for future development
- Drafting a business plan to eventually have the Rec Center be as self-sufficient as possible

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. EDC Staff Report

Community Development Director Engebretsen reported on the following:

- City Council passed the annual Operating Budget FY26-27
- City Council included a \$20k per year for an Alaska Small Business Development Center Home or Business Advisor position

B. Chamber Director Report

Homer Harbor Fest was the past weekend. It had a turnout of 1,700 people even though the weather wasn't great.

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 next meeting is upcoming and she will have a report in August.

E. HERC Update

Community Development Director Engebretsen stated the City had to close the multi-purpose room due to lead paint and lead dust. Resolution of the findings could include replacing windows or painting over the chipped paint.

F. Housing/Guiding Growth Update

Commissioner Noomah stated there wasn't much to report. He stated the Guiding Growth Group and the code consultants have been mutually updating each other.

G. Planning Update

City Council and Planning Commission have a joint worksession planned to discuss the Comprehensive Plan. Public Review Draft comes out mid-July with hearings in August with the Planning Commission. Work is being done on the Title 21 update.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. New Rec Center Location

The Commission discussed the following topics in regard to the proposed location:

- Property in considered a wetland and possible effects on storm water runoff management
- Based on location – HEA lot is a better choice
- Size of lot actually needed – potential size of Rec Center, potential size of parking lot needed
- Will this investment in infrastructure actually spark private businesses to invest as well
- Possible restrictions in code for building itself
- Surrounding business owners weren't present to provide opinions
- Using this land would result in opportunity costs and lost opportunities associated with long-term use

AREVALO/DICKINSON MOVED TO FORWARD A MEMO TO CITY COUNCIL IN OPPOSITION OF THE PROPOSED LOCATION BUT WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS ALTERNATIVE SITES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES: ISAAK, NOOMAH, ZUBEK, AREVAL, DICKINSON.

VOTE: NO: MARKS.

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Land Allocation Plan

Community Development Director Engebretsen spoke on the following topics:

- Purpose of Land Allocation Plan
- Most land is out on the Spit
- City Council approves the plan to decide what land is available for lease
- One piece of property is not viable to offer for over slope lease – recommendation to remove from the list
- Space available at the airport

AREVALO/NOOMAH MOVED TO CONCUR WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY STAFF FOR INTENDED LAND ALLOCATION.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Cancellation of July EDC Meeting

Community Development Director Engebretsen provided explanation of the technical error of the meeting not being canceled earlier.

ISAAK/ZUBEK MOVED TO CANCEL THE JULY REGULAR MEETING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

A. City Manager's Report for August 12, 2024

May 27, 2025 City Council Meeting

June 9, 2025 City Council Meeting

Chair Marks noted the informational materials. Commissioner Zubek volunteered to deliver the June report to City Council.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Community Development Director Engebretsen said it was a great meeting and great conversation. She thanked the Commission for being flexible and being willing to shift the conversation.

Deputy City Clerk Appel reminded the Commission the next meeting is August 12 and thanked the Commission for the opportunity to serve them.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCIL MEMBER (If Present)

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Dickinson stated that she felt it was a very effective meeting. She also said it was really helpful to have a lot more information and she felt like the Commission made a lot of positive progress.

Commissioner Isaak commented that she thinks it's good to have all these discussions because these are big decisions that impact the community for a long time. She said there are great benefits to the rec center but also costs associated that need to be thought about too.

Commissioner Arevalo commented that she was thankful for being able to hear from Shelly Erickson and Mike Illg and all the perspectives that they were able to provide. She also stated that she feels the Commission made some really substantive comments and questions and that they handled the Recreation Center concept very thoroughly.

Commissioner Zubek commented that she acknowledged the struggle between meeting what the people reportedly want and what's the best use.

Commissioner Noomah stated that he is not looking forward to a town that is full of rec centers and not being able to tear the old ones down. He also commented that he's like to warn against a future where there's 30 year bonds just to pay for rec centers.

Chair Marks commented that she thinks it's excellent that the Commission has such good conversations and that the Commission takes the information and really thinks about it enough to ask such good questions. She stated she can't imagine anything better than this group.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, August 12, 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:_____