

CALL TO ORDER

Session 24-07 a Regular Meeting of the ADA Advisory Board was called to order by Chair Christine Thorsrud at 4:00 p.m. on September 12 2024 from the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall, located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom webinar.

PRESENT: BOARD MEMBERS PARSONS, THORSRUD, O'BRIEN, GEISLER, SAFRA, LEPLEY

ABSENT: BOARDMEMBER VENUTI (EXCUSED)

STAFF: CITY CLERK/ADA COORDINATOR KRAUSE
DEPUTY CITY CLERK I APPEL

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Thorsrud read the supplemental items: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES Item A. Unapproved Meeting Minutes for the Special Meeting on September 12, 2024 into the record and requested a motion.

GEISLER/PARSONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA (3 Minute Time limit)

RECONSIDERATION

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Unapproved Special Meeting Minutes for September 12, 2024

GEISLER/PARSONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 12, 2024

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT(S)/COMMITTEE REPORT(S)

A. Monthly ADA Coordinator Report – October/November 2024

Chair Thorsrud introduced the item and deferred to ADA Coordinator Krause.

Ms. Krause provided a verbal report on the following:

- Requests by the Board on the Capital Improvement Plan project could be to submitted via memorandum to City Council requesting approval of the actions desired regarding design options. This memorandum will be submitted to the board for review at their January meeting and then forwarded to City Council for the second January meeting.
- The site meeting with the ADA Coordinator Robespierre with the State of Alaska Department of Transportation was cancelled.
 - o Clarification on the removal and qualification of compliant benches and removal of the non-compliant benches.
 - o No official order has been received at this time.
 - o Homer is the first to be addressed of the rural airports that has come under review.
 - o The restrooms are non-compliant even though we have the new ADA/Family restroom that does not bring us into compliance.
 - The existing restrooms have non-compliant ADA stalls but to bring these restrooms into compliance will require a capital project. This issue has been known and is included in the city facility transition plan.

PUBLIC HEARING(S)

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Staff Report ADA-24-022 Harbor ADA Accessibility Capital Improvement Plan Project Development

Ms. Krause provided a brief report on the information provided regarding accessible kayak launch which she felt was worthy of consideration for a Capital Improvement Plan Project and has requested information on a Trolley system similar to what is used for the harbor but has not received the information.

Mr. Lepley stated that the Board has not received definitive response on their question of access project for the harbor and wanted to put a motion before the Board.

LEPLEY/GEISLER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE HOMER ADA ADVISORY BOARD AS A WHOLE OR ANY OF ITS MEMBERS MAY ACTIVELY SOLICIT INFORMATION IN REGARDS TO HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE LIFT SYSTEM FOR THE HOMER HARBOR.

There was a brief discussion on amending the motion to remove the word “handicapped” or replacing with “all ages and abilities”.

Mr. Lepley repeated the motion as amended:

MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE HOMER ADA ADVISORY BOARD AS A WHOLE OR ANY OF ITS MEMBERS MAY ACTIVELY SOLICIT INFORMATION IN REGARDS TO ACCESSIBLE TO ALL AGES AND ABILITIES LIFT SYSTEM FOR THE HOMER HARBOR.

VOTE. (Amendment). NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Mr. Lepley stated that in putting this motion before the Board that he believes they will have more clout with a company or a university if it is presented by the Board or the City a request for an accessible lift system that can be user operated to see if they would be interested in providing information or pursuing, has pursued or willing to pursue. He opined that if the Board has this motion on the record and then presents to Council and since they have a newly minted Council member that happens to serve on the Board, inform Council of the intent is to get information. Mr. Lepley continued stating that they are not the only ones who experience extreme tides and someone may have a design that can be used.

Mr. Parsons questioned if the Board would be interested in stepping up a notch and submit a request for the City Council to approve the request for submitting a Request for Design/Proposal to Colleges and Universities. He then asked if he could approach others in the city to see what comes out of that discussion.

Mr. Lepley explained further his idea was to have a form letter to submit to companies providing an explanation, what the goal is and what they are looking for.

Ms. Krause stated that the motion is great, staff can draft a memorandum to forward to Council for approval and authorization to take that action.

Ms. Krause lost connection at 4:51 p.m. and was unable to reconnect.

Further discussion on previous attempts to bring forth information on lift systems for a marine environment and this approach would be a more formal approach allowing them to contact teaching schools, engineering schools, etc.

Ms. Safra provided information on possible organizations that the Board can target.

Chair Thorsrud commented on a recent program she watched regarding “flinging” and advocated for expanding our thoughts outside of the box.

Mr. Parsons recommended passing the motion and Ms. Krause can draft a memorandum.

Mr. Lepley restated the motion as amended and will email that to Ms. Krause:

MOVE TO AUTHORIZE THE HOMER ADA ADVISORY BOARD AS A WHOLE OR ANY OF ITS MEMBERS MAY ACTIVELY SOLICIT INFORMATION IN REGARDS TO AN ACCESSIBLE LIFT SYSTEM FOR ALL AGES AND ABILITIES FOR THE HOMER HARBOR.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. (Main as amended) NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Further discussion was facilitated by Chair Thorsrud on the following:

- Ms. Krause can include the information regarding the Board's intent within the memorandum
- The information on the Kayak Launch was presented to the Trails Director who does adaptive recreation who reported using these before and that they are fantastic
 - o If people cannot get down to the harbor to use it, it would be pointless
 - o Did not want to distract from the Board's main goal for an accessible harbor
 - Having this project on the CIP might be a distraction.
- Recalled previously asking for the city to have an ADA person or appointed staff with additional duties or responsibilities to oversee that ADA requirements
 - o using the airport issues as an example
- Speaking to business owners, including commercial fishing and charter businesses
 - o Approximately \$58 billion dollars' worth of disability tourism in the United States and we are not seeing it here in Homer and that relates to economic development
 - Making the harbor accessible, being able to get people on boats.
 - If we build it, then that revenue will come, then they will make the boats accessible and the city will have revenue to fund that position.
 - The business community has to buy into the fact that it makes economic sense to make sure their businesses are accessible.
 - They have to want to do the minimum of compliance.
- In the process of developing the transition plan, recommended the language is included in the contracts that are issued by the city, providing the requirements of ADA and compliance is enforced.
 - o Having forms and review by qualified city personnel as a standard.
 - o There should be formulas and when the letter is received from the FAA or AKDOT ask where they got their conclusion
 - o Software availability
- Noted the recent renovated building on Pioneer and Greatland with a new sidewalk to the front door and the ramp is not ADA compliant.
 - o Has one-inch lip at the gutter
 - Review of plans does not include the ADA compliance viewpoint
 - Support inclusion of ADA Compliance in contracts that are city issued

B. Staff Report ADA-24-024 Draft Trails Transition Plan Status Upgrade

Chair Thorsrud deferred to Mr. Parsons since Ms. Krause was not available. She referred to the parking item on page 5 of the Supplemental Packet.¹

Mr. Parsons reported that he had a meeting with the City Manager approximately one month earlier and provided pictures of the property lines on the spit and performed a walking audit with former Public Works Director Jan Keiser, whom confirmed that the west side of the Spit has an obvious ADA compliance issue when it comes to parking. Ms. Keiser suggested that the Alaska Department of Transportation be contacted and request the lease agreements that are made with the City and the businesses since permission has to be granted to use that area for parking. Mr. Parsons did not want to move too far ahead without the explicit permission of the Board and would like to request the Board's permission to proceed further on their behalf.

Chair Thorsrud facilitated discussion on the topic with the points made as follows:

- State of Alaska owns the right of way in which the parking is allowed or being conducted in front of the boardwalks
- It is out of compliance even when you count the vehicles there is only two accessible parking spots for the whole stretch
 - o Both spots are non-compliant, not near an accessible path of travel, no accessible ramp
 - o Possibly need more spaces that are designated accessible depending on the count formula/method
- Recommend joint meeting with the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission to really work through the parking issues on the east side of the road.
 - o It was believed that the east side of the spit was compliant
 - o Countered comments that some areas were great others not
 - Example was provided with the area by the Boathouse Pavilion for accessible parking and recommendation to duplicate this around the harbor
- Spit Parking Study conducted in 2022 did not address the private parking areas
 - o Would like to expand that scope of work
- Events conducted by the Chamber and using the Accessible Parking spaces
 - o Chamber should be educated on the rights and ADA regulations
 - ADA Regulations already address requirements for special events
 - o Should be addressed in the Special Event Permit
 - Enforcement by the City

¹ This topic will be forwarded to the January agenda since the Board did not discuss it at the meeting. There was miscommunication on addressing an item in the September 12, 2024 meeting minutes that was provided in the supplemental packet.

NEW BUSINESS

A. 2025 Regular Meeting Schedule

Chair Thorsrud introduced the item by reading of the title. She requested a motion and second.

PARSONS/SAFRA MOVED TO APPROVE THE DRAFT RESOLUTION MEETING SCHEDULE AS WRITTEN AND FORWARD THE RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL.

Discussion followed on having additional meetings to have review of the transition plans, memorandum for approval, and direction to solicit designs for accessibility, adding meetings every month and adding those topics annual monthly agenda items.

PARSONS/SAFRA MOVED TO ADD THE MONTHS OF JANUARY, MARCH AND SEPTEMBER TO THE MEETING SCHEDULE AND THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF TRANSITION PLANS TO THE AGENDA TOPICS.

There was brief clarification on substantiating the need for the Board to meet.

VOTE. (Amendment) NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Thorsrud reviewed the amended motion noting that they can always make further motions in January if needed.

VOTE. (Main as amended) NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Staff Report ADA-24-023 Strategic Plan Review and Update

Chair Thorsrud introduced the item and opened discussion. She noted the previous goals and duties of staff and the Board.

Discussion by the Board focused on the following:

- Funding ADA compliance projects
 - o Identifying funds and appropriating them for specific projects
 - Not allowing Council to re-appropriate funds for other projects that are not ADA compliance projects
- Including ADA compliance requirements in city projects using a form or other method to ensure regulations are followed.
- Postpone action on the strategic plan until the January meeting to allow the Board time to thoroughly consider goals and action items.

- Requested copies of the adopted transition plans for the Board to review to determine the actions required to accomplish the compliance issues noted in those plans.
- Focus on the successes and completed tasks before addressing new ones

The Board postponed this item by mutual consent to the January 9, 2025 regular meeting. No formal motion was made by the Board.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. City Manager's Report for City Council Meeting on October 28, 2024
- B. City of Homer Fall Newsletter – October 2024
- C. ADA Annual Calendar 2024
- D. ADA Annual Calendar 2025

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Appel commented that a text received from Ms. Krause apologizing for not being able to attend and that she will listen to the audio and will address any actions items, questions and concerns of the Board.

COMMENTS OF THE BOARD

Mr. Lepley expressed his appreciation being able to attend the meeting via Zoom, support expressed from the Board on his motion and Bradley's appointment to City Council. He expressed looking forward to having something that they all can address, while he understands that the Port Director is looking into possibilities he understands that they have a million other things to do and he has the time to apply himself to this project every day such as sending out emails. He is looking forward to it and really appreciates the time spent at this meeting.

Mr. O'Brien commented that it was a great meeting and he was glad to be part of the group.

Ms. Safra congratulated Brad on his appointment to the City Council and was very excited when Caroline informed her of their selection. She stated that this community of people who are more challenged with disabilities with have a better representation in Homer and for her that was really exciting and will take on a new meaning in Homer. Ms. Safra expressed her appreciation of being part of supporting the journey Brad will be taking and thanked him for stepping up.

Mr. Parsons stated that he was excited to be elected to the Council and looking forward to bringing some of these discussions to Council. He stated his intent to remain on the Board and be the representative for the ADA Board but admitted that it does need to be officially sorted out. He offered his appreciation to the Clerk's Office in dealing with back to back elections and apologized for adding more to Ms. Krause' work schedule by adding additional meetings but believes that just shows the level of passion around the table here and we are all looking at doing more work. Mr. Parsons

expressed his appreciation to Mr. Lepley for perseverance in attending the meeting via Zoom and he has the support of the Board for the accessible harbor project and welcomed Deputy City Clerk Appel. He expressed his excitement about the changes in the Council and local government staffing.

Ms. Thorsrud commented that each and every one of the members brings something unique and individual to the board along with Ms. Krause. She recognized their very noticeable passions and time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Thorsrud adjourned the meeting at 5:47 p.m. The next regular meeting is Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in City Hall Conference Room located upstairs at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, 99603 and via Zoom webinar.

RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, CITY CLERK/
ADA COORDINATOR

Approved: _____