

Session 22-01 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:02 p.m. on January 11, 2022 at the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS MARKS, BROWN, SPEAKMAN, GAMBLE, CHEROK, PERSON, AREVALO
(arrived at 6:25 p.m.)

STAFF: DEPUTY CITY PLANNER ENGBRETSSEN
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY

AGENDA APPROVAL

PERSON/SPEAKMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA (Items listed below are considered routine and non-controversial by the Commission and are approved in one motion. If a separate discussion is desired on an item, a Commissioner may request that item be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda under New Business.)

A. December 14, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Marks read the Consent Agenda and requested a motion.

SPEAKMAN/GAMBLE MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

A. Peter Briggs, Corvus Designs – Wayfinding & Streetscape Draft Plan

Peter Briggs with Corvus Designs and Deputy City Planner and Special Projects Coordinator Engebretsen explained where the draft plan is currently at, the recommended action the commission should take at this meeting, and facilitated questions from commissioners.

There was discussion on the brightness of the yellow on the pedestrian wayfinding and destination signs and to possibly have the background and letter colors inverted; suggestion to have both color schemes in the plan so that either option could be selected depending on the location; concerns with

consistency; and specific edits to the plan, such as removing “west” from Pioneer Avenue, which can be directed to Ms. Engebretsen.

Ms. Engebretsen agreed to forward the commission’s decisions and recommendations to Mr. Briggs after the meeting once the commission has taken action on the plan under Pending Business.

B. Jennifer Gibbins, Pratt Museum Director – Future Pratt Museum Projects

Jennifer Gibbins, Pratt Museum Director, provided an introduction and recap of how the Pratt Museum is working to re-engage with the community during the COVID pandemic.

Commissioner Arevalo arrived at 6:25 p.m.

Ms. Gibbins explained the Pratt’s request of support for a new Community Pavilion/Trails Project. The project includes building an outdoor community gathering and performance pavilion (an amphitheater), enhancing their ADA accessible forest trails, improving trailhead connection with Pioneer Avenue, and enhancing appearance of the corner of their property overlooking Pioneer Avenue. She looks forward to any feedback or support from the EDC.

Commissioners shared comments and feedback with Ms. Gibbins; there was overall support for such a project.

Chair Marks confirmed with Ms. Engebretsen that the EDC’s support would be conveyed by staff to the City Manager, and a letter of support would be prepared by City Manager Dumouchel for the Pratt for their grant application.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. EDC Staff Report

Deputy City Planner and Special Projects Coordinator Engebretsen reported on the HERC survey results, which closed yesterday. She explained what the consultant Stantec will be doing next, what kind of plans/designs they will be providing, and the upcoming events for the public to provide feedback. She reported on the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) Industry Outlook Forum she attended virtually, and the current activities of the Planning Commission. Ms. Engebretsen responded to questions regarding the HERC study results and if there would be any overlap for an amphitheater.

B. Chamber Director Report – Homer Chamber of Commerce Annual Report

Brad Anderson, Chamber Director, presented the Chamber of Commerce’s 2021-2022 Marketing Update. He spoke to the record-breaking 2021 year and how 2022 is looking the same, the Chamber events and new website/features that have attracted a significant number of visitors, and what the Chamber accomplished to market Homer using a COVID-safe travel grant.

Mr. Anderson facilitated discussion regarding the Chamber events and concerns with timing in the summer and bringing in competition to local businesses, that different areas of Homer are showcased, what tools could be used to determine visitor quantity, the Chamber’s online reservation tool, and considering the balance of tourist attraction and quality of life for locals.

C. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) Report

Chair Marks reported on the KPEDD's 2022 Industry Outlook Forum that was hosted in Kenai. She referenced the schedule in the packet to show the variety of speakers and topics that were discussed. Next year's forum will be hosted in Homer at the Community Church.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan Approval
- i. Sign Family – Two Color Scheme Options
 - ii. Sign Master Plan
 - iii. Homer Streetscape Plan
 - iv. Homer Wayfinding Standards

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading the title and deferred to Deputy City Planner and Special Projects Coordinator Engebretsen to begin discussions.

Ms. Engebretsen reiterated the commission's earlier comments about toning down the yellow, providing mock-ups of the signage, and the next steps in the plan approval process. They anticipate a presentation to City Council from Mr. Briggs sometime in February followed by the adoption of the plan.

Ms. Engebretsen and Deputy City Clerk Tussey facilitated discussion with the commission regarding the color scheme and the differences between the revised color set that matches the City's logo and the existing color set from Corvus Designs.

PERSON/GAMBLE MOVED TO USE THE REVISED COLOR SET FOR THE WAYFINDING-STREETSCAPE PLAN.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES: SPEAKMAN, PERSON, GAMBLE, MARKS, CHEROK
NO: AREVALO, BROWN

Motion carried.

PERSON/CHEROK MOVED TO SUPPORT THE WAYFINDING-STREETSCAPE PLAN AND RECOMMEND ADOPTION TO CITY COUNCIL.

Commissioner Arevalo verified she had not missed any significant changes to the plan in front of them from the last draft they reviewed at their December meeting. Chair Marks confirmed it's essentially the same with the possible changes to the pedestrian signs. Ms. Engebretsen advised they not get too literal at this point, but that her suggestion is to have two design options and then at the time of actual installation staff can decide what makes sense for a specific location. The commonality of the signs will be maintained through the shape of the posts, the colors, the City logo, and those type of details.

VOTE: YES: MARKS, CHEROK, AREVALO, BROWN, SPEAKMAN, PERSON, GAMBLE

Motion carried.

Chair Marks confirmed with Ms. Engebretsen if there was any additional comments at this time regarding the recommendation going to Council, which there were none. Commissioner Arevalo had a

question of clarification on when they can discuss other plan changes such as using the term “Downtown Pioneer” rather than “Downtown”.

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Homer News Article dated December 23, 2021
- B. EDC 2021-2022 Strategic Plan/Goals
- C. City Manager’s Report for January 10, 2022
- D. EDC 2022 Calendar

Chair Marks noted the informational materials in the packet. Deputy City Clerk Tussey pointed out the commissioner names listed on the calendar to give the upcoming Council reports.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Jennifer Gibbins, commented on how much she enjoyed listening to their Wayfinding-Streetscape presentations and how she would love to see signage for the Downtown and Pioneer Avenue include indication that it is an arts and culture district. She acknowledged Commissioner Cherok’s business Summit Physical Therapy who had helped the Pratt Museum with their Spring Clean-up Day, and her staff’s positive experiences with Commissioner Gamble’s business the Duncan House.

Matt Steffy, nonresident, voiced his appreciation for all the work that’s gone into the Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan. He thanked Corvus Designs, Deputy City Planner Engebretsen, and the commission for an awesome job.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen thanked Parks Superintendent Matt Steffy and the EDC for their hard work on the Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan. She is looking forward to sending it to City Council and moving forward with some of these improvements.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey had no comments.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Chair Marks thanked Commissioners Gamble and Speakman for their crowdfunding contributions for the New Year’s fireworks. She noted that at last night’s City Council meeting, they approved Ordinance 21-68 to fund part of the Homer Business Advisor position for the Alaska Small Business Development Center. She thanked everyone.

Commissioner Person thanked Chair Marks for her long-time efforts of getting the wayfinding-streetscape proposal funded and carried through. She also thanked the commissioners for their work, noting it is difficult to design in a committee. We have many diverse/different viewpoints but she thinks they did a lot of balancing between a modern look in the small, quaint town look and thanked everyone for that work.

Commissioner Gamble thanked Jennifer Gibbins and Chair Marks for their kind words, and congratulated everyone on the culmination of so much work.

Commissioner Brown commented on how she can't believe we're at the end of the wayfinding and streetscape project and that it was an incredible success. She thanked Chair Marks, City staff, and all the commissioners for the great job.

Commissioner Cherok appreciated them letting him come onto the commission three quarters of the way through the project, but it's been fun seeing the final product come together. He thanked everyone.

Commissioner Speakman thanked Deputy City Planner Engebretsen and Deputy City Clerk Tussey for their work and noted how interesting it is to see how many hats our small city employees wear. She thanked Chair Marks for seeing this project through and spoke to how much she loves our downtown Homer, seeing our young kids growing up here, the trail systems, and her appreciation for everybody's hard work and making downtown more of a destination.

Commissioner Arevalo had no further comments.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m. Their next regular meeting is Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 6:00 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: February 8, 2022