

CALL TO ORDER

Session 24-08 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:06 p.m. on September 10, 2024 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 BROWN, YOUNG, STEPHENS, BRENNAN, MARKS & ZUBEK

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER AREVALO (EXCUSED)

STAFF: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ENGBRETSSEN & DEPUTY CITY CLERK PETTIT

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Marks read the supplemental items into the agenda: **Under Visitors/Presentations Item A. City Budget Process, Elizabeth Fischer – Finance Director – FY26-27 Budget Schedule. Under Informational Materials Item D. Homer Comprehensive Plan Rewrite September – October Flyer and Item E. Homer Comprehensive Plan Community Survey and Interactive Comment Map Results.** She then requested a motion and second to approve the agenda as amended.

BRENNAN/YOUNG MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Unapproved Regular Meeting Minutes of August 13, 2024

BRENNAN/BROWN MOVED TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

A. City Budget Process, Elizabeth Fischer – Finance Director
Memorandum from Community Development Director as backup
FY26-27 Budget Schedule

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading of the title and opened the floor for Finance Director Fischer. Ms. Fischer reviewed her presentation that was included in the supplemental packet. There was a brief discussion regarding unused money in the budget for wayfinding and streetscape.

- B. Comprehensive Plan, Agnew::Beck
Memorandum from Community Development Director as backup

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading of the title and opened the floor for Meg Friedenauer of Agnew::Beck. Ms. Friedenauer provided the Commission with the updated timeline, the results from the survey and the interactive comment map, and the priorities and next steps of the project.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. EDC Staff Report

Community Development Director Engebretsen delivered a verbal report, noting the following:

- Annual Joint Worksession with City Council scheduled for Monday, November 18th
- Job posting for a half-time Community Development Associate
- Memorandum regarding city business licenses will be seen by Council in October
- Early voting for the upcoming City and Borough elections

- B. Chamber Director Report

Community Development Director Engebretsen provided a verbal report regarding a Luncheon at the Chamber of Commerce this upcoming Thursday to discuss cruise ships. She added that the Luncheon for October will be focused on the state of tourism in Homer, and that the November Luncheon will be a state of the City presentation from City Manager Jacobsen as well as some other department heads. She stated that Brad Anderson will give his annual presentation to the Commission at the November 12th meeting before presenting to Council on November 25th.

- C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

- D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report

Chair Marks noted that the group met on August 15th, adding that many of the projects are continuing ahead as planned. There was brief discussion among the Commission about a cell phone data program called *Datafy*.

- E. Port Expansion

Community Development Director Engebretsen suggested striking this item from the standing reports providing that it's typically covered in the City Manager's Report. She noted that there are quarterly reports to City Council regarding the project, and added that people that want to stay informed can subscribe to receive emails on the project website.

- F. Guiding Homer's Growth Group

Community Development Director Engebretsen suggested striking this item from the standing reports as well, as she is no longer a part of their steering group. Chair Marks noted that the group is going to start tackling housing, and asked Commissioners to let her know if they're interested.

G. HERC Update

Community Development Director Engebretsen explained that the City applied for a \$1 million EPA grant last year that was not funded, but later received funding from the State Department of Environmental Conservation. She added that the City has been contacted by the consultant, but no further progress has been made. She stated that the City will focus on working with the State and preparing for a clean-up grant, which could cost between \$50,000-100,000.

H. Housing Update

I. Planning Update

Community Development Director Engebretsen noted that there is a second open-house event for the Comprehensive Plan at the Islands & Oceans Visitor Center on Tuesday, October 22nd. She added that members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee will be at the Farmer's Market this week and next week.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Cruise Ships

Memorandum EDC-24-014 from Community Development Director as backup

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading of the title and opened the floor for Community Development Director Engebretsen. Ms. Engebretsen recommended the Commission postpone this item to let staff think about what needs to be written in the memo that will be sent back to Council. She added that she felt more public conversation could be helpful.

BROWN/BRENNAN MOVED TO POSTPONE THE CRUISE SHIPS AGENDA ITEM TO THE OCTOBER 8TH, 2024 REGULAR MEETING.

Commissioner Young commented that it might be worthwhile to try and gather data regarding the community's feelings towards cruise ships rather than going off of anecdotal evidence. Ms. Engebretsen reminded him that there are costs associated with any kind of survey or outreach this would encompass.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Comprehensive Plan Outreach

The Commission discussed various avenues of outreach to garner more public participation in the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. City Manager's Report
August 26th, 2024
September 9th, 2024
- B. EDC Annual Calendar 2024
- C. Safe Streets and Roads Flyer
- D. Homer Comp Plan Rewrite Sept – Oct Flyer
- E. Homer Comp Plan Community Survey and Interactive Comment Map Results

Chair Marks noted the informational materials. Commissioner Brown volunteered to deliver the September report to City Council, and Commissioner Young volunteered himself to deliver the October report to City Council. Chair Marks also informed the Commission that she would be absent from the Regular Meeting in October.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Patty Relay thanked the Commissioners for their service. She invited everyone to the Kodachrome RITZ event taking place at the Pratt Museum on Saturday, October 5th, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Derotha Ferraro, city resident, highlighted Proposition No. 1 on the upcoming Kenai Peninsula Borough ballot. She briefly summarized the proposition, discussed healthcare in Homer and its connection to the Comprehensive Plan, and noted an event at the Christian Community Church on Thursday regarding the proposition.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Pettit welcomed Commissioner Stephens to the Commission.

Community Development Director Engebretsen noted that it was a marathon meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCIL MEMBER (If Present)

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Brennan welcomed both Commissioners Zubek and Stephens. She noted that she will be absent from the October meeting.

Commissioner Young welcomed Commissioner Stephens and shared that he enjoyed both the worksession and the discussion regarding city planning.

Commissioner Brown welcomed both Commissioners Zubek and Stephens.

Commissioner Zubek thanked everyone for their insightful comments. She also welcomed Commissioner Stephens.

Commissioner Stephens thanked the Commission for welcoming her aboard. She added that her position as a Commissioner is much different than what she does for a living.

Chair Marks welcomed Commissioner Stephens to the Commission. She noted that having a full Commission provides more input for the group, and reminded everyone that a quorum of four is required for both worksessions and regular meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers and via Zoom Webinar.

ZACH PETTIT, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I

Approved: _____