

Session 21-09 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:04 p.m. on October 12, 2021 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. One seat is vacant from the resignation of Commissioner George Hall on September 21, 2021.

**PRESENT:** COMMISSIONERS MARKS, BROWN, AREVALO, CHEROK, PERSON (left at 6:47 p.m.)

**ABSENT:** COMMISSIONER SPEAKMAN (unexcused)

**STAFF:** DEPUTY CITY PLANNER ENGBRETSSEN  
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY

The Economic Development Advisory Commission met for a Worksession on September 23, 2021 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:07 p.m. to discuss the Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan Project. The Worksession was facilitated by Deputy City Planner Engebretsen and Peter Briggs with Corvus Design.

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

Chair Marks asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

AREVALO/BROWN 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. September 14, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Marks asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

CHEROK/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.

Commissioner Brown requested amendments be made to her discussion comments regarding Homer development on page five of the packet in the second to last paragraph. Deputy City Clerk Tussey noted that while minutes reflect what action was taken and the content of what was said at the meeting, she agreed to make those revisions before the approved minutes are posted. Commissioners Cherok

agreed to revise his motion to approve the minutes as amended with no objection from the commission.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS**

- A. Cliff Cochran, Alaska Small Business Development Center – AK SBDC Services & Funding Request

Chair Marks introduced Cliff Cochran with the Alaska Small Business Development Center (AK SBDC).

Mr. Cochran gave a presentation on what services and resources AK SBDC provides, the results of their work in Homer, and information on SBDC's budget and funding sources. He asked the commission to think about the SBDC Business Advisor position in Homer and how it will be funded in the future.

In response to questions from the commission, Mr. Cochran addressed the following:

- What "organizations" they have received funding from in the past
- How many hours a part time position works and makes, and that they get federal match funds for whatever monies they receive from local organizations
- What the \$25,000 covers for the Homer Business Advisor position
- That they do not have facility costs since the Chamber has provided the office space rent-free
- Options for contract timeframes and how they can be year-to-year or more
- Majority of the subscriptions on their website are accessible to the public except the IBISWorld and ProfitCents subscriptions, which are best utilized with the assistance of the Business Advisor
- That they work with everyone including small start-ups and large LLC's/corporations, and assist them with connecting to their target audiences

Chair Marks thanked Mr. Cochran for visiting and that they will consider his ask of the commission at their January meeting. Mr. Cochran thanked the commission and shared his contact information for reference before leaving the meeting.

- B. Peter Briggs, Corvus Design – Wayfinding & Streetscape Project

Chair Marks introduced Peter Briggs with Corvus Design.

Mr. Briggs gave a brief recap on where they are at in the Wayfinding and Streetscape Project process. He shared screen to show and speak to where they are currently at with the sign designs and coloring for the gateway signs, orientation panels/kiosks, and wayfinding/directional signs.

Mr. Briggs facilitated discussion and gathered feedback from the commission on the draft concepts. He agreed to bring revised designs to their next meeting.

Commissioner Person left the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

After further discussion and comments, the commission thanked Mr. Briggs for his time before he left the meeting.

#### **STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

A. EDC Staff Report

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen spoke to her written staff report, highlighting the current vacancy on the EDC and the Request for Proposals for the HERC Scoping Study which closes on October 19<sup>th</sup>.

B. Chamber Director Report

C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report

Chair Marks noted that KPEDD will be meeting next week so she will have a report at their next meeting.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

#### **PENDING BUSINESS**

A. EDC Strategic Plan Update  
i. DRAFT 2021-2022 Strategic Plan/Goals

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

Ms. Engebretsen spoke to her memo that included five accomplishments the EDC has had over the past year and recommended they work on sending a memo/report to City Council that highlights the work the commission has done. In response to Ms. Engebretsen's request for direction, the commission supported having staff bring a draft memo back to their next meeting for them to approve to be sent to Council. Ms. Engebretsen reiterated the importance of having clear goal markers and deliverables, especially when showing Council what they've accomplished.

Chair Marks went over the action being requested of the commission and clarified what other asks staff has. She opened the floor for discussion on the strategic plan and goals, with Ms. Engebretsen facilitating discussion.

Commissioner Cherok noted a typo under midterm goals and commented that he is happy to see housing and the multipurpose community center on the list.

Commissioner Arevalo commented that she doesn't mind how the local business outreach goal (#2 under Near Term goals) is worded and is ok with there not being a set task assigned with it since it seems more thought needs to go into it. The commission mutually agreed that they should wait on setting a task.

At Ms. Arevalo's request for clarification on Ongoing Goal #1, Ms. Engebretsen explained how the goal was to encompass the EDC's previous conversation and need to determine what development in Homer is favorable for the community. Commissioners Brown and Arevalo both voiced issues with the phrasing of the goal and believe it should be better worded or expanded so it better defines what the EDC is supposed to do. Ms. Engebretsen suggested the item be put on a future agenda for them to figure that out. Discussion ensued between the commission and staff on wordsmithing the goal or splitting it up into two separate goals, one to remain under ongoing goals and the other to go under near term goals with a set task.

The commission mutually agreed to postpone a motion of approval and allow Ms. Engebretsen to bring a revised version of the strategic plan back to their next regular meeting.

Chair Marks opined that the new near-term task include the commission presenting to Council, likely by memorandum.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. EDC Bylaw Amendments
  - i. DRAFT EDC Bylaws
  - ii. Current EDC Bylaws – Adopted September 28, 2020

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title and deferred to Deputy City Clerk Tussey to begin discussions.

At the request of the commission, Deputy City Clerk Tussey read through the draft bylaws section-by-section explaining what was the same and what changes were made. She pointed out which sections were due to the new City Code amendment for boards and commissions, specifically the revisions to teleconferencing, attendance, and vacancies, and what were general updates from staff. Ms. Tussey explained how bylaws require two readings, so a motion would be needed to introduce the amendments and then the commission would hold a final reading and approve them at their next meeting.

AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO HOLD A SECOND READING ON THE PROPOSED EDC BYLAW AMENDMENTS AT THE NOVEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR MEETING.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

- A. City Manager’s Report for September 27, 2021
- B. City Manager’s Report for October 11, 2021 (laydown)
- C. EDC 2021 Calendar

Chair Marks opened the floor for discussion on informational materials. Deputy City Planner Engebretsen answered questions regarding the Safeway development project.

### **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

Devony Lehner commented on wayfinding signage and her experience with walking down Pioneer Avenue with friends who have accessibility needs. She asked the commission to ensure any sign designs they approve are ADA compliant and voiced her support for the use of QR codes and how they assist those that are visually impaired.

### **COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF**

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen thanked the commission and noted that having comments in agreement or disagreement on the signage is great; this is why we hired an experienced consultant to facilitate these conversations. She stated there will be another streetscape presentation in November, their strategic plan, and possibly have Ms. Lehner give a presentation about her accessible Homer project, which ties into the wayfinding work.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey thanked the commission. She noted that Deputy City Clerk Krause will be clerking their November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting as she will be out of state visiting family. At Ms. Tussey’s inquiry on who would be giving the EDC report at the next Council meeting, Chair Marks stated that she will be giving the report at the October 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Arevalo thanked Ms. Engebretsen and Ms. Tussey for all their work and voiced her appreciation for their time.

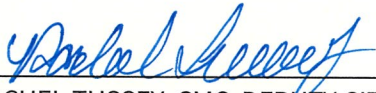
Commissioner Brown seconded Ms. Arevalo’s thanks to staff and commented on the value of having a visual placeholder for the QR codes on the sign designs. Discussion ensued on whether it was necessary to have it on the designs just yet as it will be coming later, but to at least mention it somewhere so that any public reviewing the progress see that it has come up and has been discussed.

Chair Marks voiced her appreciation for seeing everyone at the meeting, opined that they are showing their worth, and thanked the commission and staff. She noted the vacant seat on the commission for a city resident if anyone knew of someone interested in serving.

Commissioner Cherok had no comments.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 7:57 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, November 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

  
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RACHEL TUSSEY, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: November 9, 2021