

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Session 24-01, a Special Meeting of the Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair David Lewis at 5:35 p.m. on January 18, 2024 from the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar. The Commission has one vacancy.

**PRESENT:** COMMISSIONERS ARCHIBALD, HARRALD, GALBRAITH, ROEDL AND LEWIS

**ABSENT:** STUDENT COMMISSIONER WALKER, COMMISSIONER FAIR (EXCUSED)

**STAFF:** DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE, RECREATION MANAGER ILLG, PARKS & TRAILS PLANNER STEFFY AND PARKS MAINTENANCE COORDINATOR FELICE

## **AGENDA APPROVAL**

Chair Lewis read the supplemental items into the record Under New Business Item B Completed Recreation Center Location Selection Matrix and requested a motion to approve the agenda as amended.

ARCHIBALD/GALBRAITH MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH THE ADDITION OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS AS READ INTO THE RECORD, NEW BUSINESS ITEM B COMPLETED RECREATION CENTER LOCATION SELECTION MATRIX.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA**

Deb Lowney, city resident, expressed her appreciation of the Commissioners especially after the recent City Council meeting. She strongly recommended the Commission endeavor to amend or enact policy that the Commission reviews all preliminary plats and subdivisions for easements for non-motorized connections, sidewalks, etc. also the Commission should review all city owned land for pedestrian easements as well. She noted that the Commission was working on that for a long time but never made it policy and it should be policy. Ms. Lowney advocated that it would be better to have these before than try to get them after the fact. In reference to Karen Hornaday Park, as a walker who frequents that area a lot and watching all the development taking place around the space she questions it purpose and use as a campground. She believed that development was going to continue up the hill and surrounding it and did not think it was ideal for a campground setting and can see the park area for extended use with trails, winter ski trails, disc golf, snowshoe trails, cross country biking, noting the additional land up in the corner stating it would be nice to see trails weaving through that as it is too steep for much else to be done. Ms. Downey believed that the Disc Golf course was a great addition to the park, and highly recommended expanding and improving the opportunities in the park. She supported camping being taken care of by the private sector and the city should get out of the campground business. Ms. Lowney believed that Ordinance 24-06 would be a great asset, if it gets done, for the community and this Commission should

support it as for the recommendation on improving the HERC she did not support that and strongly recommended that the Commission did not either. The buildings are an eyesore and need to disappear. There are so many of these buildings sitting around town and they need to go away rather than have them sitting in the community. Putting Band-Aid's on them does not help the issue or hide the problem, it's there.

Billy Day, Homer Trails Alliance, commented on Ordinance 24-06 and hopefully clear up some misunderstandings or misconceptions and answer questions. He then noted the map on page 60 of the packet which showed the proposed trail closest to the Sterling Highway as an all abilities trail, this would need to be constructed by professionals. He then reported that Homer Trails Alliance has no authority within the recreation area and their goal is to get the items that were in the adopted plan implemented. He further commented that Homer Trails Alliance volunteers would perform no work until there was an MOA in place and fully executed. Mr. Day reminded the Commission that the data that would be provided by the engineering services is going to be very useful in the future development of the Diamond Creek Recreation Area regardless of whether the overpass is constructed or not.

Catie Bursch, city resident, presented some maps of the area around Karen Hornaday Park, and referenced an area of land referred to as Woodard Creek Canyon right above the park and with the city growing so aggressively around it she suggested that the Commission consider the park as a gateway right in the middle of town that is readily available as a green space offering hiking trails with resting or picnic areas that would provide recreational outlet for the people who work at the hospital. She then noted the additional opportunities that the DNR land provided as well. Ms. Bursch supported the underpass idea stating that it would be nice to have in the Baycrest area as she lives in that area.

Commissioner Harrald expressed her appreciation of having the who's who of visitors tonight.

Commissioner Archibald expressed comments on the energy that comes and goes on that area up north of the park.

Chair Lewis allowed Mr. Day to respond.

Mr. Day stated that Homer Trails Alliance volunteers could build that trail that Ms. Bursch is thinking about.

## **VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS**

## **RECONSIDERATION**

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Unapproved Minutes for the Regular Meeting of November 16, 2023

Chair Lewis requested a motion and second to approve the Consent Agenda.

ARCHIBALD/GALBRAITH MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

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

#### A. Staff Report PARC 24-002, Parks Maintenance Report - January 2024

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to Maintenance Coordinator Felice

Parks Maintenance Coordinator Felice reviewed his report provided in the packet. He provided information on the following:

- Staff was tracking a number of things and were in the area above the park looking a different routes this past summer. They are very interested in the idea of trails in that area north of the park proper.
- Lot of sanding and snow removal
- Purchased ADA Ramp for sandbox at Hornaday Park Playground
  - Installation will be this spring along with an ADA compliant walkway to the feature
- Clearing of alders around the campground area
- Winter Trail Maintenance
- Clearing alders from the Story trail to make it more visible to deter camping and increase safety on the Library lot
- Working with Public Works to mitigate the ground water problem along the sidewalk
  - Hoping that when the new engineer that starts in February he will have additional ideas
- Before freeze up, work was started on the warning track in the adult field at Jack Gist Park
  - Drainage ditch was dug on the east side allowing additional parking space to the east
- Sewer line is in and water line is schedule for spring, early summer
- The hump was reduced as you head east so now vehicles will not bottom out
- Picked up the new parks truck.
- Priced a compactor tractor today which would assist in trail work.

Mr. Felice facilitated questions and provided responses the following:

- placement of mobile restrooms will require installation of water and sewer lines with a lockable connection
- Entrance road to Jack Gist Park, possibly relocating the entrance will remove the intersection
- Access to the upper portion of the land that the city owns is quite steep and possibly working with Terra Bella to get access
- Confirmed that the amounts to be expended on the mobile restrooms is for installation of three restrooms and concrete pad.
- Meeting with the new Public Works Director

Commissioner Harrald stated that she would like to support camping not be limited to RV only within the City whether it is the city that offers it or a private entity.

Chair Lewis requested the Clerk to extend an invite to attend the next Commission meeting to the new Public Works Director.

B. Staff Report PARC 24-001, City Council Actions and Relevant PARC Information

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to Recreation Manager Illg

Recreation Manager Illg reviewed his report for the Commission noting the following:

- Presentation to City Council by Julie Engebretsen, Chad Felice and himself regarding the Strategic Financial Plan and Services Vision for Parks and Recreational Facilities
- The failed appointment to fill the vacancy on the commission
- Mobile Restrooms
- Lighthouse Sculpture donation minus any verbiage until a policy has been adopted for memorials
  - o That is something that is related to our strategic plan and goals for the Commission to develop more comprehensive policies and procedures
- Adoption of the new departments and Community Recreation will stay under the Administration Department
- Joint worksession with City Council went very well and believed to be very beneficial with coverage of a lot of items. There was discussion on streamlining information, suggestions of including the Commission in review processes for sidewalks, trails and easements.
  - o He will be summarizing the discussion for the next meeting and debriefing with the City Manager regarding moving forward.

C. Staff Report PARC 24-003, Community Recreation Report January 2024

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to Recreation Manager Illg

Recreation Manager Illg stated that women's basketball on Monday night starts next week, creation of a jui jitsu program as there is a lot of interest in having a program.

Chair Lewis requested if possible to make the calendar a little larger for easier reading.

Mr. Illg then drew the Commission's attention to the statistics noting that they have exceeded the revenue for 2023. He then responded to the questions regarding the following:

- New recreation software provides tracking of data for the various attendance and users for the programs, online payment, etc.
  - o Announcements or plan to make the public aware of the change being implemented
  - o Change will be slow as it is expected to have some hesitation from the public
  - o Waiting on the Finance Department and credit card acceptance
  - o Some programs are available to sign in and pay by phone
  - o Technical Assistance is provided

## **PUBLIC HEARING(S)**

### **PENDING BUSINESS**

A. Memorandum PARC 24-004 from Parks & Trails Planner re: Karen Hornaday Park Plan

Chair Lewis introduced the item and deferred to Parks & Trails Planner Steffy.

Parks & Trails Planner Steffy provided an overview of the proposed plan and changes to date from public comments that have been received. He explained the proposed options and solicited the Commissioners input on their preferences for the proposed options shown on page six of the plan, page 47 of the packet which Option 1: Retain the Campground; or Option 2: Retain a portion of the Campground and Reprogram Areas; or Option 3: Remove Campground and Reprogram Space

Mr. Steffy facilitated discussion on the following:

- no walk in tent camping, the city does not have the ability to staff a walk in only tent area
  - o preference to have some camping or area available to allow options for participants at large events such as sports tournaments, concert on the lawn and the highland games were given as examples
  - o Special Events permit to camp during the event
    - May be addressed through existing Homer City Code
- Functionality requires additional parking due to existing uses outside of larger events
- ADA campsites, not currently designated on the plan
  - o Camp Sites 1 & 2 typically used as ADA Accessible camping
  - o This area can hold up to 4 RVs
  - o If Option 1 or 2 is selected maintained ADA Campsites as required
- Perimeter walking trail
  - o Part of campground is on private property and staff is in the process of negotiations with the owner to normalize and make it official but the depicted perimeter trail is also on private property so they should be cautious investing effort into developing amenities on private property.
- Increased and improved parking on the lower section of the park over additional parking in the upper portion of the park
  - o During the season for Little League the parking is non-existent
  - o Parking would be de-centralized
  - o Parking offered to access the facility that is being used
    - Children will not have to travel across the park to visit the playground
- Actual portions can be determined as the plan progresses
  - o Determination of the reprogramming can be done further in the planning
  - o A new pavilion would also be great for the newly reprogrammed area
- Whichever option is selected brushwork is needed, depending on the option selected will determine the amount brushwork needed.

There was a brief discussion amongst Staff present on a timeline for the recommendation on whether camping was going to be continued and if it would be reduced or full occupancy of the campground. It was noted that due to the work required to the campsites it was unlikely that camping will be conducted this summer.

Chair Lewis requested the Clerk to schedule a worksession before the regular meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Discussion continued with the following points being made:

- Reprogramming the area with more parking provided closer to the playground
- Camping by Special Use Permit makes it more appealing to select this option
- Providing a section with tables and a pavilion would be great
- Concern on funding to implement the plan that is adopted
  - o Previous plan adopted and determined that no cannot do it, then informed we could, then told we can't do it because there is no funding and the area was unstable so road would have to stay in the location it is at.
- This plan will facilitate the funding being granted as it will provide the public support, feasibility, approximate costs, similar to the Capital Improvement Plan process.
  - o Would rather see a reasonable, obtainable project that it more on the conservative side
    - belief that it is easier to plan what you want when you know how much money you have than to make a plan and not be able to implement the majority of it because the costs are too high.
- Phasing is commonly used for large projects
  - o Allows for multiple funding sources
  - o Consider phasing when reviewing all proposed options for the park
- Cost estimates will be in the next phase of development of the plan for the proposed improvements
- Some items in the old master plan will be carried forward
- Food trucks are allowed per special event permit and included in the agreements for Little League, etc.
- Adding a dog park
- One way routes with parking would be safer for the kids especially around the playground

Mr. Steffy summarized the Commission sentiments so far were support for the following:

- Some camping open, reprogramming of the remaining portion

Recreation Manager Illg requested the public comments for the worksession that were reported to facilitate how the public felt about these options.

Mr. Steffy reported that the public comments collected on sticky notes or through the survey were reflected within the twenty shown on the first page. He can ask for some metrics on the number of responses from the consultant.

Mr. Steffy then provided information on restroom locations for the mobile restrooms and portable toilets and the removal of the vault toilets which have been condemned. He then responded to questions on the following:

- that the concrete vaults were in pretty rough condition and can be covered and buried.
- Each dugout will have utility sheds constructed at the end of dugout which has been outlined in their agreement with the city.
- Compost toilets are good for infrequent use areas such as across the bay, they would not stand up to the usage that Karen Hornaday Park gets during an average season.

B. Memorandum PARC 24-005 from Parks & Trails Planner re: Bayview Park Plan

Chair Lewis introduced the item and deferred to Parks & Trails Planner Steffy.

Mr. Steffy noted that Peter Briggs with Corvus Design was unable to get as far along with Bayview Park since he was under the weather for a spell. He then explained that:

- ADA Parking will be paved
  - o At grade
  - o Only one space as required since there is only a total of five
- ADA pathway will be paved
- ADA Accessible Play equipment
  - o Digger
  - o Climbing Cave
  - o More equipment is planned
- Plan will be presented to the ADA Advisory Board and the plan is being created with the recommendation from the Adopted Transition plan and review of the ADA Coordinator
- Costs
- Proposed options for the hill will be in the next phase
- Fencing is framed chain link
- restroom facilities at the park acknowledgement that a portable toilet would be suitable
- Recommendation to look into Grizzly Wood
- Timber platforms are not acceptable or recommended by staff
  - o Support less structured play area
  - o Open space play area to allow natural play area
  - o Park is geared for five year olds and under
    - Toddler Park
    - Day Care Park
- Upper path construction materials are suggesting mulch, staff does not support that material choice
- Musical Element such as drums, chimes, etc.
  - o Experiences provided from Karen Hornaday Park is that there is 127 front doors and persons other than kids would be using those instruments at two in the morning
- Drainage will be addressed
- Staff did not support placement of gravel or shrubs
  - o gravel and toddlers did not mix
  - o shrubs roots would break up the asphalt
- Completion is expected by end of construction season 2024
  - o Funding will appropriated when the plan is approved
    - Rotary Funding
    - HCC Funding
    - HART Funding
  - o Approval is needed by the February Meeting
- Best case scenario regarding project timeline

**NEW BUSINESS**

A. Memorandum PARC 24-007 from Parks & Trails Planner re: Diamond Creek Recreation Area (DCRA) Trails Connector Route

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title and requested a motion and second to suspend the rules to allow Billy Day with the Homer Trails Alliance to participate in the discussion.

ARCHIBALD/GALBRAITH MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ALLOW MR. DAY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSION.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Mr. Steffy reviewed the memorandum and referring to the maps provided in the packet on page 61 and 62 provided a synopsis of what is being proposed by obligating the funding Ordinance 24-06 was proposing to show that the city has “skin in the game”. He did question the amounts shown as encumbered on the report from finance on page 60 of the packet, but acknowledged that was for another time.

Billy Day, Homer Trails Alliance (HTA), added that HTA is proposing within the scope of the engineering that the city consider looking at the Clark property, a portion that fronts the highway and will be part of the study area, as well as the All Abilities Trail connecting to the proposed trail, heading to the Department of Transportation (DOT) parking area, where the current trailhead is located. Mr. Day referred to the map shown on page 62 of the packet, indicating the parking area just to the north of the “star” shown as point “B”, on the East side of the highway, just south of Green Timbers Road, the owner has indicated a willingness to sell that parcel to use as a trail access parking area.

Mr. Steffy reported that this is similar to the purchase of the property on Rogers Loop that the Commission supported and would also fulfill a portion of the DCRA management plan.

Mr. Day continued, stating the owner has and never had any interest in selling the property until he approached him with his idea, however if the city was to purchase it for the trailhead purpose the owner would sell it for a very reasonable figure as he was very supportive of the project. Mr. Day provided additional information of the use of the trails in the area and the increasing popularity, upgrading the access in areas of forested islands as described in the DCRA Management Plan to establish summer use trails.

Commissioner Harrald entered her support for the proposal on the record for the funding.

Further information was provided by Mr. Day and Mr. Steffy regarding the proposed trail and the engineering study and what the funding would provide, if the Borough would be involved and there would be agreements required, ADA compliance would be nominal due to areas of grade, portions may be ADA accessible but details would be determined by the engineering study.

Chair Lewis called for a motion and second.



ARCHIBALD/GALBRAITH MOVE TO PARCAC SUPPORTS ORDINANCE 24-06 AND RECOMMEND CITY COUNCIL APPROVE THE APPROPRIATION OF \$25,000 FROM THE HART FUND TRAILS FOR THE PURPOSE IDENTIFIED IN ORDINANCE 24-06.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Memorandum PARC 24-006 from Recreation Manager re: Proposed Community Recreation Center

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to Recreation Manager Illg.

Recreation Manager Illg reviewed his memorandum for the Commission, he noted the informal working group that was formed comprised of the City Manager, Economic Development Manager, Councilmembers Aderhold and Erickson, two members of the community and himself using the Resolution 23-118 and Memorandum CC-23-244 have reviewed potential locations throughout the area and using the scoring matrix narrowed the locations down to the top three. Mr. Illg noted all members of the working group with the exception of one used the matrix to score the locations. He reminded the Commission that all the information presented was purely informational at this point, the information used narrows locations down to these top three and the next step is to have the city's Real Estate Broker reach out to the owners of the two of the three properties as the city owns one location.

Chair Lewis noted that the property owned by HEA on Grubstake has environmental issues.

Mr. Illg noted that those issues will be taken into consideration when it comes time to perform the deeper dive when and if City Council decides to proceed. This is just the first step in the process, identifying locations and setting up the top three preferred locations. Next steps would be narrowing down the location and then cost estimates for the location, and funding options. Mr. Illg reiterated that the information is just informative and he is seeking the Commission's input on the process so far.

Mr. Illg facilitated discussion on the following:

- Community center should be walkable from the schools and central to the community
- Should reflect highest ratings via the selection matrix
- Location selected may add the requirement for additional infrastructure such as traffic lights to facilitate safety and access/egress
- Be a minimum of 1.5 acres of land
- Offer ample parking
- Consideration for the neighboring property owners

- Other entities considering the location for their future projects
- Tentative budget for the Community Center
- The requirements of a new community center and the many organizations that would want to be heard on their requirements such as a minimum of two basketball courts, volleyball courts, six pickleball courts.
  - o The working group is focusing on a bare minimum of what is needed, especially since they are moving away from the HERC location.
  - o Nothing is going to be done with that location any time soon and unless the city obtains Brownfield funding.
- Acknowledged that arts and culture were important, since it was apparent that a sales tax would be needed to fund the project and those votes would be required to support the project as well as recreation users.
  - o It is possible that the Council will request the voters to continue the sales tax that is being used to pay the new police station as it will be paid off soon.
    - This is conjecture at this point in time.
- It was noted that there was an error in the placement computations on the matrix
  - o HEA parcel ranked first at 123
  - o West Homer ranked second at 114
  - o Poopdeck/Hazel ranked third at 99
  - o Main Street ranked fourth at 95
  - o Main Street/Sterling Hwy ranked fifth at 92.5
  - o Public Works new campus lot ranked 6<sup>th</sup> at 90
  - o Marley ranked 7<sup>th</sup> at 75
    - Suggestion to hold on the selection until a soils report could be obtained since that may add to cost
    - Reminder that this was an informal review at this time to save costs to the tax payers
      - There may be prior studies done when looking for the new Public Works Campus and or Police Station location
- Recommend postponing this to the February meeting until further information can be obtained regarding funding strategies and costs, and will allow the Commission time to review all the potential locations.

ROEDL/GALBRAITH MOVED TO POSTPONE SELECTION OF THE PROPOSED LOCATION THAT THE COMMISSION SUPPORTS UNTIL THE FEBRUARY MEETING TO ALLOW COMPLETE REVIEW OF ALL PROPOSED SITE LOCATIONS BY THE COMMISSIONERS.

Brief discussion on the ranking of Poopdeck/Hazel and Main Street parcels.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

## **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

- A. 2023 PARC Annual Calendar
- B. Reappointment of Commissioner Harrald
- C. City Manager's Report
  - CM Report for October 23, 2023 Council Meeting
  - CM Report for November 13, 2023 Council Meeting
- D. City Newsletter for November 2023

Chair Lewis reviewed the informational items and noted that a volunteer was needed to provide the report to City Council. He then asked if Commissioner Archibald wanted to provide the report since he was going to be in attendance.

Commissioner Harrald responded that she will be out of town so was unavailable.

Commissioner Archibald conceded he would provide the report since he would already be attending the meeting.

## **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

### **COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF**

Deputy City Clerk Krause commented that this meeting was very fun compared to her last meeting. She added that a framework for the Strategic Plan is already in place and needs to be updated and there will also be Community Recreation fees and Redoing or fixing the Nomar Artists Wall. She noted that the Nomar Wall can be pushed to March at the request of the Chair.

Parks Maintenance Coordinator Felice and Parks Planner Steffy had no comments.

Recreation Manager Illg noted that at the next meeting they will start working on the Commission Strategic Plan and developing formal, comprehensive parks and community recreation policies and procedures.

### **COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Roedl requested that Non-motorized Motorized Walkways to be on the agenda as he would like to be pro-active about this before summer gets here and he sees what happened last year with the trails happen again.

Commissioner Archibald inquired about the worksession to discuss that and other items.

Chair Lewis noted that they will have a worksession prior to the February meeting.

Commissioner Harrald expressed her appreciation for spending time with the Commission this week. She then requested that the Commission address how they work with the Planning Commission by

communicating and understanding what they are working on and expressed that she was not sure how the Commission could effectively address this topic, adding as an agenda item or if the Clerk could provide a suggestion.

Deputy City Clerk Krause responded that it could be added as a goal within their Strategic Plan & Goals, noting that the Commission used to have one but it has been several years.

Commissioner Harrald thanked the Clerk and acknowledged that Commissioner Archibald may have more insight on what is happening with the Planning Commission, but it would be great to have a voice with them. She then expressed her appreciation have former Commissioner Lowney in the audience tonight and the HTA's interest in the trails. It's a really great time for Parks and Rec.

Commissioner Galbraith stated it was a great meeting and expressed appreciation on learning more about the city processes and how they work. He stated that he hoped to be able to contribute more in the future at Commission meetings.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. The next regular meeting is Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. A worksession will be conducted at 4:30 p.m. Meetings will be conducted at City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom webinar.

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RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_