

Session 22-06 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:04 p.m. on June 14, 2022 at the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, via Zoom Webinar and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Tulio Perez was appointed June 13, 2022 to fill the seat vacated by Commissioner Debbie Speakman.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS PEREZ, MARKS, AREVALO, CHEROK, PERSON, STUDENT
REPRESENTATIVE PEARSON

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS BROWN AND GAMBLE (excused)

STAFF: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER ENGBRETSSEN
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

Chair Marks welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Perez to the Commission and noted that they finally have a full commission.

AGENDA APPROVAL

AREVALO/PERSON 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. May 10, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Marks read the Consent Agenda and requested a motion.

CHEROK/PERSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

A. Update on Non-Motorized Transportation from Homer Draw Down & Homer Trails Alliance –
Commissioner Person

Adele Person, member of the Homer Draw Down Group and the Homer Trails Alliance, provided a report on these two groups and their participation and/or involvement in projects related to non-motorized transportation. She responded to questions from the Commission related to how one would join and expansion and use of multi-use trails and creation of such infrastructure.

Chair Marks explained the use of guest speakers and presentations at the Commission meetings on topics and items of interest to the Commission.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. EDC Staff Report

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen spoke to her written staff report included in the packet. She noted that Council will be addressing the ordinance on proposed Zoning changes at the June 27, 2022 meeting; Council has approved a resolution to have the City Manager develop a plan for demolition of the smaller building on the HERC Campus currently used for the city maintenance department.

Ms. Engebretsen and Commissioners discussed the following topics:

- Projects being done by the Homer Draw Down Group and the City's involvement
 - o Hands-on trail work by volunteers
 - o Trails Symposium scheduled for Fall of 2022 – to identify how people want to get around and those connection points
 - o Having an neighborhood meeting regarding sidewalks and other improvements for Bunnell/Old Town area
- Suggested ways that the Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan could be used and distributed to developers, groups and interested businesses
- Updates on the City organizational structure changes, duties and new positions to address upcoming workloads and projects.
- Outcomes from the Trails Symposium, stated that Homer Drawdown is focusing on public advocacy and community input, being proactive and liaison with Borough and State.
 - o Homer Drawdown would report directly to Council and it is a more organic than structured
- Updated Campground Brochure

B. Homer Chamber of Commerce Report

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen reported that the Chamber has hired a new consultant to work on the Visitor's Guide. They are very familiar with Alaska and produce Soldotna's and Seward's Visitor Guide. The Chamber is interested in having some type of event in June to draw people to Homer as currently certain businesses are super busy but there is not a lot of traffic on Pioneer Avenue.

C. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) Report

Chair Mark reported that she will be attending this meeting on Thursday, June 16, 2022 and will provide a report at the August meeting.

D. Homer Marine Trades

Chair Marks noted that the minutes were included in the packet.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Housing Staff Report

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title. She deferred to Economic Development Manager Engebretsen.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen reported new employee start dates and reviewed the project going in off of Adams Drive which contained 18 units single family, 2 bedrooms, 700 square feet units. Aspen Hotels was constructing employee housing units.

Deputy City Clerk Krause was able to provide some details of the project when questioned by the Commission.

B. Balance of Quality of Life, Change, & Community Growth Discussion

- i. SWOT Graphic
- ii. Opportunities Table Generated from Last Meeting

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title and deferred to Economic Development Manager Engebretsen to begin discussion.

Ms. Engebretsen shared screen and facilitated feedback from commissioners on identifying three to five words that make Homer “Homer”. The following was noted by Ms. Engebretsen and shared by the commission:

- Formatting can be changed to make it user friendly and more appealing
- The words would be used to create a graphic for the cover page of the diagram or word art cloud
- Commissioner Person offered the following: Fishing, art, home, kachemak bay, tuggeht, Dena’ina sugpiaq, eclectic
- Commissioner Arevalo offered The Bench, the sea, community, intact nature and not ruined yet
- Commissioner Cherok offered eclectic, community, serene, free spirited, natural, majestic, quaint
- Commissioner Perez offered heritage, heart, hope and home
- Student Commissioner Pearson offered Fishing, Nature, picturesque and harbor

Chair Marks reported that at an earlier meeting Commissioner Arevalo suggested having a broader viewpoint in the Commission discussions and believed that this would be the first step and encouraged to gather words from others, noting that the statement of keeping Homer “Homer” the Commission needs to define what that means to the community. She continued by stating they can have a fuller discussion at the August meeting, noting that it was also important on how they present to City Council suggesting a similar presentation like the wayfinding and streetscape plan.

Commissioner Perez inquired about creation of a survey to distribute to the community so they can receive the input.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen responded that there are plans to have a much larger community input project and she questioned her ability to use the information that they would receive from a survey so did not recommend that action at this time.

Commissioner Person stated that the SWOT analysis needed to formatting adjustments as follows:

- She liked the word cloud graphic and added the word Bishop's Beach to be included
- The formatting of the bullet points under Weaknesses need to be lined up
- Second bullet point should be re-worded to reflect the following: Difficult for early to mid-career residents to grow in place and thrive
- Under Threats: Risk of becoming empty second homes
- Including the individual comments table requires verbiage changes; Specifically noted under her comments the following changes:
 - o Housing: subsidize ADU (accessory Dwelling Units) this should reflect Encourage ADU
 - o Combine PARCAC points into one
 - o Sales Tax Cap – she was referring to simplifying the Sales Tax Cap
- Review of items under each Commissioner and clarify any misinterpreted statements, condense repeated items for the next meeting
- Marine Trades is missing from category 1 and other maritime culture or fisheries items reflected
- Under Threat – the “loss of town and nature” but it should be more defined to provide clarification on the connections to wildlife
- Defining and clarifications to a one page documents
- Staff will distribute mid-July upon return and then have on the August meeting agenda
- Under weakness – Serious improvement in the areas of infrastructure and indicating that they are in the works but not removed so at a later date they can be shown as completed.
- Changing verbiage so it does not be taken as a stab to the persons making those repairs
- Leaving the conditions as stated so it shows the urgency on the requirement to repair
- Staff will send the previous staff reports to Commissioner Perez so that he can submit a SWOT

Chair Marks with Staff input clarified that the Commission can submit during the annual report to Council in late August or early September.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Recommendation to Sell City Owned Property at 3713 Main Street
 - i. Land Allocation Plan Excerpt for 3713 Main Street

Chair Marks introduced the item and provided information from the recent City Council meeting regarding the city owned parcel on Main Street. She stated that the revenue from the sale of the parcel would not be used for the Community Center as it was designated for the Library. She further advocated for the land to be used for parking noting that there is a strong push for a walkable Homer but where are people going to park their vehicles once they arrive in Homer.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen provided input on the possible additional uses for this parcel such as low income housing that would provide a greater Community benefit. There is a \$73,000 assessment on the property as well. If the Commission wants to take this issue to Council that would be the decision of the Commission.

The Commission discussed the possible sale of the parcel and each expressed that they did not support the idea of the city selling that land but holding onto it for another use and to maintain as green space, pedestrian and wildlife corridor, if sold could an easement be included to protect these needs, preventing the loss of large mature trees in the Central Business District, making a broader assessment of how to accommodate for a more walkability, acknowledging that a central parking lot would be

needed and review of the strategic plan at the next meeting to consider what the commission can recommend on parking for vehicles.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen noted that there were two actions that the Commission could employ one review and make a recommendation during the Land Allocation Plan review in December and revisiting this issue when they have more staff and what is done can be in concert with the work of others.

Chair Marks recommended that they postpone this topic to an agenda closer to the Land Allocation Review.

Chair Marks and Economic Development Manager clarified that no recommendation or motion was required since Council did not direct the Commission to consider the item. They further noted that if asked by a member of Council a response can be provided that while the Commission reviewed and considered the sale of the parcel, they did not believe that sale of the property at this time was beneficial and wanted to review items before making a recommendation along those lines.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Commissioner Speakman Recognition Letter dated May 18, 2022
- B. EDC 2021-2022 Strategic Plan/Goals
- C. City Manager's Report for May 9, 2022
- D. City Manager's Report for May 23, 2022
- E. EDC 2022 Calendar
- F. Memo 22-096 Tulio Perez Appointment to EDC w/ Backup Info

Chair Marks noted and facilitated discussion on the informational materials provided. She noted that Commissioner Cherok was scheduled to report to Council.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen explained in response to Commissioner Cherok the typical process and noted benefit of Commissioner Perez as the newest Commissioner what reporting is conducted at Council meetings and when.

Commissioner Arevalo questioned the offering of free services noted in the City Manager's Report for Local Hazard Mitigation.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen provided clarification on the free services.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Krause reported receiving an email at approximately 7:20 p.m. from Commissioner Cherok. He was unable to locate the link to the meeting. She then expressed her appreciation of the interesting topics and work being performed by the Commission now and thanked the Commission for their efforts and time.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen commented that she did not see the Woodville Report online and that there is a fair amount of work and updates being done on the city website currently so she will get back to her on that when she can get a copy of the document. She then notified the Commission that she will be out on vacation starting tomorrow for three weeks so follow up on many of

these items will happen when she comes back. Ms. Engebretsen encouraged the Commission to get out, enjoy the season and it was nice to see all the greenery.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Chair Marks thanked Deputy City Clerk Krause for filling in on this meeting. She welcomed Commissioner Perez and that he came to the commission with a sharp mind, commented that he has a great background to share with the Commission and appreciated that he wanted to step forward to join the Commission and look forward to him being able to attend in person.

Commissioner Person reported that if you wanted to meet the drawdown group, the next Community meeting is June 23, 2022, Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. It's usually by Zoom although they're starting to speak about hybrid meetings. The website is www.homerdrawdown.info.

Commissioner Perez inquired about the next Trails Alliance meeting and provided his email address to Commissioner Person.

Commissioner Person provided information regarding an incredible show at the Pratt Museum regarding protection adaptation resistance it is the work of 54 indigenous artist about the cultural revival and resurgence and is available until September when it leave for a national tour.

Commissioner Cherok welcomed Commissioner Perez and expressed looking forward to working with him on the Commission. He stated that it was really awesome to have people from different viewpoints come together on common ground like the topic of the property sale. He noted that it was fun to work with everyone on the Commission.

Commissioner Perez expressed his appreciation for the warm welcome and looking forward to learning and very excited about working with the Commission.

Chair Marks noted that she provided each Commissioner present a copy of the Peony Celebration Brochure and for those Commissioners not present or are absent there will be copies available in the cabinet for them to pick up. She noted that she was excited about all the things happening and that a walking map is in development and looking forward to including the ADA Accessible trail. She further encouraged the Commissioners to attend and participate. Ms. Marks expressed her appreciation for staff.

Student Commissioner Pearson expressed her appreciation not being the newest person on the Commission.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Their next special meeting is Tuesday, August 23, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers and via Zoom Webinar.

Renee Krause

RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: *August 23, 2022*