

Session 21-09, a Regular Meeting of the Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair David Lewis at 5:30 p.m. on October 21, 2021 from the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS ARCHIBALD, LEWIS, FAIR, HARRALD, LOWNEY, GALBRAITH, ROEDL,
AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE FLORA

STAFF: DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY
PARKS SUPERINTENDENT STEFFY
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR KEISER

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Lewis called for a motion to approve the agenda.

FAIR/LOWNEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

William Marley, city resident, spoke to New Business Item D regarding his proposal to the commission to purchase property along the Sterling Highway owned by him for the creation of convention center and park.

Bill Fry, Vice Mayor of Kachemak City, spoke to their parks revitalization project proposal under New Business Item B and provided an update on the project as to date.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

A. Green Cemeteries by Barb Seaman

Chair Lewis introduced the presenter to the Commission.

Ms. Seaman shared her background in land management and spoke to her written proposal on green cemeteries. She explained what a "green cemetery" was and suggested the Commission go through the information provided in the packet to facilitate feedback.

Ms. Seaman facilitated questions and discussion from commissioners on the following:

Hickerson Cemetery is too small and another cemetery location will be needed
How to move forward with the project

Additional methods that people can be buried green
Interesting approach to death and topic for discussion
Future agenda item during Land Allocation Plan or Strategic Plan Review
Possible actions in the interim that could be conducted by Ms. Seaman

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Regular Meeting Minutes for August 19, 2021 and September 16, 2021

Chair Lewis requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

FAIR/LOWNEY 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. Community Recreation Report - Recreation Manager Illg

Chair Lewis noted that Recreation Manager Illg was not in attendance but provided a written staff report in the packet.

B. Fall Park Beach Walk Through Site Visit Report

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title and requested Commissioners to provide their observations.

Commissioner Lowney opined that it was a productive walk-through, there were many good ideas, they did a good job; there are a lot of concerns regarding the parking. She believed that they were moving in a positive direction and looked forward to future work on a master plan for Bishop's Beach.

Commissioner Harrauld stated that the weather assisted them, making it easier to visualize what they needed around the park, Ms. Mouw had many wonderful ideas and it was a perfect blend of arts and parks.

Commissioner Archibald reiterated the previous comment and offered additional praise for Ms. Mouw and did not want to lose their energy. There are questions and concerns on installation of a round – about.

Commissioner Fair expressed confidence with Rika Mouw and does not foresee her letting it go. He agreed on the importance of getting the parking lot drive through right. There must be a logical traffic pattern and it would be better to get the parking out of the way so that one can experience the park not the parking lot.

Commissioner Roedl arrived at 6:16 p.m.

Parks Superintendent Steffy stated the Public Works Director was interested in the concept of re-routing the traffic, she will continue to pursue the Hillstrand property as well. He also noted that signage created by Dan Coe will be installed for the Beluga Slough Trail during his walk around with Laura Mahler, Manager, Islands and Ocean Visitor Center. He then agreed that he was struggling too with the weather.

Chair Lewis stated that the Commission needs to come up with a precise plan so that they can chip away as the money comes available.

Parks Superintendent Steffy responded to questions on funding availability and steps being taken by staff.

C. Parks & Trails Maintenance Report - Parks Superintendent Steffy

Chair Lewis introduced Parks Superintendent Steffy and invited him to provide his report.

Parks Superintendent Steffy reported on the following items:

- installation of the Skate Park new half pipe equipment
- working to advertise the recreational gear library more
- ADA Parks Transition Plan is in development now work is being done by ADA Coordinator Krause to put that information into a format so they can prioritize the projects and then start getting funded and begin working on them
- Recent meetings on trail improvements
- 2021 Alaska Recreation and Parks Association conference
 - o Congratulated Commissioner Lowney on her award
- Homelessness and the City's involvement
- RTCA visited the library property to view the project as well as the Poopdeck Trail and Water Trail projects

Discussion ensued on how parks in the city are not ADA compliant and a large amount of work will be required to bring them into compliance; informational materials provided were wonderful and provided many great ideas; cross generational activities in the parks and to have that item on a future agenda; use of the haul out area with regard to the ship to be scrapped and that it is in the middle of the space typically used for camping.

D. Public Works Director Report - Jan Keiser, PE

Chair Lewis invited Public Works Director Keiser to provide her report for the commission.

Public Works Director Keiser highlighted and addressed the following topics:

connecting Rika Mouw with Corvus Designs on developing a conceptual Bishop's Beach Park Master Plan

- Deadline to submit application for funding from DEC for Clean Water Funding for storm water management drainage
- Addressing drainage problems is appropriate to use HART Roads funding

Trails are being recommended in high numbers recently

Public Works Department will be receiving two interns January 10, 2022

- One intern will be a water wizard and one intern will be a Climate Action Champion
- Requesting Student Commissioner Flora for assistance in getting interest from High School Students on the Climate Action

Restructuring of duties for coverage of restroom cleaning moving from the Parks Division to Custodial Division and also creating a part time position as a restroom custodian in 2022

Public Works Director Keiser facilitated questions and discussion on:

Trails recommended is there connectivity to existing trails

- Issues surrounding ownership, easement, location, etc.

Appreciation for the Bishop's Beach Park Master Plan

Wonderful idea to move and separate the restroom custodial care from parks to custodial

Marriage between economic development and parks and tourism

- the city does not do a good enough job to make these connections
- future business plan for parks

- the parks is an economic driver bringing in over \$100,000 annually

Staffing for Parks Division is extremely limited and cannot support any additional activities or events currently and into the immediate future

Necessary to create of a Friends of Homer City Parks group

Temporary employment is guided by the regulations in place for employees in regards to benefits

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Memorandum from Deputy City Clerk re: PARC Bylaw Amendments
 - Proposed Draft PARC Bylaws
 - Approved PARC Bylaws Adopted 10/14/2019

Chair Lewis introduced the item and invited Deputy City Clerk Tussey to speak to her memorandum.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey explained that the memorandum included her comments and if the Commission had additional questions or comments or any amendments this would be the appropriate time.

Commissioner Harrauld commended Deputy City Clerk Tussey for including her comments as it provided a background on why the changes were needed or made.

LOWNEY/ROEDL MOVED TO HOLD A SECOND READING ON THE PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENTS AT THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Kachemak City Park Revitalization Project

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of title.

FAIR/LOWNEY MOVED TO DISCUSS THE KACHEMAK CITY PARK REVITALIZATION PROJECT

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Parks Superintendent Steffy explained that Kachemak City is requesting a donation from the City of Homer and does not have information on where funding would come from. This is basically a reciprocation request since Kachemak City has supported many projects in the City of Homer.

Chair Lewis requested a motion and second.

LOWNEY/FAIR MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THE CITY OF HOMER DONATES \$10,000 TOWARDS THE KACHEMAK CITY PARK REVITALIZATION PROJECT.

Discussion ensued on the funding request and how the city cannot even afford to maintain their own parks facilities and amenities such as replacing picnic tables however there is concern with spending tax payer dollars on non-city parks. Acknowledgement was made on the contributions of the residents of Kachemak City to facilities within city limits, but they also use those facilities and they do not pay to maintain and operate those facilities outside any applicable fees. Commendation was made on the increase of activity and efforts to that Park by Kachemak City but there was a lack of justification for the recommendation of expending those funds requested. The amenities offered by Kachemak City Park provides an option for those residents who live outside the city with young children. If a monetary donation is necessary and can they do an in-kind donation such as equipment and or labor. It was noted that the City funded a large donation of \$180,000 to SPARC and tens of thousands of dollars to fund the Hockey Rink and the Zuboni. This shows a mutual aid, respect and recommend working harder with City Council on this project. This project will be beneficial to both cities young families.

Public Works Director Keiser stated that they would need direction and permission from City Council to be able to use city equipment and operators. She suggested that the Commission express their support for the development of the park and request City Council authorize Public Works to negotiate with Kachemak City to see what is needed and what other needs that the City of Homer may be able to assist them with such as in-kind services that they are needing to contract.

Chair Lewis opened the floor to Mr. Fry to comment.

Mr. Fry responded that he does not view this as a “yours and ours” and he was not able to come up with anything they really need, and it is really more of Kachemak City’s park but he appreciate the Commission’s time.

Further discussion on the following points were:

Public Works staff is already busy with their responsibilities, and there was little faith that in-kind services would work in this case

Chair Lewis called for a roll call vote.

NO. HARRALD, ARCHIBALD, FAIR, LOWNEY, ROEDL

YES. LEWIS, GALBRAITH

Motion failed.

Chair Lewis requested a motion to explore in-kind services donation.

LOWNEY/HARRALD MOVED TO RECOMMEND THAT CITY COUNCIL IN LIEU OF THE \$10,000 DONATION TO KACHEMAK CITY FOR THIS PARK LOOK AT THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE IN-KIND DONATIONS TO ASSIST IN THE PROCESS OF COMPLETING THE PARK.

Discussion ensued on respecting the workload of the City of Homer staff and what is feasible and if there are other ways to provide in-kind services and keep the door open to support the park. It was acknowledged that there are several examples and history of mutual aid agreements and activities and depending on what is needed the City of Homer may be able to assist Kachemak City complete their project. It was agreed that it was not a “your park, our park” situation but that a service area agreement with communities from Ninilchik south should be looked at in the near future.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

C. Memorandum from City Clerk re: Meeting Schedule for 2022

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title and reviewed the memorandum. He opened the floor for discussion. Hearing no comments or questions from the Commission Chair Lewis requested a motion and second.

LOWNEY/HARRALD MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2022 ADVISORY BODY MEETING SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

D. Memorandum from Deputy City Clerk re: Recommendation on Land Purchase

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title. He requested a motion to bring the item to floor for discussion.

ARCHIBALD/HARRALD MOVED TO DISCUSS THE PURCHASE OF WILLIAM MARLEY'S PROPERTY.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Discussion was facilitated by Chair Lewis and the following points, comments or questions were made by Commissioners:

The location would make a beautiful park but the price tag is too high in consideration of all the other items that the city is trying to accomplish such as the HERC and improvements at existing city parks

it is difficult to pass on the opportunity to expand the city's parks and recreation but there is no financial feasibility to accomplish the purchase

The Commission can recommend yes or no it is still up to City Council for the final denial or approval of the matter.

The development of a Convention Center while they are struggling on the direction of the HERC which has also included the possibility of a convention center as well as a recreation center

The bluff in that area has been quite unstable but the land would offer potential access to the beach west of Bishop's Beach.

Amending the recommendation to remove the convention center aspect.

Public Works Director Keiser stated that Dr. Marley has visited her and they discussed his dreams, visions and desires to make a profit on the sale of this property for him and his

partners. She respected his vision and desires but that if she had the \$900 million¹ which was the purchase price of the property, she would spend that money on upgrading Karen Hornaday Park with the Master Plan that been sitting on the shelf for some 15 odd years and Bishop's Beach plus other things that we desperately need in our parks system.

Chair Lewis requested a motion and second.

No motions were offered by the Commission.

Commissioner Archibald requested clarification on the status of the issue.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey explained that since no decision was made on the subject it can be brought back before the Commission as it has been done before. She provided further clarification on the tabling of a subject when no date is given which unless brought up from the table effectively ends the topic or action requested. Deputy City Clerk Tussey further noted it was why the Clerks preferred to use the term postpone instead of table.

There was no further discussion.

- E. Request from City Attorney for Further Analysis on the Amendments to the City of Homer Gift, Donation and Art Policies, Procedures & Guidelines

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title.

ARCHIBALD/HARRALD MOVED TO POSTPONE THIS TOPIC TO THE NEXT MEETING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. 2021 PARC Annual Calendar
- B. City Manager's Report for October 11, 2021
- C. Letter to the Editor - Dogs in Public Places
- D. Notice of Funding Opportunity Executive Summary: ARPA
- E. Addressing Homelessness in Parks: An Inclusive Practices Guide
- F. Creating Parks and Public Spaces for People of All Ages: A Step by Step Guide
- G. Winter Placemaking Guide

¹ The two parcels were listed for \$1.2 was presented to the Commission in February 2020.

Chair Lewis reviewed the informational materials and requested a volunteer for the City Council meeting.

Commissioner Archibald stated he would provide the report as long as he was being reappointed to the Commission.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey informed the Commission on the re-appointments of Commissioners Galbraith, Archibald and Lewis.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Parks Superintendent Steffy commented his appreciation for the Commissioners time expended at the beach walk through and complimented Commissioner Fair on his editorial for the new lend a leash program. He has also spoken with the Fish & Wildlife regarding dogs and they are commencing a program called Bark Ranger where they will reward responsible dog owners. He then thanked Deputy City Clerk Tussey for her work on the commission by-laws.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Archibald commented on being a bit torn on the decision and thanked everyone for their time and being appointed for another term.

Commissioner Roedl commented on getting through the 300 page packet and that the information in the back of the packet was really good, he thanked staff for including the information.

Student Representative Flora reported that she will be reaching out to the Public Works Director regarding providing more information at the high school about the environmental intern position.

Commissioner Harrauld congratulated Commissioner Lowney and Parks Superintendent Steffy on their achievements, and stating It is very easy from the Commission standpoint to realize how lucky we are for the staff we have and the historical knowledge and the energy they have on this Commission but it is really nice to see the staff recognized on a bigger level and Parks Superintendent Steffy deserves this award 10 times over for all his creativeness, patience and her appreciation for everything that he brings to their community. Commissioner Harrauld continued by stating it is really hard to have a meeting where you say no to everything that truly in your heart you support and she believed that it was really important for her to keep in mind that it is really fun to start new and shiny things but it is really hard to fund maintenance, staffing and those things are where they have shortages and are the Commission's priorities. Ms. Harrauld continued noting when grants are written, maintenance and staffing never makes the cut, she is glad that they keep that in mind as a group. The new park in Kachemak City will face the same issues in the future. Ms. Harrauld expressed her appreciation for the energy and joy that the Commission can bring to development of Bishop's Beach and she will look forward to finding ways that she can be a part of Kachemak City Park outside of this Commission.

Commissioner Lowney echoed the sentiments expressed by Commissioner Harrauld and others regarding the difficulties in making their decisions tonight but stated that after sitting on this Commission for so many years, she knows how hard and the amount of work and energies that the City needs to put into their parks and she expressed that the City is at a stage where they need to stop band-aiding their parks and try to really have an impact on their parks. She requested the Green Burials be on a future agenda. In relation to the events in the packet tonight, she wanted to assure the Public Works Director that she is definitely not intent on taxing the parks staff with those but it just brought back some of the energy from the past and COVID has dwindled some of that but as some of the people are aging out it is important to tap into that knowledge and the groups that have generated some of these activities in the past and re-coordinate with those groups to re-build those bonds. The Pratt Museum and the Pier One Theater is a good example of bringing art into the parks. She noted that the Friends of Karen Hornaday Park has been very inactive for a very long period of time now as well as Adopt A Park and she would like to revitalize those partnerships.

Commissioner Fair related an incident regarding the newly built dormitory at the Soldotna Campus and how it is in mothball status because after working 20-30 years on getting the funding to construct them now they cannot afford the operational costs. He believed the land purchase was an example with what is happening with the city, we have a lot of trails and parks. A lot of infrastructure and it is really hard as hell to take care of it because we are just stretched so thin and we don't have a lot of dollars. On one hand I would love to be able to say let's pony up the money to buy Dr. Marley's property, because even if we didn't do anything with it for a while it would be an incredible piece of property to sometime be able to do something with, in terms of parks. He expressed that he did not see any way possible to make that work and he did not know what would become of that property, but they may regret it someday. Commissioner Fair stated he felt the same way on the request for \$10,000 from Kachemak City. He said no with lots of trepidation as he was unsure if that \$10,000 would even help the city's parks. Sometimes the things you have to do suck.

Vice Mayor Fry commented that they did not have a bathroom at the park because they do not have water so if you could get City Council to approve giving water to Kachemak City then they could have a bathroom at the park and they would not need anything else from the City.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Lewis requested Commissioner Archibald to include Vice Mayor Fry's request in his report and adjourned the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m. The next Special meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 2, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.



RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: Dec. 2, 2021