

Session 22-02 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:05 p.m. on February 8, 2022 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.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS MARKS, BROWN, SPEAKMAN, GAMBLE, CHEROK, PERSON

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER AREVALO (excused)

STAFF: DEPUTY CITY PLANNER ENGBRETSSEN
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY

AGENDA APPROVAL

SPEAKMAN/BROWN 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. January 11, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Marks read the Consent Agenda and requested a motion.

GAMBLE/SPEAKMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. EDC Staff Report

Deputy City Planner and Special Projects Coordinator Engebretsen reported that City Council will be seeing the Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan presentation from Corvus Designs at the February 28th meeting. The conceptual HERC plans will also be unveiled, which will kick off various public participation events regarding the HERC project. The goal is to get public input on what the community wants to see happen

with that location. No decision has been made but in order to get grant funding they need to determine what they want to build. She requested EDC members participate when they can and noted she will send out more finalized dates and times of those events once they're available. There was brief discussion on the events, if more than one commissioner should attend, and how to notify Ms. Engebretsen if they intend to participate.

Ms. Engebretsen reported the Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing on the parking limitations in City Code for big box stores.

There was brief discussion on the upcoming public participation events, if more than one commissioner should attend, how commissioners can notify Ms. Engebretsen if they intend to participate, and Commissioner Person giving the next Council report at the February 28th meeting¹.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Wayfinding & Streetscape Implementation Funding

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading the title and deferred to Deputy City Planner and Special Projects Coordinator Engebretsen.

Ms. Engebretsen explained the tentative plan is Public Works will create a phased plan with a budget of \$40,000 a year for the next three years to implement the new Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan. The Public Works staff that is in charge of construction and purchasing signage wants to know what the commission considers priorities. Ms. Engebretsen spoke to the priority ranking sheet in the packet and asked for everyone to share their scores if they prepared them. She will be meeting with the other advisory bodies to gather their sign priorities as well.

Commissioners took turns sharing their wayfinding priority rankings with Ms. Engebretsen. Ms. Engebretsen read through the results to confirm the rankings, facilitated discussion on their selections, and made edits where needed. Chair Marks clarified no further action or a motion was necessary as they were just providing feedback to staff.

B. Special Event & Food Truck Permitting

- i. Special Event HCC Update Draft Memo from City Manager
- ii. Draft Ordinance Amending HCC Re: Special Events
- iii. Event Permit Decision Tree
- iv. Food HCC Update Draft Memo from City Manager
- v. HCC 8.11 Mobile Food Service Draft Amendments

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading the title and deferred to Deputy City Planner and Special Projects Coordinator Engebretsen and Deputy City Clerk Tussey to begin discussion.

¹ It was determined after the meeting that Commissioner Person was scheduled to give the EDC report at Council's February 14th regular meeting. Staff would coordinate with City Clerk Jacobsen to move the EDC report to February 28th to coincide with the Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan.

Ms. Engebretsen and Ms. Tussey spoke to the background of the large special event code and reasoning for amending it, the proposed event permit decision tree, and City staff's plan to build an online interactive Frequently Asked Questions page that would guide individuals to the information they need depending on the event they're planning. Commissioners voiced overall support of the special event code amendments.

In response to questions and concerns regarding the updates to food truck code, Ms. Engebretsen explained how the existing code and process was very restrictive and expensive, and how the revised code makes getting a food truck permit easier. Discussion included the following topics:

- Permit should require, at a minimum, showing proof of the applicant's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) certificate; Commissioner Gamble supports removing barriers for businesses but thinks skipping over health and safety safeguards is short-sighted; Commissioner Speakman agreed, noting the DEC permitting process is pretty extensive.
- The new process will only require the applicant states they have a copy of their business license and sales tax abilities but will not require proof of it; commissioners and staff discussed how the City is not an enforcement agency and how tedious other community's process is to verify this information; agreement that checkboxes on the application is sufficient.
- Removing the section of code that protected established restaurants from food truck competition. This topic went through extensive discussion at the City Staff level and it was determined the City does not regulate how many liquor licenses or restaurants there can be in a proximity to one another for standard businesses, and so in the spirit of the free market the proposed code does not intend to regulate food trucks as it has in the past. Any issues with food trucks being on private property is up to the owner of that property.
- Support for the "free market" concept, brings up the question why does the City regulate food trucks at all? Point made that it's coming from the same chapter as Itinerant Merchants and gives the City a right to deny illegitimate businesses from coming into the community, such as shady asphalt businesses. Food truck permits are a pretty standard thing in other municipalities, and gives some concept of who is in your down doing food services, coming from a health, welfare, and safety perspective.
- Concerns that by reducing the revenue from permits we're now losing a large amount of money due to the amount of staff time/labor put into the permitting process. Staff reasoned it would likely be less time-consuming because the new regulations will be easier to understand (therefore less staff time explaining the process), be more accessible online, less permitting barriers, and a simple \$50 fee can be paid over the phone.
- Reiteration of full support for removing excessive barriers, such as requiring finger-printing, using checkboxes on the form to determine eligibility and that revisions to code can always be done at a later time if needed.

GAMBLE/BROWN MOVED TO SUPPORT THE HOMER CITY CODE AMENDMENTS REGARDING SPECIAL EVENTS AND MOBILE FOOD SERVICES AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL BY CITY COUNCIL.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

C. Identifying Next Goal for EDC to Work On

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading the title and explained why she would like the commission to identify their goal priorities to aid staff in preparing for upcoming EDC meeting.

Chair Marks facilitated input from each commissioner on which two topics they think the commission should be focusing their efforts on next. Deputy City Planner and Special Projects Coordinator Engebretsen shared her screen to take live notes on their goal priorities. Based on the commissioners' comments and discussion, the following goals were rated/identified as top priorities:

1. View economic development through the lens of balancing growth with quality of life
Housing
2. Workforce development (housing, childcare, etc.)
Housing
View economic development through the lens of balancing growth with quality of life
Familiarize with smart growth principles and best practices
3. Housing
Planning for growth
Familiarize with smart growth principles and best practices
Need for workers – Chamber job fair

Ms. Engebretsen provided feedback to the commissioners from a Planning perspective and how their input will be beneficial and where. She agreed to bring more information back to the commission at the next meeting for them to review.

Commissioner Person left the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Homer News Article dated December 23, 2021
- B. EDC 2021-2022 Strategic Plan/Goals
- C. City Manager's Report for January 10, 2022
- D. EDC 2022 Calendar

Chair Marks noted the informational materials. She thanked Commissioner Arevalo for providing the last EDC report and Commissioner Person for giving the next report.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Tussey reported that reappointment notices for Commissioners Brown and Cherok, and advertising for EDC seats, will go out at the end of the month since terms expire April 1st.

Deputy City Planner and Special Projects Coordinator Engebretsen thanked the commission for their work and time.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Gamble thanked everyone for a productive discussion.

Commissioner Speakman voiced her thanks for the hard work and her appreciation for Ms. Engebretsen's comment regarding EDC's time on projects that make sense for the City.

Commissioner Cherok commented he is looking forward to coming up with housing solutions since that is big on his list.

Commissioner Brown commented it was a great meeting and gave thanks.

Commissioner Marks commented it was a good meeting, looks forward the seeing everyone next month, and she feels they are moving along very well with their projects.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m. Their next regular meeting is Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. and is scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.



RACHEL TUSSEY, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: March 8, 2022