

Session 22-01, 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 February 17, 2022 from the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

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

**ABSENT:** COMMISSIONER GALBRAITH (EXCUSED)

**STAFF:** DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE  
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR KEISER  
RECREATION MANAGER ILLG  
PARKS SUPERINTENDENT STEFFY  
DEPUTY CITY PLANNER & SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR ENGBRETSSEN

### **AGENDA APPROVAL**

HARRALD/ROEDL MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

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

Barb Seaman, city resident, commented on the benefits to creating a green cemetery. She noted the estimated costs, which was provided in the information and included in the packet, that would possibly be incurred for cremation or a standard burial and estimated costs and processes to have a green cemetery, as well as what is contained in a conservation easement. She then responded to questions and comments on the following:

- A steward would be needed and a guarantee on perpetuity of funding.
- Private versus public land use to establish a green cemetery
- Possibility of State or borough owned land
- If a green cemetery could be created by the Land Trust what would the city's role be
- Easements are created differently
- Ms. Seaman would offer to be a liaison with the creation of the green cemetery.
- Caring for the land in the future
- Submitting a Letter to Editor to bring the idea to the public
- Developing partnerships are difficult and this idea may be well supported by the community

Commissioners expressed appreciation for Ms. Seaman bringing the information and the idea before the Commission. It was noted that this was an action item on the agenda under new business.

## **VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS**

## **RECONSIDERATION**

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### A. Special Meeting Minutes for December 2, 2021

Chair Lewis requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

LOWNEY/FAIR 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. Parks Superintendent Report

Parks Superintendent Steffy provided a review of his staff report that was provided in the packet. He highlighted the following items for the Commission:

- Progress on the new picnic tables and panoramic scene for the Baycrest Pull out
- Revisions to the Homer Non-Motorized Trails & Transportation Plan and Small Works Management Plan
- Skate Park and Friends of the Homer Skate Park discussion on remaining funds will be painting the ramps with appropriate paint no marine grade which is too slippery
  - Planning for a Grand Opening Event and Partnering with the Homer Council on the Arts

Parks Superintendent Steffy responded to questions and comments on the following:

- Homer Draw Down group project goals and having them support the walkability and connectivity development throughout Homer
  - Provided example of the Public Works Director walks everywhere even in winter
- Performance of maintenance of the trail along the harbor was just taken over by the Parks department but they did not have an efficient large application sanding mechanism
  - More discussion is needed on conducting winter maintenance
  - This section of the trail has some areas that are quite icy and is heavily used
  - A unified maintenance protocol is needed when it comes to interdepartmental cooperation

### B. Recreation Manager Report

Recreation Manager Illg noted that he provided a number of reports for the packet this month and while he will not be speaking to all of them he did speak to the following:

- He is assisting the city team with the Multi-use Community project and his requesting a worksession before the March 17<sup>th</sup> regular meeting to discuss the project
- Mask mandates are still in effect during attendance and participation in community recreation
- Started pick up Volley ball and it is really popular
- Received notification that the Homer High School will have limited to no availability regarding the gym. The HERC has its issues and just reiterates the need for a
- Working with the teachers at Homer High School to provide a recreational focus for students
- Sports Gear Lending Library
- Safe and Healthy Kids Fair will be on May 14, 2022 this year, having it a little later will hopefully provide for better weather this year.
- He is assisting the teachers Homer High and Middle School PE teachers teach the students the rudiments of Pickle Ball. He has been able to recruit the experienced and knowledgeable pickle ball players to assist in this project.
- Resurrecting the Flag Football League and looking at utilizing the high School football players to assist in coaching the younger players
- Partnering with the recreation club to facilitate some indoor recreation during spring break
- He now has seven new volunteers which allows him to conduct these recreation opportunities
- Finally he is working with Personnel Director Browning to use existing funding to fund a six month temporary, seasonal position.
- A wellness event is in the works for your family dog

Recreation Manager Illg facilitated discussion and comments on the following:

- recreation is an economic driver and the relationship between the advisory bodies on how the land within the city was being developed
- appreciation expressed for the new and returning programs and that a way has been found to provide the recreation program with at least part time support

#### C. Public Works Director Report

Public Works Director Keiser provided her report to the Commission. She informed the commission on the following:

- Homer Green Infrastructure Storm Water Management System
- Semester By the Bay Interns and the projects that they will be assisting with
- the Sustainable Sculpture Show was canceled due to the weather and will be announced at a later date for the new date
- Advised on the status update for the Main Street Sidewalk stating the design work is complete and will be requesting Council approve the funding to construct the project.

Public Works Director Keiser handled comments and questions on the following:

- appreciation for continuing and going forward with the Main Street Sidewalk and suggestion to consider Ben Walters or the area around the Senior Center for the possible grants that may be available
- Kachemak Drive pedestrian path
- Information provided in the packet is so informative and detailed

- Explained what was meant by high and low quality of wetlands on page 49 and 50 of the report
  - seasonal wetlands versus actual estuary
- Ground water sampling can be done in the winter as you are not doing any damage to the ground, they are drilling holes and putting the monitoring equipment into the ground. This testing will be done over the course of a year so they can gather the appropriate data.
- Explained that bluff erosion is caused by the water being channeled into these ravines and then installing turbines to create electricity
- Referring to page 44 of the packet, she noted that there are parcels that the Kenai Peninsula Borough is looking to sell and several have already been purchased by developers and then referenced page 40 which referred to the window closing on the opportunity for the City to purchase the property to effect solutions.
- There are still questions and problems to solve with the drainage issues on Baycrest but it would be a great solution.
- Commission review of land development and the commission's concerns on walkability and connectivity in regards to the issues caused by the effects of the development and how this effects or enhances the drainage issues.
- Current work is being done by city staff and council members to implement and change regulations and requirements for development of subdivision standards. Examples were provided using the Eric Lane and Terra Bella subdivision projects.

Commissioners expressed their appreciation for the in-depth report and information provided by the Public Works Director.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

## **PENDING BUSINESS**

- A. Wayfinding & Streetscape Implementation - Julie Engebretsen, Deputy City Planner & Special Projects Coordinator

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title and invited Deputy City Planner Engebretsen to provide her report.

Ms. Engebretsen reviewed her memorandum and presented a few slides showing final variations of the trailhead bollard designs as well as the other types of signage that will be used. She requested the Commission to provide some additional priorities that they would like to address for funding and if they agreed with the pedestrian wayfinding for downtown Homer and to determine if there were additional locations that should be added to that list. She noted that they will be asking City Council to expend about \$40,000 per year for three years to implement the plan.

Ms. Engebretsen facilitated comments, questions and suggestions from the Commission on the following:

- Use of QR codes for directions
- Directions to get to Karen Hornaday Park from Pioneer Avenue
  - There is campground signage
  - Chamber of Commerce updating the visitor brochure

- Better directions to Jack Gist Park
    - Renaming of the road to the park
    - Strict signage requirements from the State/AKDOT
- Identification of Neighborhood Trails
  - Neighborhood connector trails would be identified with a bollard
  - Islands and Ocean has individual wayfinding signage in place
- Trail off of the bottom of Crittenden Road could also be included
- Reber Trail
- Library Trail at the entrance
- Trails that the City does not have legal access and do not maintain will not qualify for wayfinding
- Trails at the Pratt Museum
- Working with Park Staff to solve typical issues that come up most from the public
- Installation of the signage and materials used would be tough enough to withstand the winter on the Spit
  - Guaranteed for 10 years
  - Prototype will be a cheaper material
  - hardware is the most expensive
- Sharing the color coding and wayfinding for private property owners to implement

HARRALD/LOWNEY MOVED TO SUPPORT THAT DOWNTOWN PEDESTRIAN WAYFINDING IS A PRIORITY

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Parks Superintendent Steffy responded that he would appreciate being shown the Theater Trail that was brought forward by Commissioner Lowney and continued on the widely used community trails that are not city owned or maintained.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen reminded the Commission and Staff that from the city perspective the things that are of importance is that they want to make the public facilities the priority. If a private property owner sells that land then the new owner may consider that “trail” a trespass trail. It may be great to solve these other things but we need to take care of our stuff.

#### B. HERC Multi-use Community Center Update – Deputy City Planner Engebretsen

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen provided information of the conceptual plans for a multi-use community center in the location of the HERC. She touched on the following:

- two conceptual plans were being presented by Stantec to City Council on February 28, 2022
- Website will be launched on Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, and will have links to a comment form
- Displays will be established at the Library, HERC and High School along with post it notes so the public can write their comment as they view the proposed designs

- Invited Commissioners to attend the various public events as ambassadors for the project and to assist in answering questions on the following dates:
  - March 4<sup>th</sup>, First Friday event at the Pratt Museum 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
  - March 10<sup>th</sup>, Thursday 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. drop in with Parks & Recreation.  
Invitations will be extended to groups that use the outdoor locations such as the Skateboard group, and Homer Animal Friends to speak about the conceptual plans
  - March 12<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. No specific subject but opportunity for those that could not make a meeting, etc.
  - Presentations and comment opportunities at the Commissions March meeting and the EDC April Meeting
  - At the worksession in March they will review and comment on the comments received.
- Chair Lewis volunteered for the March 4<sup>th</sup> event
- Commissioner Roedl stated he would be interested in attending the Rotary Meeting
- Recreation Manager Illg noted that Commissioner Lowney could be perceived to have a conflict of interest due to her proximity to the project, then noted that he and Parks Superintendent Steffy will be in attendance on the March 10<sup>th</sup>
- Commissioner Harrauld was requested to attend the drop in on March 10<sup>th</sup>, Commissioner Roedl was requested to attend the March 12<sup>th</sup> drop in and Commissioner Archibald could attend anywhere that he was able to fit in his schedule.
- It was noted that there would be EDC Commissioners in attendance as well at all the scheduled events.
- Further comments stressed that it was better to have additional members of the public in attendance so it is not just staff receiving all the comments.
- There will be a PowerPoint and this will be used as a handout at the Council meeting and all public meeting

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Memorandum from Deputy City Planner re: Special Events and Mobile Food Service**

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen provided a summary review of the information in the packet. She noted the following in addition to the information provided:

- City of Homer is the most difficult and most expensive community
- Lengthy process for a Special Event
- Changes to City Code
- Process outlined in a flow chart format
- Clarifies how a Special Event will be conducted in the City's Parks
- Food Trucks will be wrapped into MOU's that organizations such as Little League have with the city.

Commissioners commented in support of the changes presented.

HARRALD/ARCHIBALD MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION SUPPORTS THE PROPOSED CHANGES AS PRESENTED AND RECOMMENDS FORWARDING TO CITY COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Memorandum from Deputy City Clerk II re: Donation of Art for the Homer Municipal Art Collection

Deputy City Clerk Krause provided a summary of her understanding on the donation request.

Commissioner Lowney questioned the motion containing any designation on where it would be displayed.

Commissioner Fair provided the perspective from the Library Advisory Board on being a permanent display at the library.

Commissioner Harrald expressed concerns on accepting the donation without confirmation from the artist.

FAIR/LOWNEY – MOVED TO POSTPONE ANY ACTION ON THE DONATION OF ART BY DELAND ANDERSON CONTINGENT UPON HEARING FROM THE ARTIST.

Deputy City Clerk Krause responded to questions from the commission on having a specific date or leaving it open until they had confirmation from the artist on whether it was okay to not have the artwork displayed permanently at the Library. She also noted that there was desire to have it hanging in City Hall and it would be up to Library Staff for removal.

Concern was expressed by Commissioner Roedl to have this hanging over their heads and preferred establishing a specific date.

ROEDL/HARRALD - MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO HAVE THIS ON THE MARCH 17, 2022 AGENDA.

Commissioner Fair expressed that this is not a critical thing and that they reach out to artist and it is his responsibility to respond to them and if he fails then it they can just drop it.

Commissioner Lowney agreed with Commissioner Fair stating that they are not aware of what is happening in people's lives and it is not critical that the Commission deal with this today, next month or a year from now unless the Library wants to move it, but if we reach out and if we hear back good if not, we don't.

VOTE. (Amendment) NO. ARCHIBALD, FAIR, LOWNEY, LEWIS

VOTE. YES. ROEDL, HARRALD

Deputy City Clerk Krause read the main motion before the Commission.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

C. Non-motorized Trails and Transportation Plan Update – Parks Superintendent Steffy

Chair Lewis introduced the item and invited Parks Superintendent Steffy to provide input.

Parks Superintendent Steffy explained that he had planned to have the draft update before the Commission at this meeting. He stated that there were some roadblocks and so it will be on the March agenda. He noted that on the three to five year plan they are looking at an emphasis on the spatial priority for those corridors around town that they are looking at and very importantly the functional prioritization as far as connectivity and accessibility. They will also be a prioritized project list included which includes prioritized sidewalk projects and trail projects, identified most of the funding sources, planning and implementation but he would like to open discussion and receive input from the Commission on the updating process tonight.

Parks Superintendent Steffy facilitated comments, suggestions and questions on the following:

- short trail next to the Kharacters, Danview connection, which is now a parking lot and through way
  - do they play a part if so they should be maintained and kept as a trail
- City Maintained Trails, Sidewalks, Third Party Trails and Connector
  - West to East on Fairview – road, trail back to road
  - easements for roads currently used as trails once developed into a road should retain a pedestrian component
  - Many easements are shared with private property owners and as we go forward they will be working with their neighbors
- There are plans to include the Planning Commission as well as the Economic Development Commission
- Right of ways for a road or for a pedestrian trail and planning pedestrian right of ways in order to be able to maintain that
  - Reclaiming right of way and having owners remove items that encroach and impede access
  - Danview and Fairview are actual roads and not trails
  - Potential amendments needed to city code
  - Using best management practices
- It would be nice to extend to the next meeting as it is difficult to discuss without the document in hand

D. Green Cemeteries

Chair Lewis introduced the item and requested a motion and second.

HARRALD/LOWNEY MOVED TO SUPPORT THE IDEA, CONCEPT AND CREATION OF A GREEN CEMETERY AND RECOMMEND FORWARDING A REQUEST TO THE CITY MANAGER TO HAVE THE CITY LOOK INTO HAVING A GREEN CEMETERY IN HOMER.



There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UANNIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

- A. Memorial Bench Update provided by Christina Whiting
- B. 2021 Approved PARC Commission Bylaws
- C. Letter to City Council and Interested Members from Dr. William & Mrs. Marley dated January 9, 2022 re: Property along the Sterling Highway

### **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

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

Parks Superintendent Steffy commented it was a great meeting and expressed his appreciation for the Commission.

### **COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Student Commissioner Flora reported that she was in contact with the city's environmental intern, Kate Berry, and although plans fell through for the students at the High School to participate in the Winter Carnival, they are hoping to have other projects that interested students can participate in soon.

Commissioner Archibald commented that he may be sitting in Chambers with the other Commissioners at the next meeting.

Chair Lewis thanked everyone for their hard work.

### **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, March 17, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. There will be a worksession at 4:30 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

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RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

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