PORT AND HARBOR ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 23, 2022

Session 22-03, a Regular Meeting of the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Crisi Matthews at 5:00 p.m. on March 23, 2022 in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar. Commissioner Erickson submitted his resignation February 24, 2022.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS ZEISET, MATTHEWS, SIEKANIEC, SHAVELSON, ULMER, PITZMAN, STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE STONOROV

STAFF: PORT DIRECTOR/HARBORMASTER HAWKINS
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY

The Port and Harbor Advisory Commission held a worksession from 4:03 p.m. to 4:57 p.m. prior to the meeting and was facilitated by Finance Director Walton on the Port and Harbor Budget.

AGENDA APPROVAL

ULMER/ZEISET MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Doug Van Patten, city resident, spoke to Homer Spit parking issues and shared some of his concerns and solutions to remedy the problems.

Jackie Eisenberg introduced herself as the Fleet Manager for Copper River Seafoods and was available for questions regarding their development proposal.

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 23, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

ULMER/ZEISET MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 23RD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Port & Harbor Staff Report for March 2022
Port Director Hawkins spoke to his written staff report, highlighting notable meetings with State representatives, his trip to Juneau to lobby for Port Expansion Project funding, and answered questions regarding the matching funds at the federal level for the Harbor Expansion Project and operational events that took place in the harbor.

B. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

Commissioner Zeiset reported on an article First National Bank of Alaska issued out that spotlighted Northern Enterprise Boat Yard’s recent expansion and captures what marine trade businesses are doing here in Homer. Marine classes are still going on at the college.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Copper River Property Development Proposal & Lease Amendment
   i. 2022 Copper River Property Development Proposal
   ii. Exhibit E - Copper River’s Current Property Development Plan per Lease

Chair Matthews introduced the item by reading the title and deferred to Port Director Hawkins, who provided a brief overview of the proposal. Chair Matthews clarified with Deputy City Clerk Tussey that a motion to suspend the rules was needed to allow Ms. Eisenberg to speak.

ULMER/ZEISET MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ALLOW THE APPLICANT TO SPEAK.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECT: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Jackie Eisenberg, Fleet Manager, explained Copper River Seafood’s property development plan and what improvements to the buildings on the property they have made so far. Mr. Hawkins responded to questions from commissioners regarding the original lease, whether the rent will change, if the amendments meet the requirements of the prior lease, and how according to the lease any structures would become City property once a lease ends and the tenant has the option to take any of their property with them.

SIEKANIEC/ULMER MOVED TO APPROVE COPPER RIVER SEAFOOD’S LEASE AMENDMENT AND PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROPOSAL AND RECOMMEND ADOPTION BY CITY COUNCIL.

Commissioner Shavelson inquired with Ms. Eisenberg if there was any consideration for worker housing. She responded that living quarters was not allowed out there, only a nightly watchman, but the bathhouse/restroom/laundry facilities was critical for their fishermen and crew with the added benefit of not having to rely on the City's public bathrooms.

Discussion ensued between staff and the commissioners on how housing on the Homer Spit is a zoning and code issue. Mr. Hawkins opined that this topic will become more critical and not just for the summer season but for workers who work late midnight shifts and should not drive due to safety.
reasons. Deputy City Clerk Tussey suggested they could have the topic on a future agenda to make a recommendation to the Planning Commission and City Council.

VOTE: YES: ZEISET, PITZMAN, ULMER, SIEKANIEC, SHAVELSON, MATTHEWS

Motion carried.

Chair Matthews provided a point of protocol regarding how she and the staff liaison set the agenda, and that if any commissioner wishes to have an item on the agenda they can reach out to either of them.

B. Port & Harbor Budget

Chair Matthews introduced the item by reading the title, recapped what took place at their earlier worksession with Finance Director Walton, and opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioners discussed their takeaways from the worksession and shared what other items they would like to see at their monthly meetings. Items include:

- The same monthly financial reports that Port Director Hawkins receives included in their meeting packets; a new running agenda item under staff reports could be established for said reports and for any budget/financial updates as they come up.
- Continuation of budget training opportunities such as the worksession they just had.
- Provide copies of the complete City budget that commissioners can bring with them to each meeting.

The commission unanimously requested to have another budget worksession at 4:00 pm before the April regular meeting. In response to Chair Matthews, Deputy City Clerk Tussey recommended commissioners forward their questions or budget items they would like more information on to Mr. Hawkins the Friday before the next agenda deadline to give staff time to compile everything.

C. Port Infrastructure Development Grant Program (PIDP) for Float Replacement

i. Port of Homer Asset Sheet for Float Systems

ii. R&M Proposal for PIDP Grant Development & Submission Management

Chair Matthews introduced the item by reading the title and deferred to Port Director Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins explained the results from the harbor float asset assessment. While they have been talking about a replacement plan for years they’re still a ways away from making those repairs possible due to the floats getting worse faster than the Harbor Enterprise is able to save up the replacement costs in reserves. Chair Matthews spoke to the work harbor staff accomplished to get the grant and R&M hiring proposal together that was currently in front of the commission and City Council. She explained the time restrictions that they need to meet to make the grant and budget cycles/deadlines and what action would be needed from the commission at this time.

SHAVELSON/ULMER MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL THAT R&M BE HIRED FOR PORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM GRANT DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION MANAGEMENT ON HOMER’S BEHALF.

Commissioner Shavelson commented on how vital it is that we stay ahead of the float replacement improvements, and how this proposal sounds like an opportunity to do so.

Discussion ensued between commissioners and Mr. Hawkins on the following:
How it is a great funding opportunity that has not been offered by other grant programs.

The grant application process itself and if they get the grant what that would mean for funding repairs.

Importance of all the photos; when commissioners talk to public it’s good to have visual references to show how bad the floats have gotten.

The need to take care of our existing infrastructure, especially in the face of all this planning to build an expanded harbor.

What the float replacement priorities are if they receive the funding and if it included other floats like the Fish Dock; there are no limitations to the funding source but the focus would be on the float and mooring systems since they’re the most foundational of the harbor.

How much funding the Enterprise has now and how other kinds of funds (i.e. federal, state, other grants) can be used for matching.

VOTE: YES: SIEKANIEC, MATTHEWS, ZEISET, SHAVELSON, PITZMAN, ULMER

Motion carried.

Chair Matthews commented on how this grant proposal will be before City Council at their March 29th regular meeting, and encouraged the commissioners to attend and voice their support. Commissioner Siekaniec inquired with Mr. Hawkins regarding his spending authority per the City’s Procurement Policy.

D. Parking – HDL Homer Spit Parking Final Technical Report
   i. September 2021 PHC Meeting Minutes Excerpt
   ii. HDL Homer Spit Parking Final Technical Report

Chair Matthews introduced the item by reading the title. She recapped when the commission had last reviewed HDL Engineering’s Spit Parking Study and what changes they made by comparing the new study and the older one from September 2021.

Port Director Hawkins explained how the study will be going before Council in April and this is the commission’s opportunity to make additional comments or recommendations. He spoke to Port and Harbor staff’s suggested parking implementations for spring 2022, outlined in his memo, that are based on the study results and what harbor staff has already implemented.

Discussion ensued on ways to go about implementing a parking plan, what commissioners would like to see happen, and the timeline they would like to see those changes take place on.

SHAVELSON/ZEISET MOVED TO SUPPORT PORT AND HARBOR STAFF’S SUGGESTED PARKING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR SPRING 2022 AND RECOMMEND CITY COUNCIL AUTHORIZE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SAID PLAN AND ITS NECESSARY FUNDING FROM PORT AND HARBOR RESERVES.

Commissioner Ulmer voiced concerns that merchants on the Spit need parking in front of their businesses. Commissioner Zeiset concurred and shared his experiences as a business owner.

There was discussion on the motion and if it meets staff’s parking implementation plan. Mr. Hawkins shared his plan to work with other departments, such as Public Works, to pull financial resources together for the funding of the implementation plan. They would then go to City Council to acquire additional funds from the harbor reserves.
Commissioner Siekaniec wished to make a motion to implement a paid parking plan as identified in HDL’s parking study; Deputy City Clerk Tussey noted there was a motion already on the floor and verified that he was not making an amendment. She reiterated harbor staff’s request for support for the spring 2022 implementation plan and how the current motion accomplishes that.

Commissioner Pitzman opined how these three steps recommended by staff will create new parking in two different areas and somewhat alleviate the parking situation, and voiced his support.

VOTE: YES: MATTHEWS, SIEKANIEC, ULMER, SHAELSON, ZEISET, SHAELSON

Motion carried.

SIEKANIEC/ULMER MOVED TO RECOMMEND CITY COUNCIL APPROVE FUNDING TO IMPLEMENT A PAID PARKING PROGRAM IN THE GRAVEL LOT BETWEEN RAMPS 3 AND 4 AS OUTLINED IN HDL’S PARKING STUDY BY JULY 1, 2022.

Commissioner Pitzman voiced his support for the concept and his concerns. He believes the timeline is too quick and referenced a past comment made by Mr. Hawkins to plan it for 2023, but he understands where they are coming from and is in support of the concept.

Chair Matthews suggested that if this recommendation was to go forward and it became paid parking, that they have enough time to establish provisions for stall lessees such as an annual paid parking pass.

Discussion ensued on planning out parking provisions for various harbor user groups, how the plan could be implemented, and what would work and what isn’t feasible by July 1st. Commissioners agreed to stay with the current recommendation and have the topic on the next meeting agenda to continue working out the details. There was further discussion on the historical aspect of paid parking implementation on the Spit and what past decisions have progressed us to this point, current rates and some of their suggested rates/chances to the parking kiosks, and the timeline that this study will be going before Council.

Commissioner Pitzman commented that they are putting this recommendation to Council because of the timing, and the commission will then flesh out the feasibility. His only concern is with the timing, not the motion itself, but he is fine with supporting it under the circumstances.

Commissioner Siekaniec clarified with Mr. Hawkins that if Council approves the appropriation but during detail planning the commission determines they don’t need it, then they would need to explain to Council why.

VOTE: YES: ULMER, SHAELSON, ZEISET, MATTHEWS, Pitzman, SIEKANIEC

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

A. Letter & Certificate of Recognition for Commissioner Erickson
B. Port & Harbor Monthly Stats for February 2022
C. Water/Sewer Bills Report
D. Ice & Crane Report
E. Dock Activity Report

4/5/2022 rt
F. PHC 2022 Meeting Calendar

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Port Director Hawkins thanked everyone for a great meeting, their patience, and leadership.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey noted the PHC vacancy due to Commissioner Erickson’s resignation and that the Clerk’s Office had received appointment applications. The selected person happened to be in the audience and their appointment is expected to be confirmed at the upcoming Council meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Student Representative Stonorov thanked the commission for having her.

Commissioner Zeiset thanked Port Director Hawkins for all the hard work that went into the packet. He commented the more parking area pictures the better as they are awesome references for when discussing the parking issues. He commended Chair Matthews for a nice job running the meeting.

Commissioner Siekaniec thanked everyone.

Commissioner Pitzman apologized to the commission for missing the last meeting as he was in Kodiak for emergency repairs after his vessel the Kona Kai ran aground. He was happy to report that they pulled into the Homer Harbor repaired early this morning. He thanked everyone for the good meeting.

Commissioner Shavelson voiced his appreciation for having Ms. Stonorov there as their student representative. He noted that while this is only his second meeting, he is impressed with how professional and knowledgeable staff is, and thanked Chair Matthews for running a wonderful meeting. He reiterated his request that worker housing be on the next PHC agenda.

Commissioner Ulmer thanked Student Representative Stonorov for being a willing representative and Chair Matthews for a really well job done. In response to her request for the new PHC appointee’s name, Bruce Friend briefly introduced himself from the audience.

Chair Matthews thanked everyone for their patience with the full agenda. She cannot promise they won’t be this full going forward but she opined they need to get some things in order for this Port Expansion Project and their budget goals.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Matthews adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 27, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. and a Worksession at 4:00 p.m. All meetings are 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: April 27, 2022