Session 22-05, a Regular Meeting of the Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission was called to order by Acting Chair Robert Archibald at 5:32 p.m. on June 16, 2022 from the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS FAIR, ROEDL, HARRALD, ARCHIBALD

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS LEWIS, LOWNEY, STUDENT COMMISSION FLORA (EXCUSED) AND COMMISSIONER GALBRAITH (UNEXCUSED)

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

AGENDA APPROVAL

FAIR/HARRALD MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Roberta Highland, city resident, commented in support of changes to make stronger language regarding dogs in sensitive areas such as Beluga Slough.

VISITORS/PRESENTATION

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Regular Meeting Minutes for May 19, 2022

Acting Chair Archibald requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

FAIR/HARRALD 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. Chair’s Report - Mayor’s Roundtable Meeting with Advisory Bodies

Acting Chair Archibald noted that the Chair was absent and they will re-schedule his report for the August meeting.

B. Homer Drawdown - Trails Symposium Report, Commissioner Lowney

Acting Chair Archibald noted that Commissioner Lowney was not present to provide a report and deferred to Parks Superintendent Steffy who also attends the meetings.

Parks Superintendent Steffy provided a brief report on history of previous trails symposiums and what was discussed in deliverables from those Trails Symposums, city involvement and the Homer Drawdown group involvement. He then announced the next meeting date and time and that it will be conducted via Zoom.

Acting Chair Archibald commented that he believed they had a good team involved.

Parks Superintendent Steffy stated that he believed that they had a good tried and true method to follow from the previous symposiums conducted. He noted that the Homer Trails Alliance (HTA) would probably have the conversation regarding the outside city limits conversations. He noted that HTA is a very strong Member when it comes to draw down adopting non-motorized transportation because there's a lot of overlap there with members of the group, and both are getting some really strong support right now, and trails outside city limits is dependent on HTA interests and maybe what they want to contribute to the conference, through their funding, staff and time.

C. June Parks Report – Parks Superintendent Steffy

Acting Chair Archibald apologized for skipping over this report item and deferred to Parks Superintendent Steffy.

Parks Superintendent Steffy provided a synopsis of his report, commenting further on the following points in the response to questions from the Commission:
- removal of specific persons from the campgrounds with the assistance of Homer Police Department and local agencies to offer assistance in the early stages before issues arise
- hiring of parks employees has been difficult and slow with scheduling but managed to hire a few very qualified and talented persons
- peony celebration planning
- turf cutting started after the Memorial Day holiday
- Non-motorized Trails 7 Transportation is on everyone’s mind
  - HTA received funding
  - Homer Drawdown performed first project trail clearing. Different projects will be addressed on a bi-weekly basis. Projects are announced through their website for [www.homerdrawdown.info](http://www.homerdrawdown.info)
- Lend a Leash program went through 250 leashes and the Homer Animal Friends has placed an order for 500 more.
  - These are available in 5 locations around town
They are being used as they are not coming back
- ADA Compliance Committee meeting was canceled due to lack of a quorum.
  - There is a vacancy on this committee if anyone is interested.
- Little Libraries are very popular.
- Poopdeck Trail from the Independent Living Center entrance will have audio recordings done and placed at the end of summer, access will be via QR codes. This will be recorded at the HCOA studio with possible musical background.

Parks Superintendent Steffy facilitated questions and responses on the following:
- funding
- reserving close parking spaces near the launch for the Water Trail as these were taken by campers
- Uptick in camping was mostly due to locals versus the expected visitors from outside the state
- camping areas are poorly marked
- Administrative Assistant for future if a Community Center is constructed so this position should be configured into any revenue/cost such as the third fulltime janitorial position when the Police Station was constructed.
- Overhaul of the Parks & Recreation webpages of the City website

D. Public Works Director Report

Acting Chair Archibald introduced the item and invited Public Works Director Keiser to provide her report

Public Works Director Keiser provided information and facilitated questions from the Commission on the following:
- Main Street Sidewalk project is ready to start with the exception of missing concrete storm drain parts. These items were ordered months ago but as with most things there are delivery chain issues. Notices will be going out to residents and businesses.
  - This will be the first project under the certified weed free gravel program.
- Homer Soil and Water will be assisting with the Weed Free Gravel program to inspect the gravel pits that will be used for the Main Street Sidewalk project and for future projects.

Parks Superintendent Steffy stated that remediation of a gravel pit will depend on the invasive plant that is found in the gravel pit. There are some standard techniques that will be implemented.
- Non-motorized Transportation program – Bishops Engineering given a task order to design a pedestrian/bike pathway for the Eric Lane to West Fairview Avenue connection.
  - PW has developed some process and forms to provide accounting,
  - There is funding to extend the shoulder 10 feet.
  - Dressage or finish work will need to occur at a future time when funding is available.

Public Works Director Keiser approached the aerial maps that depicted the area where the Eric Lane to Fairview Avenue West project was, in response to questions from the Commission. She also indicated the following task orders were given for the following projects to contracted engineering firms:
West Hill Bike Path Connection – surveyed and marked noting this was a state road but explained how it could be incorporated when the state addressed that project.

Tietjen Pedestrian Easement - survey and mark

Reber Trail will be surveyed and then reconfigured so they can address the steepness of the trail.

Old Nelson Bike Trail – connecting to New Nelson then east to the Homer High School
- Goal is to make this a Category 3 trail.
- Nice walking path for that neighborhood and will be surveyed and marked.

South Slope Trail – after finishing up the water and sewer project there will be additional gravel placed, boulders will be relocated back into position.

The Fire Department has requested a gate for the future for ease of access.

Adams Drive Bike Path which will connect Jack Gist Park
- Beauregard Court access to Jack Gist Park

Ohlson Lane and Bunnell Avenue – sidewalk on the south side of the road from the ELKS Property to the RV Park. There will be a neighborhood meeting to get input and visioning to make that neighborhood pedestrian friendly. Consensus will be required from property owners.

Heath Street – address storm drain issues and ADA compliance for sidewalk ramps, design slated for 2023

Commissioner Archibald asked if it was ever considered making Ohlson Lane a one way to Main Street to provide enough space to create a sidewalk.

Commissioner Fair related an incident that he witnessed recently with a big truck and trailer and the driver trying to turn his whole rig around in the area down by Bishop’s Beach.

Public Works Director Keiser continued her report:

- Contract to HDR for design on ADA compliance for the Nick Dudiak Fishing Lagoon and will be finishing the cost estimates for the recommended designs.
- HERC building – City Council has directed City Manager to develop a plan for demolition of the smaller building. She reported on a partial plan that would be a cost savings for this project. This smaller building currently houses the City Maintenance and Janitorial Staff so they are being relocated to the Main HERC building

Commissioner Harrald expressed her appreciation for the successful strategy and trails for addressing the City’s walkability.

Acting Chair Archibald expressed his appreciation for the progress on all the work that Public Works Director Keiser has accomplished in the two years since her arrival back to the city

E. June Recreation and Staff Report – Mike Illg

Acting Chair Archibald noted the reports included in the packet and opened the floor for comments of the Commission.

There was no discussion.
PARKS, ART, RECREATION & CULTURE ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 16, 2022

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS
  A. Memorandum from Parks Superintendent re: Using 2021-2022 Budget Funds and Designating Uses for the 2022-2023 Budget

Acting Chair Archibald introduced the item and deferred to Parks Superintendent Steffy.

Parks Superintendent Steffy reported the fiscal budget year ends on June 30th and the balance remaining in the Commission fund remained at 1175.00 and the funds spent were used for the “Lend a Leash” program. He confirmed that if the monies are no spent they will return to the general fund. He noted that Deputy City Clerk Krause suggested that the Commission should discuss where they would like to allocate the funds for the FY2023 budgeted funding.

Discussion ensued on possible uses for the remaining FY2022 funds with the Commission covering such expenses as allocating funds to be used at the discretion of the Parks Superintendent for additional Little Libraries; additional trash cans; donating to an organization; trash can lids that would prohibit the depositing of household trash; formerly parks celebration bar-b-que; adding this item to the Annual Calendar as a quarterly subject to address; additional signage to prohibit loose dogs in the berm area on Bishops Beach; supporting additional doggie stations, purchases of books for the little libraries, candy for the 4th of July Parade with a wacky waving arm flailing; purchase of a PA system for use during special events.

Deputy City Clerk Krause clarified that the Commission can designate the funds for Public Works personnel to spend as they need.

HARRALD/FAIR MOVED THAT THE REMAINING $1175.00 FY2022 PARKS BUDGET FUNDS BE DESIGNATED TO THE PARKS STAFF AS THEY BEST SEE FIT AND THAT THIS ITEM IS ADDED TO THE COMMISSION ANNUAL CALENDAR FOR QUARTERLY REVIEW.

There was a brief discussion on the following:
- origination of the parks commission budget
- previous expenditures done in the past by the commission compared to now where the staff accommodates the Commission requests
- the need to have a budget line item

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

  B. Memorandum from Chair re: Trash Cans on the Homer Spit Trail

Acting Chair Archibald introduced the item and deferred to Deputy City Clerk Krause for a brief explanation since Commissioner Lewis was not in attendance.
Deputy City Clerk Krause explained that Commissioner Lewis expressed that he desired to see additional trash cans on the Spit Trail since in his opinion there was not enough receptacles and a person would have to carry the trash with them for quite a distance.

Discussion ensued on the location of trash cans, where it would be appropriate to place trash cans for proper and convenient maintenance, if they were full which would indicate high usage.

Parks Superintendent Steffy would appreciate further input from Commissioner Lewis on his request for additional trash cans and specific locations.

C. Memorandum from Recreation Manager re: Discussion on Selecting New Project(s) for the Capital Improvement Plan Recommendation.

Acting Chair Archibald introduced the item and opened the floor for general discussion.

Public Works Director Keiser provided a brief explanation on the difference between the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that is usually presented by Special Projects & Communications Coordinator Carroll and the Public Works Capital Improvement Program.

Deputy City Clerk Krause stated this item was on the agenda at the request of Recreation Manager Illg and provided clarification on the standard process, noting that the Commissioners typically submitted two of their top priority projects from the CIP and then voted on the top two majority recommended projects of the Commission were submitted to City Council for consideration of being included in the City’s top five projects and hopefully selected as one of the top two legislative requests. Typically the Commission has selected one of the projects to continuously advocate for funding similar to the Main Street Sidewalk Project.

The Commission reviewed the projects as shown in the CIP document from last year with input from Public Works Director and Parks Superintendent Steffy and decided to rank them in the following order. They designated Karen Hornaday Project as number one priority project of the Commission since it was a highly used park and fell into the larger project cost. The projects were ranked in the following order of priority:

1. Karen Hornaday Park – Priority Level 1
2. Jack Gist Park Improvements – Priority Level 2
3. Bayview Park – Priority Level 1
4. Spit Trailhead Restroom – Priority Level 1

The Commission did not submit any new projects at this meeting.

Public Works Director Keiser and Deputy City Clerk Krause provided clarification that the Commission still has time to make edits to their recommendation and this will be on a later agenda for final recommendation. This was a preliminary discussion since it was on the annual calendar.

D. Memorandum from Deputy City Clerk re: Donation of A Mural for Placement at the Skate Park
Acting Chair Archibald introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to Deputy City Clerk Krause.

Deputy City Clerk Krause provided a summary of the memorandum provided in the packet.

Commissioner Roedl moved to accept the donation of art.

The motion died for lack of a second.

Acting Chair Archibald opened the floor for discussion stating that he did not appreciate the red splatters in the art as it reminded him too much of recent events and was wondering if they could request a color change from the artist.

Several Commissioners agreed with Commissioner Archibald’s assessment.

Commissioner Harrald questioned the cost reflected in the application and requested clarification if this was informational or if the artist was requesting the amount and if that was the case did that change this from a donation or gift to a commission for art since the City would essentially be paying for the artwork.

Additional discussion was facilitated by the Parks Superintendent and Deputy City Clerk on process and clarification was provided to the Commission that they could request staff to obtain additional information from the artist and postpone decision until the August meeting. There was also questions regarding ownership and recognition costs, etc. that needed to be answered.

FAIR/ROEDL MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION DOES NOT ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL AS PRESENTED AND REQUESTS THAT STAFF CONTACT THE ARTIST TO EXPRESS THE COMMISSION’S CONCERNS REGARDING THE COSTS LISTED IN THE APPLICATION, SIZE AND ARTISTIC ELEMENTS WITHIN THE ARTWORK AND THAT THIS ITEM BE POSTPONED TO THE AUGUST 18, 2022 MEETING TO ALLOW STAFF TIME TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION’S CONCERNS WITH THE ARTIST AND ARTIST’S REPRESENTATIVES.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

E. Memorandum from Parks Superintendent re: Amending City Code and Leash Laws in Parks

Acting Chair Archibald introduced item and deferred to Parks Superintendent Steffy.

Parks Superintendent Steffy provided the background leading up to the request to require dogs being leashed within city parks, parking lots and sensitive wildlife habitat areas. He noted that current city code does not require a dog to be on leash and defines a dog that is at large is one who is off the property of its owner and not under the direct control of a competent person. He noted that the Deputy City Clerk has provided in the supplemental packet a draft of amended code language to start the discussion. He noted that Public Works would like the Commission to require dogs to be on leash in these areas and make that recommendation to City Council. Mr. Steffy further stated that legally by implying voice
control there is no preventative law regarding restraint of an animal there is only punitive law once an animal has bitten, attacked before action can be taken to address the animal. Lieutenant Browning with the Police Department has expressed that they would not oppose the changes.

Discussion on the following topics and issues with relevant questions ensued between the Commission, Public Works Director Keiser and Parks Superintendent Steffy:

- Enforcement if a leash law is put into effect
- Attitude change for the community
- it may take time but if a person is vigilant and reports incidents by reporting a plate number
- Signage reflecting that dogs must be on lease in accordance with HCC and the fine for the first offense
- remove voice control as that does not work
- This will be a cultural change for the city and surrounding community, address the immediate areas of campgrounds, parks, parking lots and sensitive wildlife habitat i.e. Beluga Slough.
- Clarification that dogs would be allowed to be off leash in the area near the water but should remain on leash from the vehicle to the beach where people would tend to congregate.
- Add new section 20.08.015 that states dogs must be restrained when in campgrounds, parking lots, parks and designated protected wildlife habitat
- Clarification on why it states “direct control” instead of “voice control”
- The City Attorney will be reviewing any proposed amendments to City Code, further the Commission would have a Public Hearing on the proposed changes before going to City Council otherwise if submitted to Council they will just refer it back to the Commission.
- Preference for specific areas where leashes will be required
- Add a definition on what restrained by leash and what exactly a leash is can also be defined
- Direct Control is very ambiguous
- Addressing other areas in the next go around

There was additional dialogue on getting some teeth into controlling these issues due to the increase in the number of contacts and incidents and the following clarification was determined:

Remove the proposed amendments in the supplemental packet and add the following new Section 20.08.015 On Leash Requirements

a. All dogs are required to be on lease in these specific areas identified as Beluga Slough, sensitive habitat area, city campgrounds, parking lots and parks.

Deputy City Clerk Krause requested a motion to postpone to the next meeting or to adopt and forward the proposed amendments to City Council.

Discussion ensued on whether the Commission needs to have all the code language before sending the message that the Commission wants City Council to fix the code. Public Works Director Keiser provided some language for the recommendation to City Council as follows:
The Parks Art Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission strongly urges the City Council to review and amend the existing language in Chapter 20 Animals to require dogs to be on leashes in city parks, campgrounds, parking lots, Beluga Slough and other sensitive habitat areas.

Acting Chair Archibald requested a motion to extend the meeting to 8:15 p.m.
HARRALD/ROEDL MOVED TO EXTEND THE MEETING TO 8:15 P.M.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTIION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Acting Chair Archibald inquired if there was any further discussion on this matter. Hearing none he asked the Clerk if a motion was needed to forward the Commission's recommendations to City Council.

Deputy City Clerk Krause confirmed that a motion would be appropriate.

FAIR/HARRALD THE PARKS ART RECREATION AND CULTURE ADVISORY COMMISSION STRONGLY URGES THE CITY COUNCIL TO REVIEW AND AMEND THE EXISTING LANGUAGE IN CHAPTER 20 ANIMALS TO REQUIRE LEASHES AND RESTRRAINT IN CITY PARKS, CAMPGROUNDS, PARKING LOTS, AND OTHER SENSITIVE HABITAT AREAS.

There was a brief discussion on specifying dogs only or animals in general clarifying that there have been complaints received regarding goats. Public Works Director Keiser advocated for keeping the focus on dogs. It was noted that there have been numerous incidents related to dogs, complaints received regarding dogs menacing people and dogs in sensitive habitat areas and they have only increased in recent time.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

A. 2022 PARC Advisory Commission Calendar

Acting Chair Archibald asked for a volunteer to speak before Council. He reported that he was unable to do so as he will be out of town.

Commissioner Harrald volunteered noting that Commissioner Archibald may be perceived to have a conflict of interest on the subject. She confirmed with the Commission on what to include in her report to Council.

B. The Economic Impact of Local Parks - An Examination of the Economic Impacts of Operations and Capital Spending by Local Park and Recreation Agencies on the US Economy

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION
Commissioner Harrald commented her disappointment on how poorly the tourist treat their parks as they put so much work into their parks noting a recent visit to Bishops Beach and that it was literally trashed.

**ADJOURNMENT**
There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m. p.m. The next regular meeting is Thursday, August 18, 2022 at 5:30 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: ________________________________