

## CALL TO ORDER

Session 24-05 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:02 p.m. on May 14, 2024 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS MARKS, AREVALO, BRENNAN, BROWN & YOUNG

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER HASCHE (EXCUSED) & STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PEARSON

STAFF: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ENGBRETSSEN & DEPUTY CITY CLERK PETTIT

## AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Marks read the supplemental items into the agenda: **Under Informational Materials Item E. Homer Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Community Snapshot.** She requested a motion and second to approve the agenda as amended.

BROWN/BRENNAN 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

## RECONSIDERATION

## CONSENT AGENDA

A. Unapproved Minutes for the Regular Meeting on April 9, 2024

BROWN/AREVALO MOVED TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 9, 2024.

Commissioner Brown pointed out that Commissioner Pitzman was included in the Commissioners that were listed as 'present' for the April 9<sup>th</sup> meeting even though he resigned prior to that meeting. Deputy City Clerk Pettit noted that this was a formatting error on his end, and that he would correct the minutes after the meeting.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

## VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

A. Agnew::Beck, Comprehensive Plan

Chair Marks introduced Meg Friedenauer of Agnew::Beck for the purpose of delivering her presentation regarding the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Friedenauer presented to the Commission, covering the following topics:

- Overview of the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite website – community survey, upcoming events, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and how to contact Agnew::Beck.
- Community Snapshot – boundaries that the Comprehensive Plan will encompass, who can take the survey, and what's been learned so far.
- Focus points of this Comprehensive Plan:
  - Land use and environment
  - Housing
  - Public services and infrastructure
  - Transportation
  - Economic development
  - Health and wellness
  - Sustainability
  - Resilience and climate change
  - Quality of life

### **STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **A. EDC Staff Report**

Community Development Director Engebretsen noted that City Council would be receiving the draft budget in a few weeks, and that the City Manager is not planning to include the funding that the EDC has requested for \$10,000 for the Alaska Small Business Development Center. She reminded the Commission that they had passed a motion regarding this funding in one of the recent meetings, and that Council will be receiving that recommendation at their next meeting when the budget is in front of them. Other discussion topics included:

- Resolution that was passed by City Council instructing the EDC and the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission to investigate the potential of cruise ship capacity limits and policies.
- Bayview Park Plan was approved by City Council and will hopefully be done by the end of summer.
- Ongoing work for the Karen Hornaday Park Master Plan and the park walkthrough on Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 p.m.
  - There were also discussions regarding the future of the campground at the park, and how it is currently being utilized for disc golf.
- Resolution that was passed by City Council requesting the Kenai Peninsula Borough to coordinate with AirBnB for the purpose of sales tax collection for short-term rentals.

#### **B. Chamber Director Report**

Community Development Director Engebretsen shared that she helped with the food truck event that was in town this past Friday. She added that the event was well attended and nicely organized, saying that it was nice to see an event of that size taking place somewhere else other than City property.

#### **C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report**

Chair Marks noted the report and added that it might be nice to schedule the Association as a visitor/presentation somewhere down the line.

D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report

Chair Marks reported that the Industrial Outlook Forum took place. She stated that she had not heard officially, but had imagined the timing worked much better hosting the Forum in April as opposed to January. She noted several interesting presentations, two of which were presented by Derotha Ferraro who just spoke to the EDC a few weeks ago. There was also a brief discussion regarding transportation services and updates on the Kenai Peninsula. Ms. Marks highlighted that there was a presentation from Sam Tappen, who is the economist for the State of Alaska. In reference to the flyer regarding transportation on the Peninsula, Commissioner Arevalo lauded the taxi companies that operate locally in Homer.

E. Port Expansion

Community Development Director Engebretsen shared that Councilmember Lord and Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll traveled to Washington, D.C. and learned that there was an issue in the funding of the first part of the three-year phase of investigating port expansion. She added that the Army Corps of Engineers has funding to continue their portion of the project, which means that the project will continue more or less on schedule.

F. Guiding Homer's Growth Group

Chair Marks stated that she attended the Guiding Growth Group/Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meeting with Agnew::Beck. She shared that part of the reason that she went was due to the fact that Commissioner Kim – who previously held a spot on the EDC and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee – is no longer living in Homer. She noted the vacancies on both the EDC and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee that Mr. Kim leaves behind. She welcomed any of the Commissioners to fulfill the formal requirement of having one EDC member on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

G. HERC Update

Community Development Director Engebretsen reiterated that Homer made the first cut in the State's funding for the Brownfield projects, noting that this is great news. She continued, saying that the City is waiting to hear back from the EPA on whether it's approved for the State to help with the City's buildings. The City is also waiting to hear back from the EPA on a \$1 million grant application that was submitted last fall. Commissioner Young inquired about the goals for both the buildings. Ms. Engebretsen informed him that there are no plans to rehab the smaller building, and that the future plans for the larger building are still yet to be determined. She also shared the City's desire for a new recreation facility altogether. Further discussions revolved around what a new facility might look like, the timeline for a new building, and property conditions.

H. Planning Updates

Community Development Director Engebretsen shared that the Planning Department has already handed out 11 mobile food permits this year. She added that it's been nice to have both a city

engineer and a public works director on the staff team, noting that it's been helpful in getting projects out to bid and moving forward with a lot of things that have been started. She urged anyone interested in serving on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to submit an application.

I. Housing

Chair Marks reported that the housing group for the MAPP (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships) community needs assessment has decided to divide into a couple of groups to narrow down to get some deliverables. She added that she is a part of the policy and economic development subgroup, and that her group would be meeting with Agnew::Beck on Thursday from 12 p.m. – 1 p.m.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**PENDING BUSINESS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

A. Bylaws Review  
Memorandum from Community Development Director as backup

Community Development Director Engebretsen recommended the following minor changes to the EDC Bylaws:

1. Article V Staff Roles Section 1, Line 64, changing "Deputy City Planner" to "Community Development Director."
2. Article VI Meetings Section 3, Line 89, the Bylaws currently state a quorum is no needed, but this is out of date. Worksessions do require a quorum, this is a change that has been implemented since the last Bylaw amendment in 2021.

AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE SUGGESTED CHANGES ON LINES 64 AND 89 OF THE BYLAWS AND MOVE THE DOCUMENT FORWARD TO THE EDC'S JUNE MEETING.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Commission Training  
Memorandum from Community Development Director as backup  
Memorandum EDC-24-006 from Deputy City Clerk as backup

Community Development Director Engebretsen conducted the Commission Training for the group. Topics discussed included the following:

- Open Meetings Act
- Bylaws
- City Code
- Chair's responsibility
- Taking care of business

- C. Elections  
Memorandum EDC-24-005 from Deputy City Clerk as backup

BROWN/AREVALO MOVED TO VOTE BY SHOW OF HANDS.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Marks opened the floor for Vice Chair nominations.

Commissioner Brown was nominated; she agreed to accept the position.

With no other nominations called out, Chair Marks declared Commissioner Brown as Vice Chair and passed the gavel.

Vice Chair Brown opened the floor for Chair nominations.

Commission Marks was nominated; she agreed to accept the position.

With no other nominations called out, Vice Chair Brown declared Commissioner Marks as Chair and passed the gavel.

- D. Strategic Plan  
Memorandum from Community Development Director as backup

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading of the title and noted that this was mostly a housekeeping item. Discussion topics included:

- Near-term goals: community health needs assessment and community health improvement plan.
- The Commission's relationship with the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District.
- Agnew::Beck's development of the Comprehensive Plan.

- E. Preparation for City Council Work Session in June  
Memorandum from Community Development Director as backup

Chair Marks requested that all Commissioners review Chapter 18.5 (Economic Vitality Chapter) of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, in addition to reviewing SWOT information and reviewing the EDC's Strategic Plan in preparation for the joint work session with Council on June 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

- A. City Manager's Report  
B. City of Homer Newsletter  
C. EDC Strategic Plan 2024-2025  
D. EDC Meeting Calendar  
E. Homer Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Open House Flyer

Chair Marks noted the informational materials and requested a volunteer to deliver a report to Council at the May 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Brown volunteered to deliver the May report, and Commissioner Arevalo volunteered to deliver the June report.

**COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

**COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF**

Deputy City Clerk Pettit welcomed Commissioner Young to the Commission.

Community Development Director Engebretsen welcomed Commissioner Young and thanked the Commission for the fastest commission training and bylaw training.

**COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCIL MEMBER (If Present)**

**COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Arevalo commended the local taxi companies in Homer: Nick's Taxi, Kostas Taxi, Bayside Taxi, Ryder, and Kachecab.

Commissioner Brown seconded Ms. Arevalo's comment, noting that she discovered there is no taxi service in Cordova during a recent visit. She also welcomed Commissioner Young.

Commissioner Young stated that he is excited to be a part of the Commission and to get his feet wet.

Commissioner Brennan welcomed Commissioner Young and thanked Meg Friedenauer of Agnew::Beck for attending tonight's meeting. She also thanked the City of Homer for filling in some potholes on Sterling Highway.

Chair Marks thanked the Commission for electing her as the Chair for another term. She thanked Commissioner Young for stepping in to fill a vacancy on the Commission. She shared her excitement for the peony celebration coming up in July.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, June 11, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers and via Zoom Webinar.

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ZACH PETTIT, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I

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