

Session 22-05, a Regular Meeting of the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Crisi Matthews at 6:00 p.m. on May 25, 2022 in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS ZEISET, MATTHEWS, SIEKANIEC, SHAVELSON, ULMER, FRIEND, PITZMAN

CONSULTING

MEMBER: MAYOR CASTNER

ABSENT: STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE STONOROV

STAFF: PORT & HARBOR DIRECTOR/HARBORMASTER HAWKINS
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY

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

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 27, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

ULMER/ZEISET MOVED TO APPROVE THE APRIL 27TH REGULAR MEETING MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Port & Harbor YTD Budget/Financial Report

Port and Harbor Director Hawkins responded to questions and comments from the commission on the Port Fleet Reserve report and the Port and Harbor Enterprise Fund financial report.

B. Port & Harbor Staff Report for May 2022

Port and Harbor Director Hawkins summarized his written report, highlighting key meetings, notable events, and projects.

- C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report
 - i. HMTA Meeting Minutes dated April 26, 2022
 - ii. MTA Meeting Minutes dated May 24, 2022

Commissioner Zeiset reported on the HMTA grill event at the high school, scholarships awarded and monies received for scholarship reimbursements, and middle and high school student participation in the marine trade classes. There was a setback in plans for establishing marine trade programs through the college after the University of Alaska was not allocated State funding to continue funding a key position to those efforts. Mr. Zeiset noted how members in the HMTA was reporting how busy everyone is and the lack of help.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Workforce Housing on the Spit
 - i. HCC 21.28 & 21.30 Excerpts Permitted/Conditional Uses & Structures in MI & MC
 - ii. Commissioner Shavelson Memo Re: Worker Housing on the Homer Spit

Chair Matthews introduced the item by reading the title and deferred to Commissioner Shavelson.

Commissioner Shavelson recapped the statements made by Copper River Seafoods staff being unable to build worker housing when they were looking to amend their lease and improvement plan. He was unsure of why that was and explained his research into the City's base lease agreement and Homer City Code on permitted uses within Marine Industrial and Marine Commercial zoning districts, provided in writing in the supplemental packet.

In response to questions, Port and Harbor Director Hawkins reiterated that Copper River's lease amendment allowed them to bring in three modular units, one of which was to house two employees, offer shower/laundry facilities, and an office space. He reported that Copper River has not yet solidified their timeline and are still debating this project. It did not appear that housing was the issue with this project moving forward, and the proposal they provided was approved by the City.

There was discussion on the overall issue of including workforce housing within the marine zoning districts without them being subject to conditional use permitting. Commissioners voiced their concerns that the code verbiage is currently not friendly towards marine businesses, such as the fish processors, who wish to provide seasonal/temporary housing for their workers.

Commissioner Shavelson put forth a recommendation that if they wanted to encourage employee housing on the Spit would be to get rid of the 50% area and 30 consecutive-day provisions, and allow freestanding buildings to exist without putting restrictions on the time people have to live there. He suggested limiting it so not anyone could set up a boarding house for any purpose, but as an accessory building to that lease's primary use/business. Discussion ensued on how amending the code will overlap with privately-held land so considerations would be needed, and speculating the reasons for why the code was written the way it was.

Consulting Member Mayor Castner commented that it was 2022, things have changed out on the Spit, and the commission should ask for what they want. He suggested they come up with the language they

would like to see; City Council has been discussing the topic of housing so they should not feel restricted to any set box.

Chair Matthews inquired with Mr. Hawkins if these housing code amendments would have any Terminal Tariff policy effects/changes to allowing live-aboards or Airbnb's on vessels in the harbor, or renting vessel space out (i.e. subleasing stalls). Commissioner Friend added the question on if there was an impact on infrastructure and if there are any restrictions or utility limitations. Mr. Hawkins explained the reasons for why the Homer Terminal Tariff is written the way it is to prevent problematic live-aboard situations, derelict vessels, private businesses operating in public thoroughfares, and the lack of infrastructure on the float system for permanent residents. He noted it will be an interesting conversation with the Planning Commission to work out these code amendments.

SHAVELSON/SIEKANIEC MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION THEY UPDATE HOMER CITY CODE TO EXPAND WORKER HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE MARINE INDUSTRIAL AND MARINE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS ON THE HOMER SPIT.

Commissioner Siekaniec opined it is important to make sure it be an accessory permit to an authorized use, but that basically be the only restriction. Commissioner Shavelson responded his intent was to keep the motion broad as there are many issues around the housing issue, and would leave it up to the Planning Commission to have that discussion.

Chair Matthews commented on Mayor Castner's roundtable meeting with all the chairs from the board and commissions. There was a great consensus from everyone there to see housing be explored, look at the code to make the changes necessary to make Homer friendly to all walks of life, ensure our commerce is in place and supported, and it's going to come from housing and job stability.

Mayor Castner commented the need for worker housing, not more guest housing out on the Spit.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey confirmed with the commission they did not need clarifying information from past meeting minutes in regards to the Copper River Seafood lease amendment questions. She noted the lack of year-round potable water in the harbor is another utility limitation. Commissioner Friend corrected staff that his infrastructure question pertained to land structures, not the float system. Mr. Hawkins noted that there was established utility infrastructure for any buildings on land.

At Commissioner Ulmer's request, Commissioner Shavelson clarified his motion.

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

Motion carried.

Chair Matthews pointed out how housing is a recognized goal in the Economic Development Advisory Commission's strategic plan and goals, and is provided in their supplemental packet.

- B. South Central Radar Lease Amendment Request for Additional Parking
 - i. South Central Radar Email – Lease Amendment Proposal for Additional Parking
 - ii. Map of City & ADOT&PF Right-of-Ways & Boundaries
 - iii. Plat Map
 - iv. DRAFT 1st Amendment to Lease Agreement

Chair Matthews introduced the item by reading the title.

Commissioner Zeiset declared a conflict of interest and recused himself from the dais. Chair Matthews verified with the commission that there was no opposition to allowing Mr. Zeiset be available to answer any questions on the amendment proposal.

Port and Harbor Director Hawkins facilitated discussion and responded to questions from the commission on the following:

- Clarifying that the rent amount is calculated based on square footage and the fair market value, and increases from additionally-used space, the 5-year appraisal, and annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) amount.
- Other leases with similar arrangements to utilize the extra space outside of the lot boundaries; this area is usable City space and is not in the State Right-of-Way.
- Who will be conducting the labor of installing the new parking boundaries and sign installations; will be a collaborative effort between the lessee and Harbor Staff.
- What the new parking layout will look like for both the outer public parking area and South Central Radar's expanded parking area.

SHAVELSON/SIEKANIEC MOVED TO SUPPORT THE APPROVAL OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL RADAR'S PROPOSED LEASE AMENDMENT TO EXPAND THE PARKING LOT AND RECOMMEND ADOPTION TO CITY COUNCIL.

There was no further discussion.

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

Motion carried.

Commissioner Zeiset returned to the dais.

- C. Homer Spit Comprehensive Plan Review & Discussion
- i. Spit Comp Plan Overview 2022 Calendar
 - ii. City Planner Staff Report 22-34, Comprehensive Plan & Attachments
 - iii. City Planner Supplement Memo to SR 22-34: Trails & Sidewalks in Code

Chair Matthews introduced the item by reading the title. She spoke to her proposal for having the PHC be involved with rewriting the Spit Comprehensive Plan and promoting their recommendations to City staff, City Council, and the Planning Commission over the next year. She explained the resources and information gathered from City Planner Abboud and the meeting/implementation calendar she prepared for the commission. She opened the floor for discussion.

The commission discussed the following initial thoughts and recommendations on the Spit Comprehensive Plan:

- Calling out the "blue economy" or "blue zone": anything having to do with businesses on the ocean; that way it includes not just fishing but also things like seaweed farming. Goal is to allow areas for fishing, tourism, and other marine related developments beyond just fishing and transportation.

- Recognizing the Homer Spit as a commerce lifeline for the community and keeping that snapshot/goal in mind as they're working through the plan rewrite; have some ideas of the things that are more important since this document is to be used as a driver for future funding.
- The harbor expansion and what that's going to do to change the harbor as a whole; will impact how the uplands will be developed and the open space within the small boat harbor once the larger vessels and USCG boats relocate to the new harbor system. They should take time to envision what that expansion is going to look like to help with long term planning.
- Importance of making sure the future planning takes parking and infrastructure into account.

Chair Matthews requested commissioners do some homework and submit their ideal wish list from their respective professional fields to Port and Harbor Director Hawkins by June 10th in time for the June meeting packet deadline.

At Commissioner Shavelson's request for direction on how far their wish lists are looking forward to, Chair Matthews clarified a component of the plan is for 30 years so the infrastructure needed for that 20-30 year vision needs to be in place by then.

Chair Matthews spoke to City Planner Abboud's Staff Report 22-34 Supplemental Memo regarding the Homer Comprehensive Plan, and planning for trails and sidewalk in Homer City Code. She noted how Planning's comments on smaller motorized transportation correlates with the PHC's past conversations on personal watercraft transportation.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. 2015-2016 Harbor Rate Study Info Packet
- B. Port & Harbor Monthly Stats for April 2022
- C. Water/Sewer Bills Report for April 2022
- D. Ice & Crane YTD Report
- E. Dock Activity YTD Report
- F. PHC 2022 Meeting Calendar
- G. Economic Development Advisory Commission 2021-2022 Strategic Plan & Goals

Chair Matthews spoke to the informational materials provided and facilitated discussion. She would like to work with Mr. Hawkins in preparing a harbor rate comparison spreadsheet (for both land and harbor parking) for the next meeting. The commission voiced their support and excitement to see that comparison information.

In response to Chair Matthews' questions on utilizing cranes for commercial cargo offloads, Mr. Hawkins explained the study they conducted on using Homer's Port and how there was a lack of interest on the freight forwarders' side; they prefer to continue using the Port of Anchorage. There was brief discussion on this possibly being a topic to address again in the future as shipping needs and options change.

Commissioner Siekaniec confirmed he would be available to give the PHC report at the next City Council meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Carl Nostrand, non-resident, introduced himself and gave a presentation on polar vessels, their potential value to having one moored out of Homer, and his proposal for building one locally on the Concrete Pad. Chair Matthews confirmed with Mr. Hawkins that Mr. Nostrand could reach out to Port and Harbor staff to set up a meeting and discuss options and availability of the harbor uplands for such a project. Commissioner Shavelson thanked Mr. Nostrand for attending, and commented on wanting to see more boat building in Homer; it's something to think about as they're working through this Spit Comprehensive Plan rewrite.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Chair Matthews reported on the State of Alaska approving the matching funds for the Harbor Expansion Project study.

Commissioner Shavelson shared his observations on the City lease document and potentially having the City Attorney incorporate stipulated penalties into the agreements to help address some of these defaults or inaction by a date certain. He voiced his appreciation for Chair Matthews and how she runs the meetings, and thanked Deputy City Clerk Tussey, Mayor Castner, and all the commissioners for the time they put in for these meetings.

Commissioner Ulmer noted she had no comments and thanked the commission.

Commissioner Friend echoed Commissioner Shavelson's comments about having a well-organized packet and the information presented. He thanked Deputy City Clerk Tussey and everyone's efforts for the materials; he thinks it makes them more prepared and as a new member there's a lot for him to get up to speed on.

Commissioner Pitzman voiced his appreciation for everybody's work preparing the commission for their work, and just wished he had more time. He commented on earlier points made about sharing the space out on the Spit and how they share a shipyard with a campground and a performing arts center; maybe they can reimagine that whole space such as having a boat building barn in the winter and it be a performing arts center in the summer.

Commissioner Siekaniec commented he loves the big dreaming and is looking forward to going over this plan and thinking out different uses of the Spit and Harbor. He thanked everyone and City Staff.

Commissioner Zeiset thanked everyone for their work and commented they now have some homework to do.

Consulting Member Mayor Castner commented on his economic reasons for taking the time to do this work. He spoke to the purpose of the roundtable meeting he had with all the board and commission chairs and his appreciation for all the knowledge these bodies bring. The City needs their input so he hopes they stick with it and is really confident they will do great things.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Tussey shared an update from Student Representative Stonorov that she will be absent for the summer meetings.

Port and Harbor Director Hawkins thanked everyone for their time and great dialogue. He recapped the topics they discussed, items to bring to the next meeting, and reminded commissioners that they are always welcome to reach out to him with questions. Mayor Castner added the concept of a parking garage being incorporated into the tsunami refuge point feature for the new harbor expansion.

Chair Matthews thanked everyone for being there, Harbor and Clerk staff for their work, and Mayor Castner for encouraging the commission. She commented on how they are there to not necessarily shake the boat but to study it and keep it going forward. She's excited for all the work they have coming up and reminded the commissioners of their Spit Comprehensive Plan homework for the month.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Matthews adjourned the meeting at 7:57 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 22, 2022 at 6:00 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: June 22, 2022