

Session 21-07 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:02 p.m. on August 10, 2021 at the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS MARKS, BROWN, HALL, CHEROK, SPEAKMAN, PERSON

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER AREVALO (excused)

STAFF: DEPUTY CITY PLANNER ENGBRETSSEN
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR KEISER
SPECIAL PROJECTS & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR CARROLL

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Marks asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

BROWN/PERSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Wayne Aderhold, city resident, voiced his support for the wayfinding-streetscape project. He had attended one of the Discovery Week events and strongly feels that any tsunami inundation zone signage should be considered.

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 8, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Marks asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

HALL/PERSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 8TH REGULAR MEETING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

A. Peter Briggs, Corvus Design – Wayfinding & Streetscape Project

Chair Marks introduced Peter Briggs, Corvus Designs, to provide a presentation on the wayfinding and streetscape project. She noted that presentation materials are in the packet starting on page 11 of their packet, and the goal is to narrow down their preferred sign design options to one or two selections.

Peter Briggs gave his presentation, going over where they are in the process, the goals for sign development, where existing signs are, and what they've learned is needed from their Discovery Week. Mr. Briggs reviewed and facilitated discussion with the commission on the preliminary sign concept designs. Topics covered include:

- Costs associated with the different concepts; signs with more concrete would be more expensive while designs like option C would be cheaper
- Durability: all of the options are durable but options A and C would be the easiest for replacement/repairs
- “Instagram” opportunities
- Components at the Islands and Oceans Visitor Center and the Homer Spit are already harnessed in option A
- Option B does have more of an artistic appeal
- Lighting integration with the signage
- Snow coverage concerns for low-placed signs
- Looking for a “timeless” look that will last throughout the different aspects of Homer

Mr. Briggs recapped the commission's overall consensus with Option A but with changes to the pedestrian sign, and ensuring the panel design is consistent; potentially toning down the curvature in option B to be more marine-like. Next step is to refine the sign designs. Chair Marks and Deputy City Planner Engébretsen went over public outreach efforts and notable project dates.

Mr. Briggs thanked the commission and left the meeting.

B. Jan Keiser, Public Works Director – Public Works Project Updates

Chair Marks introduced Public Works Director Keiser to give her department update.

Ms. Keiser spoke to the Public Works projects that received funding in the FY 2022-2023 budget. These projects include City facilities that have funding for ADA-compliance improvements, various repairs and replacements, and roads, sidewalks, and trails projects that have funding either for designing or construction. She explained the projects and budget requests that did not get approved during the budget process, projects Public Works is working on now, and what projects are coming up in the near future.

Ms. Keiser facilitated questions from the commission. Commissioner Speakman commented on how Homer is an aging community and it's important to see those ADA-compliant projects at the top of the priority list. Commissioner Hall inquired on what caused the City to become out of compliance with our accessibility features. Chair Marks commented on the importance of improving the Baycrest pull-out as it provides an area for restrooms, informational signage, and landscaping. Ms. Marks also requested an update on the Motorized Trails and Transportation Plan and clarification on the difference between Public Work's funded projects and the City's Capital Improvement Plan.

C. George Hall – Seasonal Housing Solutions for Homer

Commissioner Person left the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Chair Marks deferred to Commissioner Hall to give a presentation on seasonal housing solutions for Homer. She noted that this topic, plus others that will be presented at next month's meeting, segue into the EDC's strategic plan and goals which the commission will be reviewing later in the year.

Mr. Hall gave a presentation on his proposal on how the City should address the seasonal housing issue. He spoke to the housing shortage in Homer, its impact on employment, and explained his proposal of using modular movable/removable housing. He described out some of the issues with using modular housing including cost, location, number of beds, rent being charged based on cost-recovery vs subsidy, if they should be used in the winter, term of need, and facility rules/management. Funding of the units could be done either by the employer, the City, or through a Public-Private-Partnership agreement.

Mr. Hall requested feedback from the commission on if this was a concept the EDC would like to take up, and if so what next steps could we take. The commission briefly discussed the proposal and agreed to have the idea come back up when the commission reviewed their strategic plan.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. EDC Staff Report
i. Wayfinding-Streetscape Postcard

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen spoke to her written staff report, highlighting the Wayfinding-Streetscape project postcards that went out, some changes to City Code that will be coming to the commission, and City Council candidacy filing is open for those interested in serving. In response to Commissioner Brown, she explained how the Planning Commission began working on revising the regulations for large retail stores and staff's proposal to give EDC an update on the changes at their October meeting.

- B. Chamber Director Report

Chair Marks noted that Chamber Director Brad Anderson was present earlier in the meeting but was no longer in attendance.

- C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report
- D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report

Chair Marks noted that KPEDD will be meeting August 19th so she will have a report at the EDC's September meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan Project Update
 - i. DRAFT Sign Location & Design Concepts

Chair Marks noted that the commission's feedback was provided to the consultant and staff during Mr. Brigg's presentation, and that no further action or motion was needed at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. City of Homer Draft 2022-27 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
 - i. DRAFT 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Plan
 - ii. "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about the CIP" FAQs
 - iii. CIP Project Nomination Form

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title and deferred to Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll.

Ms. Carroll reviewed what the CIP is, the process for providing feedback to her and City Council, and what action staff is requesting from the commission at this meeting.

Chair Marks inquired on the removal of the Storm Water Master Plan. Ms. Carroll noted that in the report provided earlier by Public Works Director Keiser it was stated the reason for that removal is because the project is moving along and they would like to focus more on groundwater. Ms. Carroll spoke to a meeting City staff had with Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities on some of the infrastructure funding that's coming forward, and where the State and City could coordinate on those funds to accomplish mutual goals. Storm water projects was one of those projects.

Chair Marks and Ms. Carroll discussed how the removal of projects from the State Legislative Request list would create openings for other projects, next steps at the Council level for approval, and whether a motion from EDC was needed or if feedback to staff would suffice.

Commissioner Speakman commented that anything regarding the Port and Harbor should be high priority outside of increasing bandwidth or connectivity for businesses. At Chair Marks' request for clarification, Commissioner Speakman agreed that her two top priorities are New Large Vessel Harbor Phase 2 and Barge Mooring and Large Vessel Haul Out Repair Facility.

Commissioner Hall supported those two selections.

Commissioner Cherok agreed to the New Large Vessel Harbor Phase 2 as #1 but proposed the Multi-Use Community Center Phase 1 as #2.

Commissioner Brown agreed with the New Large Vessel Harbor Phase 2 being the #1 priority. She requested more information on the Homer Spit Trailhead Restroom and noted she does not have a strong opinion for #2.

Chair Marks agreed with Commissioner Cherok, that priority #1 be the New Large Vessel Harbor Phase 2 and #2 be the Multi-Use Community Center.

Chair Marks asked if commissioners had any #3 priorities. Commissioner Speakman suggested making downtown more walkable. Ms. Carroll noted the Main Street Sidewalk project was similar and was already on the list under the State's portion. Commissioner Hall stated he did not have a #3 priority. Ms. Engebretsen commented that two priorities will suffice for Ms. Carroll's request.

HALL/CHEROK MOVED TO RECOMMEND PORT OF HOMER: NEW LARGE VESSEL HARBOR PHASE 2 AS OUR #1 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY PROJECT, AND BARGE MOORING AND LARGE VESSEL HAUL OUT REPAIR FACILITY AS OUR #2 PROJECT FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER FOR INCLUSION IN THE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY SECTION ALONG WITH SUPPORTING THE MULTI-USE COMMUNITY CENTER.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES: MARKS, CHEROK, BROWN, SPEAKMAN, HALL

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. City Manager's Report for July 26, 2021
- B. City Manager's Report for August 9, 2021
- C. EDC 2021 Calendar

Chair Marks stated that she will be out of state for the next City Council meeting and asked for a commissioner willing to give that report. It was agreed that Deputy City Planner Engebretsen would speak to Commissioner Person about giving the report since many of the other commissioners will be unavailable.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Wayne Aderhold, city resident, voiced his support for the mobile housing unit idea and opined that it should be up to the employer and the Chamber of Commerce to oversee their implementation.

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen thanked everyone's patience as they work through the new technology and noted bigger and better things are coming.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey reiterated Ms. Engebretsen's comments and thanked the commission.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Marks commented that the Zoom and in-person hybrid meetings have been going well. She acknowledged the lengthy meeting but it was all valuable information and looks forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Brown commented it was great to be back in person and thanked City staff for their hard work.

Commissioner Speakman commented that we are all exhausted, referencing the busy summer and events that have recently taken place. She spoke to the seasonal housing issue and the need to maintain her great employees; she interested to see what kind of Public-Private-Partnership could be arranged. She impressed upon everyone to be very kind to each other as it's been a tiring year and voiced her appreciation for City staff.

Commissioner Hall thanked City staff for their work in running the meeting.

Commissioner Cherok commented that it was a very productive meeting, he's excited to see the Wayfinding-Streetscape project moving forward, and thanked everyone.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m. A Worksession is scheduled for Tuesday, August 31, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. and the next regular meeting is Wednesday, September 14, 2021 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: September 14, 2021