

Session 21-05, a Regular Meeting of the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Steve Zimmerman at 6:00 p.m. on May 26, 2021 in the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall located at 491 E Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS ZIMMERMAN, ZEISET, STOCKBURGER, ULMER, ERICKSON, MATTHEWS, AND SIEKANIEC

CONSULTING

MEMBER: MAYOR CASTNER

STAFF: PORT DIRECTOR/HARBORMASTER HAWKINS
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY
DEPUTY CITY PLANNER ENGBRETSSEN

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Zimmerman noted that Julie Engbretsen, Deputy City Planner, is in attendance to give an update on the Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan project under Staff & Council Reports. He asked for a motion to approve the agenda with that amendment.

ULMER/ZEISET MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH DEPUTY CITY PLANNER ENGBRETSSEN'S REPORT UNDER STAFF AND COUNCIL REPORTS.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Deputy City Clerk Tussey noted for the record that six written testimony submittals were received after the packet deadline and were emailed to the commissioners just before the meeting as laydown items.

Patricia Cue, resident, spoke in favor of Ordinance 21-26. She supports funding for public outreach to educate the community on enforcement and what areas are affected by the ordinance, and to ask the public to participate in keeping a look-out for compliance/opportunities to educate others. She opined that the City should later consider additional cameras in these areas and adding additional restrictions in those critical habitat areas. She thanked the commission for their time.

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 28, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Zimmerman asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

ULMER/SIEKANIEC MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS WRITTEN.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

The agenda was amended under “Approval of the Agenda” to include Item C.

A. Port & Harbor Staff Report for May 2021

Port Director Hawkins facilitated discussion and took questions in response to his written staff report. There was discussion on the upcoming and recent large vessel haul-outs, setting up a section of the concrete pad to accommodate camping that was displaced for haul-out/repairs, and damage that had occurred to the Steel Grid.

B. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

Commissioner Zeiset noted in his verbal report that HMTA is currently running radio spots in Anchorage throughout the summer that support the Homer Harbor and marine trades, and that one scholarship was awarded to Owen Glasman. Port Director Hawkins noted that Mr. Glasman also received a scholarship from the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators.

C. Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan Project Update

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen provided a verbal update on the Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan project and the upcoming public outreach events being hosted by Corvus Designs. She requested that the commissioners and other advisory body members attend the events to support the process and give public input.

Commissioners discussed with Ms. Engebretsen signage needs on the Spit, particularly for public restrooms, and the Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan project in general.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Identifying Other Revenue Sources – Spit Parking Plan Update & Kiosk Research

- i. Memo from HDR Engineering Re: Homer Spit Parking Study Scope
- ii. Parking Map of Homer Spit

Chair Zimmerman introduced the item by reading the title and opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Siekaniec commented that he agreed with staff's recommendation that it's too late in the year to try and order kiosks, and to postpone any large decision-making.

MATTHEWS/ULMER MOVED THAT THE BOAT HOUSE PAVILION PARKING LOT BE TURNED INTO PAY TO PARK STATUS EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2021 WITH NECESSARY SIGNAGE IN PLACE AND PUBLIC NOTICE TO BEGIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE VIA PRINT SIGNAGE, WINDSHIELD FLYERS, AND COURTESY NOTICES AT THE STREET WITH A-FRAMES.

There was discussion to clarify the allowance of flyers under the pretense of public notice, not as advertising. Port Director Hawkins provided information on how harbor staff intends to transition the parking area into a pay-to-park lot, how parking passes are calculated, and what's currently allowed/not allowed.

Commissioner Ulmer opined that parking fees should be high enough to normalize parking off the Spit, and encourage it.

Discussion ensued on whether to include a monthly parking pass fee into that motion, and what that fee should be. Commissioners suggested it should range between \$70-100.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Port Director Hawkins commented that the PHC has another meeting before fees are finalized by Council. Staff could prepare a monthly parking fee recommendation and bring it back to the next meeting. There was discussion between staff, commissioners, and Consulting Member Mayor Castner on the commission supporting a fee change at this meeting.

Mr. Hawkins responded to questions and facilitated discussion with the commission on paid parking in the area, relocating the Ramp 1 kiosk to be between Ramps 1 and 2, and preference for advertising sooner than later that a monthly pass is being offered given the season has already started.

STOCKBURGER/ULMER MOVED TO ADD TO THE FEE SCHEDULE A SHORTER MONTHLY PASS FOR \$100, WITH THE FULL SEASON PASS TO REMAIN AT \$250.

There was discussion on the fee amount, if a discount on vehicle parking passes should be offered to reserved moorage lessees, and possibly limit the number of passes sold later down the line. Harbor staff recommended to not change anything to the parking policies or fees until after HDR Engineering finishes their Homer Spit parking study, and then the PHC could make changes as part of a bigger parking plan.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Zimmerman commented on HDR Engineering's scope of work memo, and his objection to having any more paved areas on the Spit due to drainage concerns and environmental impacts; barriers and striping can still be done without paving. Mayor Castner spoke to his knowledge of natural drainage on the Spit and the need for better drainage out there.

- B. 2022-23 Budget & Commodity (Moorage) Rate Increase
 - i. Proposed Budget Development Schedule for FY 2022 & 2023

Chair Zimmerman introduced the item by reading the title. He recapped what had been discussed at their last meeting and opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Matthews proposed to make a motion to increase the commodity rate. Deputy City Clerk Tussey briefly described the recommended motion from the last meeting and the need to ensure the motion includes a recommendation to amend the budget and tariff.

MATTHEWS/ULMER MOVED TO AMEND THE 2022-2023 BUDGET AND PORT OF HOMER TARIFF NO. 1 TO HAVE A 4% COMMODITY RATE INCREASE, AND RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL ADOPTION.

Discussion ensued on the increase to moorage rates again. Commissioner Stockburger opined that we have discussed this subject extensively before and there's going to be some really upset large vessel owners over an extra increase.

Commissioner Siekaniec commented that when the 3.2% annual increase over the course of 10 years was agreed to in 2015, it felt like an agreement was made with the public; it was a compromise between the need to increase the moorage and what the customers were willing to pay. Mr. Stockburger commented that the moorage owners have already been hit pretty hard and he felt the commission/Harbor Enterprise should defer to other harbor users to pay more.

Commissioner Matthews shared her reasoning for being in support of the extra increase, specifically noting the larger increase in infrastructure repair costs. Concerns were raised about penalizing the other businesses surrounding the harbor who bring a lot of sales tax to Homer. The counter point was made that the Harbor Enterprise itself does not see any of that sales tax revenue directly, therefore the brunt of the harbor expenses still land on the larger, commercial vessel owners.

Commissioners discussed with Port Director Hawkins' recommendation on the matter; while the increase may not seem like much for a smaller vessel, it could mean more for larger vessels. He also noted that it does feel like the harbor "changed their plan", and how do they explain that change to the public. Mr. Siekaniec opined that while the increase may not be a lot for the user, it's also not a lot for the harbor, and they should come up with another plan at the end of this 10 year plan. Commissioner

Ulmer pointed out that this discussion seems to be more about the harbor's integrity with the public and if there was a way to explain to the public that we're broke.

Mayor Castner spoke to the budget process and consulted the commission on ways they could recognize additional revenue sources and be more affective in the budgetary process to be a more sustainable port.

VOTE: YES: ULMER, MATTHEWS

NO: ERICKSON, SIEKANIEC, ZEISET, STOCKBURGER, ZIMMERMAN

Motion failed.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey clarified that a motion is still needed for the annual 3.2% increase.

ZIMMERMAN/STOCKBURGER MOVED TO APPROVE AND RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL THE PROPOSED STAFF CHANGES TO THE PORT OF HOMER TARIFF NO. 1 AT THE 3.2% COMMODITY RATE INCREASE.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES: SIEKANIEC, ULMER, ERICKSON, STOCKBURGER, MATTHEWS, ZIMMERMAN, ZEISET

Motion carried.

C. Annual Review of PHC Policies/Bylaws

i. PHC Bylaws - Adopted March 11, 2019

Chair Zimmerman introduced the item by reading the title and opened the floor for discussion.

At Commissioner Matthews' request, Deputy City Clerk Tussey spoke to her memo on staff's recommended changes to the PHC's bylaws. She explained how their bylaws should include only fundamental rules and that information that's likely to change frequently should not be included, such as their annual calendar topics. She also noted the commission's previous request to formally amend their regular meeting schedule to not have their December meeting land on the 4th Wednesday of that month.

Consulting Member Mayor Castner commented on the City Clerk's Office's efforts to evaluate City Code, the Fee Schedule, and advisory bodies' bylaws to ensure accuracy and prevent redundancy throughout our City documents. He spoke to the value of the student representative seat and suggested the commission support having a student serve on the commission. Ms. Tussey noted that the PHC amended their bylaws in 2019 to allow a student representative serve, and that the student they just had this past year was the first for this commission. Commissioner Ulmer commented on her efforts to locate a new student representative.

SIEKANIEC/ULMER MOVED TO REMOVE ARTICLE V. SECTION 2 AND 3 FROM THE BYLAWS.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

MATTHEWS/ULMER MOVED TO MODIFY ARTICLE V. SECTION 1 TO HAVE THE DECEMBER MEETING ON 2ND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

ZIMMERMAN/ULMER MOVED TO HOLD A FINAL READING ON THE PROPOSED PORT AND HARBOR ADVISORY COMMISSION BYLAW AMENDMENTS AT THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Commissioners discussed with Deputy City Clerk Tussey the student representative section of the bylaws. Ms. Tussey explained where in their bylaws it currently allows one Homer area high school serve as a student representative, which is considered a consulting, non-voting member. The bylaws do not limit the term, as other advisory bodies may do, so it would allow a freshman or sophomore to serve until they graduated. The commission agreed to leave it as written.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Ordinance 21-26 No Wake Zone
 - i. Memo 21-070 No Wake Ordinance from Councilmember Lord
 - ii. Ordinance 21-26 No Wake Zones
 - iii. Map of City Owned Waterfront Properties

Chair Zimmerman introduced the item by reading the title and opened the floor for discussion on whether the PHC wishes to support this ordinance.

Commissioner Ulmer voiced her appreciation for the public testimony they received on the subject.

STOCKBURGER/ULMER MOVED TO SUPPORT THE CODE AMENDMENTS AND BUDGET EXPENDITURE PROPOSED BY COUNCILMEMBER LORD AND RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL THEY APPROVE ORDINANCE 21-26.

Commissioner Matthews shared her concern on how the waterline transitions will be indicated, and where it says “motorized” in the code, are we isolating out regular boats or skiffs from accessing those waterways? Port Director Hawkins explained how there’s essentially two different speed zones. Inside the harbor it’s specific to 2 mph. Outside the harbor up to a quarter of a mile from the entrance, the limit is a speed that does not create damage to the area. He referenced the draft ordinance to explain that the amendments to code would be to include the City’s tidelands into that second speed category so that vessels need to travel as a safe speed. He clarified that a 2 mph no-wake-zone outside of the harbor isn’t being proposed, it’s saying that the wake can’t do damage in those areas. In response to Ms. Matthews’ question, he does not believe waterway markings via buoys would be feasible but Council may consider identifying boundary lines based on geographical points.

Commissioner Zeiset questioned proposed HCC Section C. “All motorized vessels are prohibited from the entrance to Beluga Slough and from all waters within Louie’s Lagoon.” He wanted to make sure there wouldn’t be any valid reason to enter those areas that they would be prohibiting with this code amendment. The physical location of Louie’s Lagoon was clarified as the location with all the derelict vessels, and could technically be accessed at very high tides.

Commissioner Stockburger commented on compliance. He acknowledged that something like this would be hard to enforce, but he felt having some signage on shore and having established rules would deter the majority of people from entering those areas. The kind of people who would violate these laws would do it regardless of how well the boundaries are identified or enforced by local authorities.

There was brief clarification that this ordinance is primarily about no-wake policies, not banning or restricting jet-skis from these areas.

VOTE: YES: MATTHEWS, SIEKANIEC, ZIMMERMAN, ZEISET, STOCKBURGER, ULMER
NO: ERICKSON

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. PHC 2021-2022 Strategic Plan – Approved April 28, 2021
- B. Memo to City Council Re: 22/2023 Budget – Port Generated Sales Tax Credited Toward City Admin Fees
- C. Port & Harbor Monthly Statistical Report for April 2021
- D. Water/Sewer Bills Report for April 2021
- E. Crane & Ice Report
- F. Dock Activity Reports
- G. PHC 2021 Meeting Calendar

Chair Zimmerman opened the floor for discussion on informational materials. Deputy City Clerk Tussey commented that their new strategic plan, approved at their last meeting, was included. There was

discussion with staff on how busy the Spit has been already this early in the season, shift adjustments for staff coverage, and if any cruise ship landings will be happening this season.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Gart Curtis voiced his full support for charging for parking between Ramps 1 and 2. He commented on the no-wake zone and the tidal rip that's located at the end of the Spit near Land's End Resort, and for the City to take that into consideration.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Tussey thanked Commissioner Stockburger for his service since 2012 and that it has been great working with him these years.

Port Director Hawkins commented on cold storage at the Fish Dock, and having as an upcoming agenda item for the June meeting. He spoke to a comment Commissioner Matthews made about people coming to her not being able to find the nearby restrooms, and how that tells him we must have new customers and visitors. He also thanked Commissioner Stockburger.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY COUNCILMEMBER

Mayor Castner commented on Mr. Curtis' comments, that the entire tip of the Spit is not included in the designated no-wake zone maps. Mr. Castner formally recognized Commissioner Stockburger for his service and all the work he has done for the marine trades. He said he has asked Ian Pitzman, a commercial fisherman, to apply for the vacant position. Mr. Castner reiterated his comments about all the work going into the budget and their positions as commissioners in that process.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Zimmerman thanked Commissioner Stockburger for his service and great insights he brought to the commission.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Erickson said they'll miss Mr. Stockburger.

Commissioner Zeiset said how the commission will miss Mr. Stockburger and thanked him for his service to the PHC and the Homer Marine Trades Association.

Commissioner Matthews commented that the Homer Halibut Tournament and Food Truck Festival is coming up. She thanked Mr. Stockburger for his service.

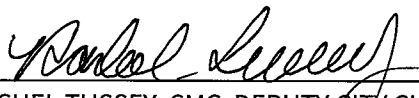
Commissioner Ulmer thanked Mr. Stockburger and that he will be missed.

Commissioner Stockburger thanked everyone. He commented on how the PHC has been a really good and diverse group to represent all aspects of Homer. He personally thanked Deputy City Clerk Tussey, Port Director Hawkins, and Mayor Castner.

Commissioner Siekaniec had no comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska via Zoom Webinar.



RACHEL TUSSEY, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I

Approved: June 23, 2021