



Agenda

ADA Advisory Board Regular Meeting

Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 5:00 PM

Cowles Council Chambers In-Person & Via Zoom Webinar

Homer City Hall

491 E. Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603
www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Zoom Webinar ID: 998 6324 0301 Password: 404451

<https://cityofhomer.zoom.us>
Dial: 346-248-7799 or 669-900-6833;
(Toll Free) 888-788-0099 or 877-853-5247

CALL TO ORDER, 5:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

- A. Board & Commission Annual Training - Melissa Jacobsen, City Clerk

SYNOPSIS APPROVAL

- A. Unapproved Meeting Minutes for Special Meeting on September 7, 2023

REPORTS

- A. Staff Report for October 2023

PENDING BUSINESS

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- A. 2024 Regular Meeting Schedule

Memorandum from City Clerk as backup.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. Informational Flyer on Rapid Flashing Beacons for Heath Street Project
- B. Advisory Board Annual Calendar 2023
- C. City of Homer Monthly Newsletter - October 2023

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

COMMENTS OF THE BOARD

ADJOURNMENT

Next Regular Meeting is **Thursday, November 9, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.** All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom webinar.

CALL TO ORDER

Session 23-07 a Special Meeting of the ADA Advisory Board was called to order by Vice Chair Joyanna Geisler at 5:03 p.m. on September 7, 2023 from the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall, located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom webinar.

PRESENT: BOARD MEMBERS GEISLER, LEPLEY, PARSONS, SAFRA, THORSRUD

ABSENT: BOARD MEMBER ADERHOLD (EXCUSED)

STAFF: DEPUTY CITY CLERK II/ADA COORDINATOR KRAUSE

AGENDA APPROVAL

SAFRA/LEPLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA (3 Minute Time limit)

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Unapproved Regular Meeting Minutes for August 10, 2023

LEPLEY/SAFRA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT(S)/COMMITTEE REPORT(S)

A. ADA Coordinator Report

ADA Coordinator Krause provided a verbal update on the Heath Street Renovation Project having recently received the drawings from Public Works. She noted that they did contain design and placement of pedestrian crossings with flashing lights.

Vice Chair Geisler reported that the Independent Living Center received news that the two traffic lights will receive audible signals.

Board member Parsons reported that in discussion with Alaska Department of Transportation does not automatically install audible signals on traffic signals since some persons find that it causes more noise and makes hearing traffic even more difficult but if they receive a request they will install those audible signals.

PUBLIC HEARING(S)

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. ADA Transition Plan for Parks, Play Areas & Campgrounds – Review and Adopt
Memorandum ADA 23-024

Vice Chair Geisler introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to ADA Coordinator Krause.

ADA Coordinator Krause review Memorandum ADA-23-024 for the Board noting the following amendments to the document:

Page 2 – No further amendments.

Page 3 – The table of contents will be updated once all the final amendments have been executed.

Page 4 – 1.0 Introduction

- Lines 87 – 93: Updated the information to represent the 2021 figures from the US Census Bureau for the US overall, the State of Alaska and then the City of Homer to be more impactful
- Lines 94-101: Moved to a separate paragraph from the Information regarding the number of people with disabilities as it addressed another topic.

Page 5 – Paragraphs were separated throughout as recommended by the Chair.

2.2 Transition Plan Requirements

- Line 157: Amended to correct the description of the action

Page 6 – Line 162, 166 & 172: Added the word “Facilities” to identity the first transition plan correctly

- Line 172: Deleted verbiage as it is not necessary as a descriptive
- Added spaces between paragraph for separation of topics

Page 7 - 3.2 Findings

- Line 228: Deleted verbiage as it was vague and misleading. The City does not really have a managed Parks system. Corrected word to past tense to represent correct grammatical use.

Page 8 - 4.0 Transition Plan

- Line 244: Removed extra space

Page 9 – 5.1.1 Cost/Impact Ranking

- Lines 302 – 308: Indented text
- 5.2 Funding
 - Line 311: Justified text

Page 10 – 5.3 Timeline Ranking

- Indented text

Page 11 – 6.0 Recommendations

- Line 362-364: Bulleted to define what actions can be designated as routine

Ms. Krause commented on the proposed timelines submitted by maintenance and was very surprised that they were very short and could be accomplished within normal work schedules and within the next year. She did note that there were several that would require additional time due to funding.

ADA Coordinator Krause provided clarification on the deleting “park system” explaining that in comparison to other cities the City of Homer does not have a parks department so it is misleading to state in the document that it is a managed park system in response to a question from the Board.

Vice Chair Geisler requested a motion and second.

LEPLEY/THORSRUD MOVED TO ADOPT THE CITY OF HOMER ADA TRANSITION PLAN FOR PARKS, PLAY AREAS AND CAMPGROUNDS AND FORWARD TO CITY COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL.

ADA Coordinator Krause facilitated discussion on the following points:

- Line 86, research showed that the CDC reports 61 million, ADA National Network reports 54 million and Global Disability Rights for the United States reports 57 million while American Community Survey does estimate 42.5 million – depending on what organization the Board would like to reference those figures can be used.
 - 42.5 million was generally thought of as low and typically the numbers referenced between 50 and 60 million.
 - The paragraph would need to be re-written to reflect the number from the organization that the Board preferred.

SAFRA/GEISLER MOVED TO AMEND LINES 86 AND 87 TO REFLECT THE NUMBERS FROM THE ADA NATIONAL NETWORK.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

- Page 25 in the packet, page 14 of the Transition Plan clarification was provided on the description of “Install chair level transfer”
- Page 26 in the packet, page 15 of the Transition Plan, typographical error in Priority Level. This should be a level 1 not 4 since it referred to access.
- Page 31 in the packet, page 20 of the Transition Plan, clarification on the Priority level was a three because it was considered an amenity which according to the Department of Justice falls under 4 which included things such as drinking fountains, trash receptacles, etc.
 - o It was noted that at that park it was the only shelter so a preference would be to classify it to a higher priority.
 - o Further point was made that since the Port & Harbor has taken over the Spit Campgrounds they have it ranked as a two due to the additional budget needed so with a timeline of 1-2 years so really that moves it into a priority one class item.
- Page 32 in the packet, page 21 clarification was provided on the priority level since there is no ADA compliant camping spots and multiple campsites are needed to bring that campground into compliance.
 - o Port Maintenance Supervisor is very cognizant of the requirements of bringing things into compliance and the concerns of the Board are definitely heard.

Further concerns were expressed by the Board that such things like handrails and access should automatically be done and implemented when constructing amenities such as the gazebo at Mariner Park. It was commented that a pavilion should be constructed since it is such as heavily visited park.

ADA Coordinator Krause provided further clarification that Bayview Park is the park that was omitted since the equipment was removed due to safety and is currently being re-designed will be a fully accessible park. Ben Walters Park was not included but it was noted that benches and the boardwalk to the lake was not ADA compliant; and Beluga Slough Boardwalk after the recent visit there would be gravel installed and transitions would be addressed within the week.

The Board agreed by consensus to have the Clerk effect the minor corrections as noted.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Karen Hornaday Park & Bayview Park Public Forum Flyer

ADA Coordinator Krause explained that all meetings were open to the public, written comments could be submitted and this was being advertised that Council and Advisory Bodies members would be attending.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Mr. Agee expressed his appreciation for the good work that the Board does.

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

ADA Coordinator Krause expressed her appreciation for a good meeting, noting she liked having short meetings too.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCIL MEMBER (If Present)

COMMENTS OF THE BOARD

Board member Lepley expressed his appreciation for the clarification provided by Ms. Krause.

Boardmember Thorsrud expressed her appreciation of having such wonderful group to work with and the benefit of knowledgeable city staff person. She will be the person to push for more benches with backs.

Vice Chair Geisler reported that she received an invitation to be a member of the stakeholder group on accessible voting and while she appreciated the invitation she does not have the time and submitted a recommendation for Brad and Pat Case.

Boardmember Safra reported that she will be absent from the October meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Vice Chair Geisler adjourned the meeting at 6:05 p.m. The next regular meeting is Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, 99603 and via Zoom webinar.

RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: _____



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Clerk

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

clerk@cityofhomer-ak.gov
(p) 907-235-3130
(f) 907-235-3143

Memorandum

TO: ADVISORY BODIES
FROM: MELISSA JACOBSEN, MMC, CITY CLERK
DATE: OCTOBER 4, 2023
SUBJECT: MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2024

Please review the draft resolution that establishes your meetings for 2024 and make any changes by way of motion.

Requests for meeting schedule changes will then go to City Council, who will be setting the 2024 meeting schedule for Council and Advisory Bodies via resolution no later than their November 27, 2023 meeting.

Recommendation

Review the attached draft resolution; make a motion to approve the resolution either as-is or with amendments and recommend adoption by City Council.

**CITY OF HOMER
HOMER, ALASKA**

City Clerk

RESOLUTION 23-1xx

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA, ESTABLISHING THE 2024 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE FOR CITY COUNCIL, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION, LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD, PARKS ART RECREATION AND CULTURE ADVISORY COMMISSION, PLANNING COMMISSION, PORT AND HARBOR ADVISORY COMMISSION, AND AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) ADVISORY BOARD.

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Homer City Code (HCC) Section 1.14.020, the City Council annually sets the schedule for regular and some special meetings, noting the dates, times and places of the City Council, Planning Commission, Advisory Commissions and Boards; and

WHEREAS, The public is informed of such meetings through notices located at the City Clerk's Office, Clerk's Calendar on KBBI, the City Clerk's Website, and postings at the Public Library; and

WHEREAS, HCC 1.14.020 - 040 states that meetings may be advertised in a local paper of general circulation at least three days before the date of the meeting and that special meetings should be advertised in the same manner or may be broadcast by local radio at least twice a day for three consecutive days or two consecutive days before the day of the meeting plus the day of the meeting; and

WHEREAS, HCC 1.14.010 notes that the notice of meetings applies to the City Council and all commissions, boards, committees, subcommittees, task forces and any sub-unit of the foregoing public bodies of the City, whether meeting in a formal or informal meeting; that the failure to give the notice provided for under this chapter does not invalidate or otherwise affect any action or decision of a public body of the City; however, this sentence does not change the consequences of failing to give the minimum notice required under State Statute; that notice will ordinarily be given by the City Clerk; and that the presiding officer or the person or persons calling a meeting are responsible for notifying the City Clerk of meetings in sufficient time for the Clerk to publish notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the City; and

WHEREAS, This Resolution does not preclude additional meetings such as emergency meetings, special meetings, worksessions, and the like; and

WHEREAS, Council adopted Resolution 06-144 on October 9, 2006 establishing the Regular Meeting site for all bodies to be the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Homer City Council, that the 2024 meeting schedule is established for the City Council, Economic Development Advisory Commission, Library Advisory Board, Parks Art Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Planning Commission, Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory Board of the City of Homer, Alaska, as follows:

HOLIDAYS – City Offices closed:

January 1, New Year's Day, Monday	February 19, Presidents' Day, third Monday	March 25, Seward's Day, last Monday	May 27, Memorial Day, last Monday	July 4, Independence Day, Thursday	September 2, Labor Day, first Monday
October 18, Alaska Day, Friday	November 11, Veterans Day, Monday	November 28 Thanksgiving Day, Fourth Thursday	November 29, Friday, the day after Thanksgiving	December 25, Christmas, Wednesday	

*If a holiday is on a Sunday, the following Monday is observed as the legal holiday; if on a Saturday, the preceding Friday is observed as the legal holiday pursuant to the City of Homer Personnel Rules and Regulations.

CITY COUNCIL (CC)

January 8, 22	February 12, 26	March 11, 26*	April 8, 22	May 13, 28*	June 10, 24
July 22**	August 12, 26	September 9, 23	October 1 Election	October 14, 28 Oath of Office October 14	Canvass Board October 4
November 5 Runoff Election	November 25**	December 9***	December 16*** if needed		

*Second meeting in March and May will be held on a Tuesday due to Seward's Day and Memorial Day respectively

**There will be no First Regular Meeting in July or November.

*** The City Council traditionally cancels the last regular meeting in December and holds the first regular meeting and one to two Special Meetings as needed; the second Special Meeting the third week of December will not be held.

City Council's Regular Committee of the Whole Meetings at 5:00 p.m. to no later than 5:50 p.m. prior to every Regular Meeting which are held the second and fourth Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Council will not conduct a First Regular Meeting in July or November.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION (EDC)

January 9	February 13	March 12	April 9	May 14	June 11
July 9	August 13	September 10	October 8	November 12	December 10

Economic Development Advisory Commission Regular Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD (LAB)

January 16	February 20	March 19	April 16	May 21	
	August 20	September 17	October 15	November 19	December 17

Library Advisory Board Regular Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of January through May and August through December at 5:30 p.m.

PARKS, ART, RECREATION AND CULTURE ADVISORY COMMISSION (PARC)

	February 15	March 21	April 18	May 16	June 20
	August 15	September 19	October 17	November 21	

Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission Regular Meetings are held on the third Thursday February through June and August through November at 5:30 p.m.

PLANNING COMMISSION (PC)

January 3, 17	February 7, 21	March 6, 20	April 3, 17	May 1, 15	June 5, 19
July 17*	August 7, 21	September 4, 18	October 2, 16	November 6*	December 4*

*There will be no First Regular Meeting in July or Second Regular Meetings in November and December.

Planning Commission Regular Meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

PORT AND HARBOR ADVISORY COMMISSION (PHC)

January 24	February 28	March 27	April 24	May 22	June 26
July 24	August 28	September 25	October 23	November 27	December 11

Port and Harbor Advisory Commission Regular Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of month January through November and the second Wednesday of December at 5:30 p.m.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) ADVISORY BOARD (ADAAB)

	February 8		April 11	May 9	June 13
July 11	August 8		October 10	November 14	

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory Board Regular Meetings are held on the second Thursday at 5:00 p.m. in the months of February, April, May, June, July, August, October, November, with additional meetings called as needed.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Homer City Council this _____ day of November, 2023.

CITY OF HOMER

KEN CASTNER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

MELISSA JACOBSEN, MMC, CITY CLERK

Fiscal Impact: Advertising of meetings in regular weekly meeting ad and advertising of any additional meetings.



Safety Benefits:

RRFBs can reduce crashes up to:

47%

for pedestrian crashes.⁴

RRFBs can increase motorist yielding rates up to:

98%

(varies by speed limit, number of lanes, crossing distance, and time of day).³



RRFBs used at a trail crossing.
Source: LJB

For more information on this and other FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures, please visit <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures> and https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/2022-06/techSheet_RRFB_2018.pdf.

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB)

A marked crosswalk or pedestrian warning sign can improve safety for pedestrians crossing the road, but at times may not be sufficient for drivers to visibly locate crossing locations and yield to pedestrians. To enhance pedestrian conspicuity and increase driver awareness at uncontrolled, marked crosswalks, transportation agencies can install a pedestrian actuated Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) to accompany a pedestrian warning sign. RRFBs consist of two, rectangular-shaped yellow indications, each with a light-emitting diode (LED)-array-based light source.¹ RRFBs flash with an alternating high frequency when activated to enhance conspicuity of pedestrians at the crossing to drivers.

For more information on using RRFBs, see the Interim Approval in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*.¹

Applications

The RRFB is applicable to many types of pedestrian crossings but is particularly effective at multilane crossings with speed limits less than 40 miles per hour.² Research suggests RRFBs can result in motorist yielding rates as high as 98 percent at marked crosswalks, but varies depending on the location, posted speed limit, pedestrian crossing distance, one- versus two-way road, and the number of travel lanes.³ RRFBs can also accompany school or trail crossing warning signs.

RRFBs are placed on both sides of a crosswalk below the pedestrian crossing sign and above the diagonal downward arrow plaque pointing at the crossing.¹ The flashing pattern can be activated with pushbuttons or passive (e.g., video or infrared) pedestrian detection, and should be unlit when not activated.

Considerations

Agencies should:²

- Install RRFBs in the median rather than the far-side of the roadway if there is a pedestrian refuge or other type of median.
- Use solar-power panels to eliminate the need for a power source.
- Reserve the use of RRFBs for locations with significant pedestrian safety issues, as over-use of RRFB treatments may diminish their effectiveness.

Agencies shall not:²

- Use RRFBs without the presence of a pedestrian, school or trail crossing warning sign.
- Use RRFBs for crosswalks across approaches controlled by YIELD signs, STOP signs, traffic control signals, or pedestrian hybrid beacons, except for the approach or egress from a roundabout.

¹ *MUTCD Interim Approval 21 - RRFBs at Crosswalks*.

² "Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon" in PEDSAFE: Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System. FHWA, (2013).

³ Fitzpatrick et al. "Will You Stop for Me? Roadway Design and Traffic Control Device Influences on Drivers Yielding to Pedestrians in a Crosswalk with a Rectangular Rapid-Flash Beacon." Report No. TTI-CTS-0010. Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

⁴ (CMF ID: 9024) NCHRP Research Report 841 Development of Crash Modification Factors for Uncontrolled Pedestrian Crossing Treatments, (2017).

ADA ADVISORY BOARD

2023 Calendar

	AGENDA DEADLINE	MEETING	CITY COUNCIL MEETING FOR REPORT*	ANNUAL TOPICS/EVENTS
JANUARY	No Meeting Scheduled			
FEBRUARY	Wednesday 2/1 5:00 p.m.	Thursday 2/09 5:00 p.m.	Monday 2/13 6:00 p.m.	ADA Budget Review *may not be applicable during non-budget years Development of Annual Strategic Plans & Goals
MARCH	No Meeting Scheduled			
APRIL	Wednesday 4/5 5:00 p.m.	Thursday 4/13 5:00 p.m.	Monday 4/24 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review first draft Parks, Play Areas & Campgrounds Transition Plan ADA Budget Review FY23-FY25
MAY	Wednesday 5/3 5:00 p.m.	Thursday 5/11 5:00 p.m.	Monday 5/22 6:00 p.m. [Sorter]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in Education and outreach activities for ADA Compliance in Local businesses to promote Accessible Homer Draft Strategic Plan for 2024
JUNE	Wednesday 6/7 5:00 p.m.	Thursday 6/8 5:00 p.m.	Monday 6/12 6:00 p.m. [Sorter]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule Site Audits for Trails Finalize Strategic Plan
JULY	Wednesday 7/5 5:00 p.m.	Thursday 7/13 5:00 p.m.	Monday 7/24 6:00 p.m. [Sorter] Tentative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Term Expiration Notices/Reapplications Sent Out 2nd Draft Parks, Play Areas & Campgrounds Transition Plan Amended COH Facilities Transition Plan Site Visit Scheduling for Trails Transition Planning
AUGUST	Wednesday 8/2 5:00 p.m.	Thursday 8/10 5:00 p.m.	Monday 8/14 6:00 p.m. [Sorter]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reapplications Due Site Visits for City Trail Transition Plan Aug 17th 9a-12pm Review Draft Transition Plan Parks Review Draft Transition Plan Update Facilities
SEPTEMBER	Wednesday 8/30 5:00 p.m.	Thursday, 9/07 5:00 p.m.	Monday, 9/11 6:00 p.m.	Special Meeting to Approve Parks Transition Plan
OCTOBER	Wednesday 10/4 5:00 p.m.	Thursday 10/12 5:00 p.m.	Monday 10/23 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve Meeting Schedule for Upcoming Year Board Training by City Clerk
NOVEMBER	Wednesday 11/1 5:00 p.m.	Thursday 11/9 5:00 p.m.	Monday 11/13 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Strategic Plan & Goals for 2024
DECEMBER	No Meeting Scheduled			

*The Board's opportunity to give their report to City Council is scheduled for the Council's regular meeting following the Board's regular meeting, under Agenda Item 8 – Announcements/ Presentations/ Borough Report/Commission Reports.

CITY OF HOMER NEWSLETTER



VOL. III - ISSUE II | OCTOBER 2023

WHAT'S INSIDE?

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2023

Polling places for the City of Homer and Kenai Peninsula Borough regular election will be open 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the following locations:

Homer No. 1, 06-230: City Hall Cowles Council Chambers, downstairs in the City Hall Building located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue. Entrance is located off Kachemak Way, towards the rear of the facility.

Homer No. 2, 06-240: Homer Methodist Church located at 770 East End Road.

Where's The Voter Pamphlet?

The Kenai Peninsula Borough is no longer automatically mailing voter pamphlets. It is published on the Borough's election webpage kpb.us/voterpamphlet.

Printed copies are available at the Clerk's Office at Homer City Hall and the Borough Annex Office at 638 East Pioneer Avenue. KPB Annex office hours are 8 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

Questions? Contact the City Clerk's Office at (907) 235-3130 or email clerk@cityofhomer-ak.gov



Helpful Links:

- [How to Vote Absentee by Mail or In-Person](#)
- [Check Your Voter Status & Find Your Polling Location](#)
- [View the Voter Pamphlet for Sample Ballots & Candidates](#)
- [City of Homer 2023 Candidacy Filing](#)

- Library Events
- Community Corner
- Public Works
- Homer Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Homer Airport Terminal New Artwork
- Homer Public Library
- Public Safety Corner - Halloween!
- Parks
- Port & Harbor
- Harbor Expansion Study Update
- Community Recreation
- Homer Volunteer Fire Department
- Meet City Staff
- Municipal Art Collection
- Stay Connected with City Council

Discover something new today and see the latest City project updates information! Learn about ways community members can get involved at City Hall and in the Homer community.

Follow us on Social Media

- City Hall: [@cityofhomerak](#)
- Parks & Recreation: [@homerparksandrec](#)
- Homer Public Library: [@homerpubliclibrary](#)
- Homer Police: [@homerpolice](#)
- Fire Department: [@HomerVolFireDept](#)

Subscribe to the Monthly Newsletter

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/citymanager/monthly-email-newsletter

LIBRARY EVENTS

VIRTUAL AUTHOR TALKS

Zoom in and listen to your favorite authors talk about their latest books. For a complete list of Upcoming Speakers, go to library.org/homerlibrary/upcoming.



October 10 at noon
European Travel Tips & Tools
with Guidebook Author Rick Steves

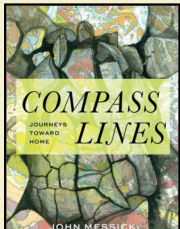


October 18 at 10 am
Master of Suspense:
An author talk with Ruth Ware



October 26 at 3 pm
A Lifetime of Writing: A Conversation
with International Bestselling Author
John Irving

SPECIAL & ONGOING EVENTS



October 6 at 6:00 pm
Visit by John Messick,
author of Compass Lines



October 26 at 6:30 pm
Visit by local writer Robert
Stark, author of Warflower



Councilmember Conversations
Noon to 1 pm, the second Tuesday of
each month, September - May, at the
Homer Public Library.

October 10: Donna Aderhold

CHECK OUT MORE LIBRARY
PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



Homer Public Library
500 Hazel Street - 907-235-3180
circ@ci.homer.ak.us
www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library



COMMUNITY CORNER

What's happening around the City of Homer



SOUTH PENINSULA HOSPITAL'S WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS RETURN IN OCTOBER!



5:00 - 5:15 PM: TASTY SNACKS AND SETTLING IN
5:15 PM - 5:45 PM: BITE SIZED HEALTH EDUCATION
6:00 - 7:00 PM: YOGA
FREE

SAFESITTER COURSE

Safe Sitter teaches young teens important safety skills, how to handle emergencies, how to treat illnesses and injuries, CPR basics, business skills, how to screen jobs, set a wage, and more.



- **Date**
October 13 & 14
- **Time**
9 am to 2:30 pm
- **Age**
Grades 6 through 8
- **Location**
South Peninsula Hospital
- **Fee**
\$50 - scholarships available
- **Info & Registration**
wellness@sphosp.org
(907)235-0285

PUBLIC WORKS

STATE OF AK DOT AND PUBLIC WORKS RESPOND TO EAST END ROAD FLOOD EVENT

Heavy rain last week caused a flash flood in a steep canyon just west of the new Meadows Subdivision in Kachemak City. The flood waters undermined the steep slopes of the drainage and swept mud and debris-laden water downstream over East End Road and into commercial areas downstream, temporarily closing the road and nearby businesses.

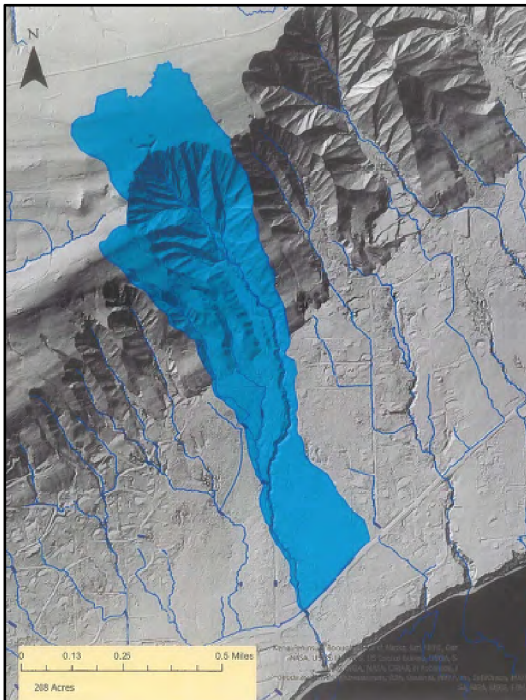
The Alaska Department of Transportation responded with equipment to clear the road and open the ditches, and while doing so inadvertently sheared off the top of a City of Homer manhole. This left a 24" opening through which mud and debris poured for many hours, spiking flows to Homer's Waste Water Treatment Plant with over 500,000 gallons of cold, muddy water.

This extra inflow placed heavy demand on Homer's waste water facility. Public Works staff responded with the Vector Truck to pump out the manhole, clear debris, and repair the damaged section of pipe.

In an effort to restore road access as quickly as possible, the City allowed DOT to deposit the ditch spoils onto the Public Works' ditch spoil yard on East End Road, which the State will remove to not overload the yard's limited capacity.



Traffic passing through the flooded section of East End Road at Kachemak Drive.



How did this happen? The graphic (at left) shows the stream's substantial natural drainage area. Over time, water movement has eroded the slope, which now, in long stretches, is about 75 feet deep and 100 feet wide. The recent heavy rains continued the steep slope scouring, taking mud and debris with it as it rushed downstream. The diversion of smaller streams (away from developments and into the main channel) adds even more water to the main channel before it crosses East End Road, likely exacerbating the situation. It is also quite likely the culvert at East End Road is undersized for larger flood events.

Why does this matter to Homer? First, it's a clear example the importance of working closely with the State to encourage stormwater management and proper road maintenance, as actions upstream can adversely affect City of Homer utilities, residences and businesses. Further, this situation (where upstream development has the ability to adversely affect downstream properties) exists in other drainages in Homer. As we address this situation in the near future, it's good to have this real life example of the importance of effective storm water management

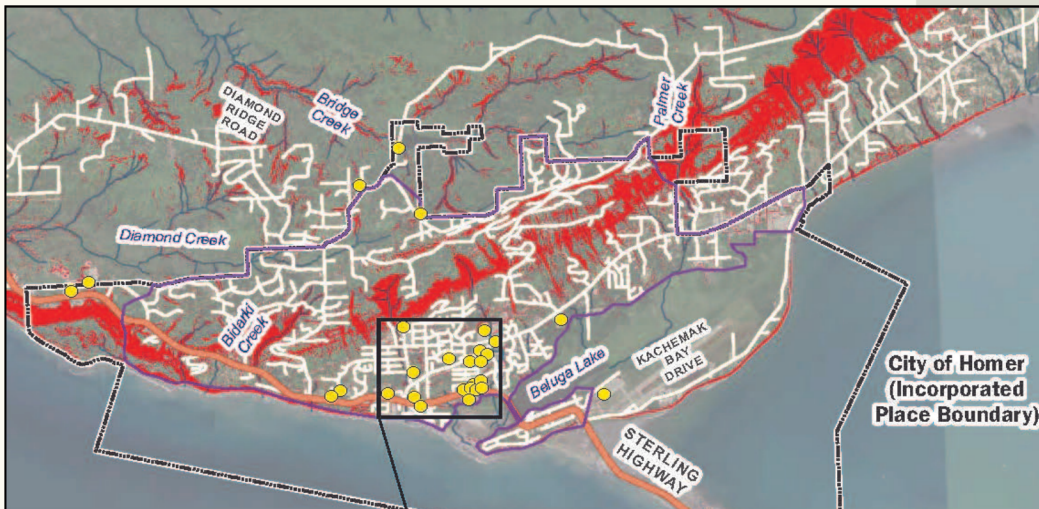
HOMER HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Home's Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies and profiles hazards, analyzes the people and facilities at risk, and develops mitigation actions to reduce or eliminate hazard risk.

One of the hazards identified in Homer is landslides and mudslides.

While the susceptibility of hillsides to landslides depends on variations in geology, topography, vegetation, and weather, steep slopes are often the focus because they can gradually or rapidly erode and have the potential for failure, creating significant damages downstream.

The slopes in Homer at greatest risk of slides are greater than 20 degrees. Approximately 17% (1,504 acres) of Homer is in this hazard area.



The highest concentration of these slopes (highlighted red in the map, above) is along the bluffs running between Skyline Drive East End Road and on the west end of the City, just south of the Sterling Highway (Bluff Point).

The Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys has identified over 1,000 slope failure scars in the Homer and Kachemak City using aerial photographs and light detection and ranging (LIDAR) data. Several factors can contribute to destabilize a slope, including earthquakes, increased water saturation (from groundwater or flooding), erosional undercutting, indiscriminate development, loss of vegetation or the creation of cut-and-fill slopes in areas of unstable geologic conditions.

Notable landslide failures in the last ten years include:

2013 16-foot mudslide down Bear Creek Drive caused by heavy rains that saturated the narrow Bear Creek Canyon. The slide sent trees and debris down Bear Creek, jamming a culvert on the uphill side of East End Road. A disaster declaration was made for several rain-soaked areas in the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

2015 Landslide on Kachemak Drive near the Homer Airport that took out a 100-foot section of the east bound lane of Kachemak Drive, pushing clumps of spruce and alder trees into Mud Bay. The slide resulted in the closure of Kachemak Drive approximately 0.5-mile from Homer Spit Road to the top of the hill.

At least one severe landslide occurred in Homer above Kachemak following the 1964 Great Alaskan Earthquake.

Shallow landslides can occur at any time but are more likely to happen when the ground is nearly saturated. However, deep-seated landslides are generally triggered by deep infiltration of rainfall over many months.

Mitigation Measures Suggested in the LHMP

Landslide Zone

Regulate development through zoning and permitting in landslide prone areas.

Hillside Protection

Stabilize landslide-prone areas through stability improvement measures, including interceptor drains, in situ soil piles, drained earth buttresses, and subdrains.

PUBLIC WORKS

NEW ARTWORK INSTALLED AT HOMER AIRPORT TERMINAL



Next time you fly in or out of Homer, take some time with the gorgeous new artwork in the terminal by Homer naturalist Kim McNett. The three panels celebrate the peatland ecosystems that surround the Homer airport.

McNett said it was “*delightful to honor all of the peatland species through art*”, and it “*warms [her] heart to know the artwork will lend an enduring appreciation and identity to these local treasures.*”

This project was made possible by the efforts of Homer Drawdown, a climate solution community whose members include the Peatland Project of 2021, the Bunnell Street Arts Center, City of Homer, Kachemak Bay Conservation Society and the Rasmuson Foundation. An artist reception is being planned for November.

Peatlands also play a critical role in the [City of Homer Green Infrastructure Slope Stability project](#) — which is conserving and recharging peatlands in the Beluga Wetlands not only for their ecological services, but to help manage stormwater runoff to reduce contaminants entering Kachemak Bay and reduce coastal erosion.

What are peatlands?

Peatlands are a special kind of wetland with deep, carbon-rich, saturated soil. Though peatlands only cover 3% of Earth’s surface, they store more carbon than any other terrestrial ecosystem -- twice that of all the world’s forests combined!

Why are peatlands important?

In addition to enormous carbon sequestration, peatlands in the vicinity of the Homer airport and Kachemak Drive provide other important services. They:

- mitigate the effects of climate change by recharging aquifers and reducing the severity of wildfires and flood events;
- mitigate storm-water runoff and associated flooding and erosion along Kachemak Drive;
- naturally remove harmful toxins from groundwater before it enters our streams, lakes and Kachemak Bay;
- provide essential winter moose habitat and critical migratory bird and salmon habitat.

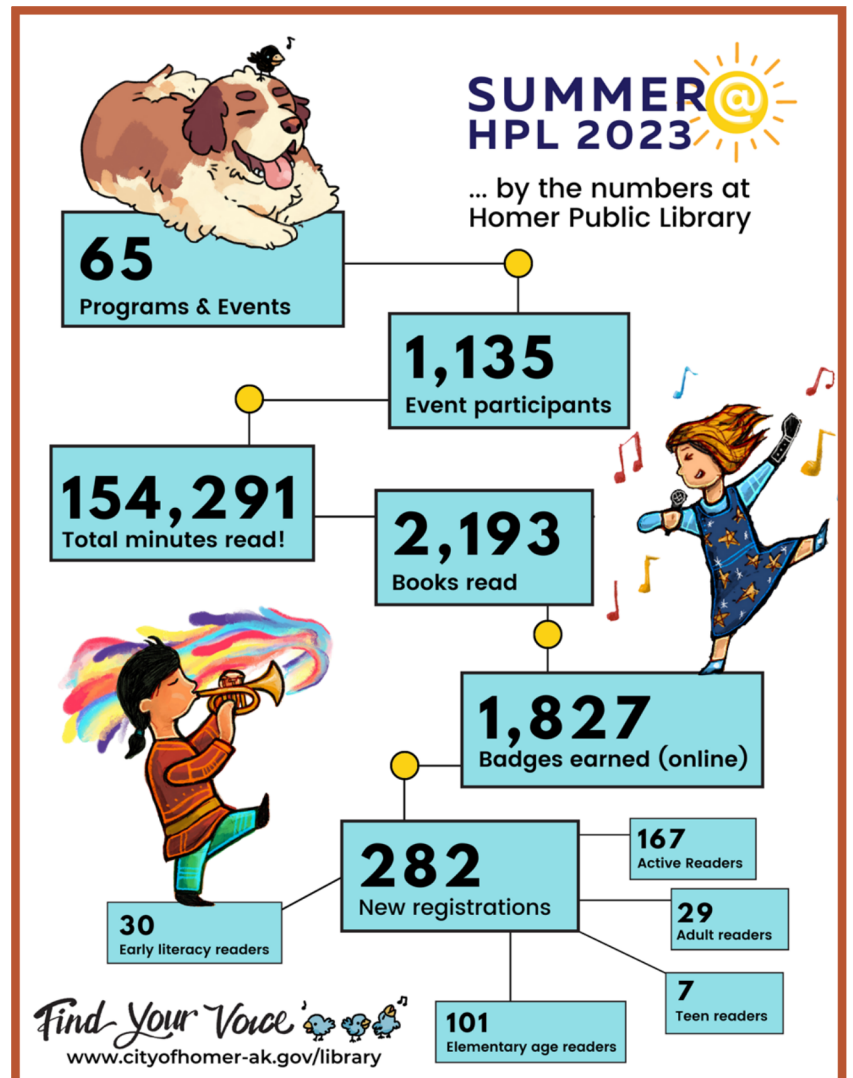
Globally, peatlands are recognized as the highest priority habitat to preserve in the face of climate change.

LIBRARY

SUMMER @ HPL A SUCCESS!

Homer Public Library's 2023 Summer Reading Program, *Find Your Voice*, is officially over and officially a success! The program's 65 events served 1,135 participants who enjoyed a variety of creative and connecting literary events led by skilled local community members in collaboration with Youth Service Librarian Cinda Nofziger. The outdoor celebration on July 29 that marked the end of the Summer Reading Program was a festive and busy event, with music, books, games, BOB the Bookmobile, exciting raffle drawings, food, and local ice cream.

A large part of the Program's success is due to a generous grant from the Homer Foundation's Opportunity Fund and the outpouring of generosity by Homer's outstanding local businesses who provided fabulous prizes and donations. Thank you!



AFTER-SCHOOL @THE LIBRARY

For Elementary Students

EVERY THURSDAY 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

- September**
➤ Books, books, books!
- October**
➤ Board Games
- November**
➤ LEGOs
- December**
➤ Arts & Crafts

Even though summer reading is over,
the fun continues after school
at the library this fall!

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library/after-school-library



In this section, we aim to keep readers informed about the latest developments in public safety in the community. Whether it's news about crime prevention, emergency preparedness, or updates on local law enforcement activities, we've got you covered. Our goal is to promote a safe and secure environment for all community members and visitors of Homer, and we believe that staying informed is a crucial part of achieving that. Read on to learn more about what's happening in public safety in Homer.

HALLOWEEN IN HOMER

Get your costumes ready, gather your little goblins and come out for delightful scares and sweet treasures.



The Chamber of Commerce team is brewing up a cauldron of enchanting surprises for you. From creative decorations to interactive experiences, they are conjuring up an event that will thrill both the young and the young at heart. Tune in for updates and sneak peeks coming soon to:

<https://www.homeralaska.org/events/annual-events/pioneer-ave-trick-or-treat/>

Whether you're chauffeuring your children on a candy quest or just driving home from work, please slow down, be cautious in low lighted areas, and mindful of costumed children who might excitedly dart into the road chasing after their friends and not see a car. Also, make sure your trick-or-treater can be seen. Reflective tape and flashlights help motorists see pedestrians in the dark. Have fun and be safe everyone!

HALLOWEEN NIGHT ONE-WAY TRAFFIC CONTROLS

Halloween is one of the most anticipated times of the year for young children. We don't want any tricks when it comes to being safe and seen on our dark October roads.

To help keep trick-or-treaters as safe as possible on Halloween, streets in the Mountainview neighborhood will be open to one way traffic only from 5 to 8 pm on Tuesday, October 31.

- **Vehicles:** One way traffic will be directed from Pioneer to go up Main Street, around Mountain View (clockwise), and across Bayview.
- **Pedestrians:** One lane of the road will be reserved for pedestrians only.
- **Park & Walk:** Due to limited parking on the route, plenty of parking is available at the high school and other side streets for you to park and walk the neighborhood.

The Homer Police Department is working with volunteers to create a smooth, safe traffic flow for trick or treating in the Bayview and Mountain View neighborhoods. You can do your part, too!



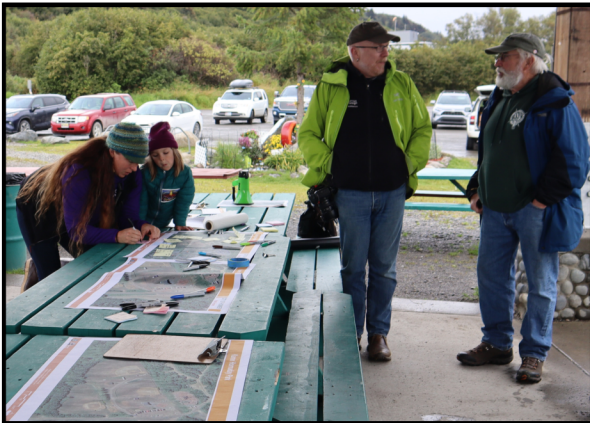
PARKS

PARK MASTER PLANS UNDERWAY

September 12th and 13th were rainy, cool fall days, but that didn't keep park enthusiasts away! Consultants Peter Briggs and Linda Pringle from Corvus Design were in Homer to host a series of meetings with the general public, user groups, City Council and staff as part of the initial process for developing Master Plans for Bayview Park and Karen Hornaday Park.



The public discussed a range of considerations for park improvements.



Despite the challenging weather, turnout was good and there were great conversations. Several Council Members and Commissioners joined staff from the City Manager's Office, Economic Development, Public Works, Parks, and Building Maintenance to engage the public about park needs and to meet with representatives from Little League, Softball, and Sprout Family Services to address specific user-group concerns regarding on-site and weather friendly venues. The information gathered from these meetings is being combined with the public input also being gathered on the City's website for both projects to inform design options. Stay tuned for updates in the near future as the designers process this large volume of public input.

PORT & HARBOR

EROSION ISSUE AT THE DEEP WATER DOCK REPAIRED

In July, Harbor maintenance staff noticed a hole forming next to the approach to the Deep Water Dock. A recent check revealed that erosion had undermined the foundation of the approach where the dock trestle transitions to shore.

Upon discovering the damage had progressed to where daylight shown through all the way to the road surface, with a 1-inch steel plate to accommodate truck and crane traffic as scheduled.

This is the second time erosion has damaged the Deep Water Dock approach. Working with Public Works and HDR, a plan was devised for what we hope will be a permanent solution. Public Work crews excavated the affected area and then built it back with concrete blocks and heavy road fabric. Staff will continue to work to beef up the water side of the approach bulkhead before winter sets in.



HOMER HARBOR EXPANSION

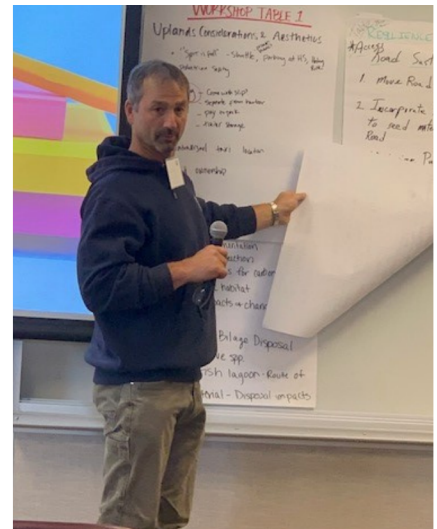
RECAP OF THE SEPTEMBER 23 PUBLIC MEETING

City staff teamed up with the Army Corps of Engineers and HDR to host a public meeting on September 23rd to share updates on the Harbor Expansion Study and engage the public to collect feedback. Over 60 people attended the meeting on a sunny Saturday morning.

In the first hour, presenters spoke about the Army Corps' study process, how the team narrowed from fourteen alternatives to the current five under consideration, and what comes next. Community members then had the opportunity to join breakout groups to discuss one of the following themes in greater depth:

- Uplands consideration & Aesthetics
- Resiliency & Sustainability
- Reduced Environmental Impact
- Balanced Harbor Design, Logistics
- Business & Economic Opportunities

The group reunited to share highlights from their conversations, and the meeting closed with a Q&A session. Many themes emerged, including the importance of affordable employee housing, curiosity about project timeline and cost estimates (see the Study Update below for more details), and the vital role the harbor plays in this community. Thank you to all who joined us for this meeting. The next public meeting will be timed to align with the release of the Tentatively Selected Plan.



Harbormaster Matt Clarke shares insights from the **Business & Economic Opportunities** breakout session

STUDY UPDATE



The pace of progress on the study has been great, but the City recently learned it may be put on pause. The USACE has informed the City that their FY23 Federal funds will carry USACE activities into January 2024. However, Federal funding for FY24 has not yet been secured, so they are anticipating a slowdown and possible pause in the study for the next 6 to 16 months.

While all USACE general investigation studies (GI's) are incrementally funded, it is unprecedented for a study to pause like this for lack of continuation funding. The Homer Harbor Expansion study, however, falls into a unique and very small cohort of new start GI's nationwide that were started through congressionally designated spending appropriations. The procedure for securing continuation funding for these studies in the FY24 Federal budget (either through a second federal appropriation or through inclusion in the USACE workplan) was unclear and no funding was included. It is our understanding that all new start GI's funded through FY23 Federal appropriations are in the same position, and efforts are underway to remediate the Federal funding issues and progress the various studies.

The City is working closely with the USACE and diligently investigating all opportunities to keep the harbor expansion study on schedule or minimize the impacts of a delay. The work done to date on the study is not time-sensitive and will remain relevant at the resumption of the study. We appreciate all the efforts of our local USACE project team. They have been open to creative solutions to stretch the current funding, utilize work in kind, and generally optimize the budget; they just recently secured an additional \$50,000 in reprogrammed funds from a study in Hawaii.

The USACE anticipates resuming the study in July 2024 by receiving continuation funding through a balance of unused funds in the USACE FY24 workplan, or possibly later through inclusion in the FY25 Federal Budget. To our knowledge no GI has ended due to lack of Federal funding. We trust that the federal government will ultimately fulfill its commitment to the Homer Harbor Expansion study.

Additionally, geotechnical sampling and ship simulation are being recommended during the study phase, which in the past have been conducted during a project's engineering and design phase. Adding these components to the GI will increase the study cost above the budgeted \$3M, requiring an increase in sponsor matching funds, which is ultimately a City Council decision. The City and HDR are working with the USACE to keep those costs down while gathering sufficient data to support basin design assumptions which is important to mitigating risk associated with identifying construction costs.

COMMUNITY RECREATION



COSMIC HAMLET PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT RECAP

The 2nd Annual “Cosmic Hamlet Pickleball Tournament” was held on Labor Day weekend September 1-3. The event was co-sponsored with Homer Pickleball Club and attracted many participants. We expect this to grow every year despite the challenges and limitations of using the HERC gym. The numbers include:



- 73 players entered, an increase over last year's tournament
- 51 teams played in the tournament
- 30 players were from Homer, 43 were from out of town (largely Anchorage and from other communities on the Peninsula)
- 3 Major Sponsors - Story Real Estate, Grace Ridge Brewery and Homer's Jeans
- 21 Homer businesses provided door prizes
- 45 door prizes were given out

The Homer Community Recreation program has a constant flow of new opportunities. Please check out our many activities, programs and special events here: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec/current-programs-events>.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

SEPTEMBER TRAININGS

Throughout the month of September, trainees in HVFD's 2023 Firefighter 2 class has been covering a wide variety of skills trainings to prepare them for their State certification test the first week of October. Their trainings include vehicle extrication, special rescue team operations, fire origin and cause, and much more. Four members from HVFD and four from Seward Fire Department worked hard and made this class great. We look forward to congratulating them when they graduate in October with State and National certifications!



HVFD's newest Volunteer putting in the extra time for Extrication Training.



24



VEIS (Vent, Enter, Isolate, Search) Training teaches firefighters advanced levels of fire rescue tactics.

CITY STAFF
SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

We would like to recognize City staff members with anniversaries last month. Thank you for the dedication, commitment, and service you've provided the City and taxpayers of Homer over the years. You all are an integral part of what makes the City of Homer a great place to work .

Aaron Glidden	Port	19 Years
Ryan Browning	Police	13 Years
Tracie Whitaker	Police	9 Years
Lisa Linegar	Police	8 Years
Jakob Richter	Fire	4 Years
Charles Benson	Police	2 Years
Samantha Cunningham	Fire	2 Years
Jessica McGuire	Finance	1 Year

MEET CITY
STAFF

Meet Cinda Nofziger

Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My! I love being the youth services librarian at the Homer Public Library. I help plan and run programs for area youth from wee-ones to young adults, including our summer reading program. Year round, I get to host storytimes for our youngest patrons, and after school activities for elementary kids as well as tweens and teens. Shout out to the Teen Advisory Board! You can also catch me on KBBI radio each month for radio story hour where young and old alike can listen to stories and take a much needed dance break! I also manage the collections of materials for children and young adults.



wonders of the Homer Public Library when it was located on Pioneer. My previous employment includes stints at the Gear Shed, Albany County Public Library, and Head of Reference at the University of Michigan. Please say hello the next time you visit the library!

EMPLOYEE
HIGH FIVE!

Everyone in town knows that phone service was down for an extended period recently. What most people don't realize is that the water treatment plant relies on the phone system to alert operators to problems with the system. Another thing that some people don't know is that the drinking water system supplies water to the fire hydrants in town.



The on call operator, Jason Hoffman, contacted his supervisor about the lack of comms at the WTP. They assessed the situation, if the plant had a shutdown, without the phone system operating, reaction time would be dangerously long, especially if there were a fire or some other emergency in town. It was decided someone should stay at the plant all night to insure uninterrupted service, Jason volunteered. This shows his dedication, not only to his job but to the health and safety of our community.

High five, Jason!

My favorite part of my job is getting to know and hang out with so many of our community's wonderful youth—from the littles who are just learning about books to the teens who use the library to study, socialize, and craft their own stories. Everyone brings a super fun energy to the building and I feel so lucky to be a part of it. Our area kiddos make my job fun, exciting, and so very meaningful. I also have some wonderful colleagues!

When I'm not at the library, you might find me reading, watching British mysteries, hanging out with my family crew, Jazzercising (yes, Jazzercising), and going on Homer adventures. I've served as the youth librarian and have lived full-time in Homer for two years now, but Homer has always felt like home for as long as I can remember. I still think so fondly of Grandma Hilda Stoltzfus introducing me to the

CITY OF HOMER ROSTER

Mayor - Ken Castner (2024)

City Council

Donna Aderhold (2024)

Jason Davis (2025)

Shelley Erickson (2024)

Storm P. Hansen-Cavasos (2025)

Rachel Lord (2023)

Caroline Venuti (2023)

City Staff Leadership

Rob Dumouchel, City Manager

Melissa Jacobsen, MMC, City Clerk/Deputy Director of Administration

Mark Robl, Chief of Police

Bill Jirsa, Chief Technology Officer

Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

Elizabeth Walton, Finance Director

Mark Kirko, Fire Chief

Dave Berry, Library Director

Andrea Browning, Personnel Director

Bryan Hawkins, Port Director

Jan Keiser, Public Works Director/City Engineer

Ryan Foster, City Planner

Mike Illg, Community Recreation Manager

Commissions and Boards

ADA Advisory Board

Economic Development Advisory Commission

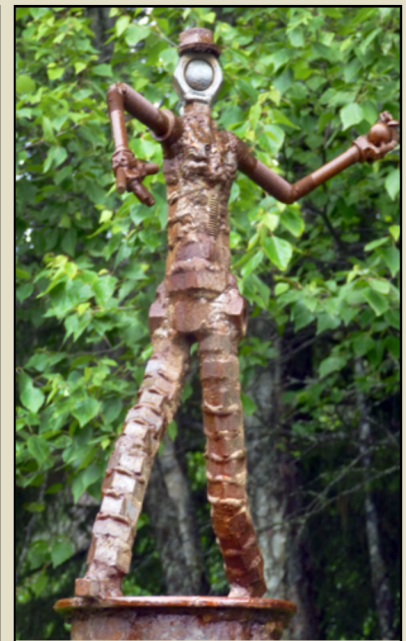
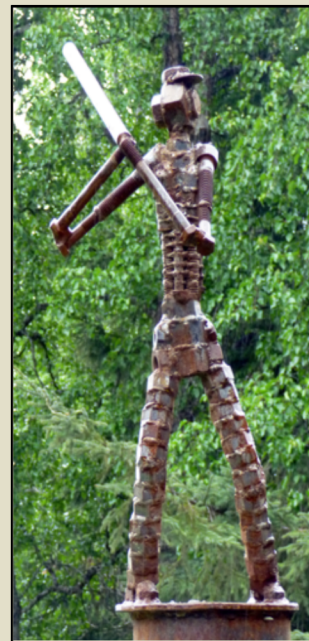
Library Advisory Board

Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission

Planning Commission

Port and Harbor Advisory Commission

MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION



These two ball players can be seen hanging out at Jack Gist Park, no matter the season.

These sculptures were constructed by artist Don Henry in 2009 out of welded found objects.

Learn more about the municipal art collection at:

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/prac/city-homer-municipal-art-collection

STAY CONNECTED TO CITY COUNCIL

Go to cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/stay-connected-city-council to find instructions on how to listen, provide testimony, and participate in the meetings via Zoom.

October UPCOMING MEETINGS

3 7 am - 8 pm	Election Day for 2023 City & Borough Regular Election
4 5:30 pm	Planning Commission Worksession
4 6:30 pm	Planning Commission Regular Meeting
9 4 pm	City Council Worksession - HERC
9 5 pm	City Council Committee of the Whole
9 6 pm	City Council Regular Meeting
10 6 pm	Economic Dev. Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
11 5:30 pm	Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
12 5:30 pm	ADA Advisory Board Regular Meeting
12 5:30 pm	Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Worksession
16 5:30 pm	Planning Commission Worksession
16 6:30 pm	Planning Commission Regular Meeting
17 5:30 pm	Library Advisory Board Regular Meeting
19 5:30 pm	Parks, Art, Rec & Culture Commission Regular Meeting
23 5 pm	City Council Committee of the Whole
23 6 pm	City Council Regular Meeting

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JOIN OUR TEAM

- Find current job listings for the City of Homer
- Sign up for Job Alerts
- Apply Online at:
cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs

CURRENT JOB LISTING

- [Harbor Officer I](#)
- [Firefighter/ EMT](#)



ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The City of Homer Newsletter is published monthly. For questions or comments, please contact the Office of the City Manager at citymanager@ci.homer.ak.us.

City of Homer

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(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
DATE: October 4, 2023
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for October 9, 2023 Council Meeting

Transportation Plan's Public Meeting Update

Over 40 people turned out to comment on the Public Review Draft of the Transportation Plan. Next steps include collecting public comments until October 10th, providing comments to project consultant Kinney Engineering, and revising the plan so it is ready for presentation to the Planning Commission. Stay tuned for the next draft near the end of the year or early 2024.



Audit Update

The current audit has been a topic of discussion at recent meetings. I have written a memo, attached to this report, which provides more context for Council and the public to understand the challenges we've faced in

the last two years related to audit timing. The cumulative impacts of COVID, the administration of large amounts of grant and relief dollars, the change in fiscal year, the truncation of FY21, a software transition, new accounting rules, and staffing shortages in the accounting world have all contributed to a delayed audit for FY22. We're working on options for acceleration of the FY23 audit that would get us caught up and into a better rhythm for future audits.

Airport Sidewalk Repair Update

The City issued an Invitation to Bid for the Airport Terminal Sidewalk Replacement Project that was advertised in the Homer News August 24 and 31, 2023 and no bids were received for the project. The Invitation to Bid was extended and re-advertised on September 14 & 21, 2023 and in the Peninsula Clarion on September 16, 2023, and again, no bids were received. Public Works Director Keiser's has suggested that we issue another invitation to bid for the project in the spring.

ICMA Conference

I am currently attending the International City Manager Association (ICMA) conference in Austin, TX. I attended micro-certification courses titled "Building High Performing Board-Manager Relations" and "Tackling Wicked Problems: Building Capacity for Deliberative Engagement." I've also attended many sessions on topics related to governance, staff transitions and institutional knowledge transfer, rural community management, conflict resolution, multigenerational workplace management, revenue generation, ethics, and more. On the way to Austin, I attended an AMLJIA meeting of the board of trustees.

Attachments:

October Employee Anniversaries
Audit Update Memorandum
Panel Discussion Flyer
Council Work Session Scheduling



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

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(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: MAYOR CASTNER AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: Andrea Browning
DATE: October 9, 2023
SUBJECT: October Employee Anniversaries

I would like to take the time to thank the following employees for the dedication, commitment and service they have provided the City and taxpayers of Homer over the years.

Charles Lee

Police

3 Years

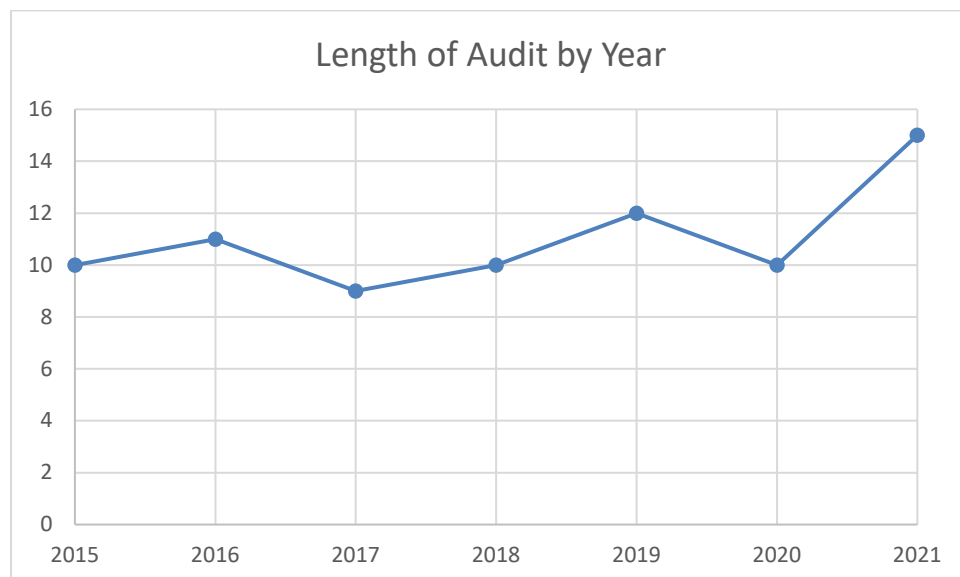


MEMORANDUM

FY22 Audit Context and Discussion

Item Type: Informational Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
Date: 4OCT23
From: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager

The FY22 audit is nearing completion and has taken more time than both Council and staff would have liked. Many factors have contributed to the delay. The timing of the audit has generated some comments at Council meetings, and this memo is written with the intent of providing context for the discussion as it is important to understand the current situation.



Going back to 2015, audits have taken anywhere from 9 to 15 months to complete. The majority have been between 10 and 12 months. Where we began to have challenges is after 2020. My perspective is that the cumulative impacts of a number of items have slowed down our progress:

- The general impacts of the pandemic on staff and contractors.
- The Influx of COVID relief funds (CARES Act, ARPA, etc.) brought millions of additional dollars to the City that were processed through the City for various emergency relief grants to

businesses, non-profits, and individuals. Additionally, funds were made available for City purposes, pass through grants, and projects related to pandemic response and mitigation which required a significant amount of administration.

- Ordinance 20-89 changed the City's fiscal year from a January 1 - December 31 calendar year, to a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year. The change was a logical move that I believe is good long term decision for the City, however, the move has been very labor intensive for staff in the fiscal years immediately following the change.
- FY21 was truncated to six months as part of the fiscal year change which gave the FY21 audit a late start because the actual fiscal year was shorter than the time required for the FY20 audit to be completed.
- A major update to our finance software, Caselle, was undertaken after the FY21 audit was complete to account for the fiscal year change in our system.
- GASB rule 87¹, which impacts reporting related to leases, was implemented and has caused difficulties for many local governments in integrating the new standard.
- There is a nationwide shortage of accounting professionals in the public and private sectors which impacts the schedules of our partner finance firms and our auditing firm. For instance, BDO USA is reportedly pursuing a significant increase to its offshore workforce in an attempt to combat the decrease in workers interested in becoming auditors². Similarly, many municipalities in Alaska, from big cities like Anchorage³ to small cities like Seward⁴, are having to use finance consultants to mitigate the impacts of unfilled Finance positions in their organizations.
- Significantly more local governments than usual have been required to conduct federal single audits due to COVID relief funding creating pressure on auditing firms.⁵

¹ GASB = Governmental Accounting Standards Board which is the source of generally accepted accounting principles used by state and local governments in the United States. <https://gasb.org/page/PageContent?pagelid=/standards-guidance/pronouncements/summary--statement-no-87.html&isStaticPage=true>

² <https://www.ft.com/content/5e2a3d0d-57cf-4e9a-a8ea-d3877e124037>

³ Anchorage contracted with three finance firms to support the Controller Division which was at approximately 52% of total staffing in February of 2023 <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/anchorage/2023/02/22/municipality-of-anchorage-to-pay-up-to-2m-to-outsource-finance-work-due-to-employee-vacancies/>

⁴ Seward uses a financial consultant to support the operations of an understaffed Finance Department. Seward also went four years without a long-term finance director until promoting an existing staff member in August 2023 https://www.sewardjournal.com/news/local/city-names-jusino-new-finance-director/article_bfa5315e-47ab-11ee-a8c8-5f9a93dd4d0f.html

⁵ "...the demand for government auditors in the private sector has likely increased because more localities will be subject to the federal government's single audit requirement. Under the rule, governments that spend \$750,000 or more of federal awards in any given year are subject to the federal Single Audit Act, which requires they submit an external audit to verify they've spent the money according to the guidelines. In some cases, governments in 2022 were going through the single audit process for the first time ever, according to Mary Foelster, senior director of governmental auditing and accounting. She added that 'the increase in the demand for new government audits came during the same time as entities and firms were trying to work on the backlog of previous audits [for governments who were given filing extensions during the pandemic].'" <https://www.route-fifty.com/workforce/2023/04/how-auditor-shortage-could-hurt-local-governments/385337/>

- The late finish for FY21's audit delayed the start of the FY22 audit.

Staff put a lot of effort into attempting to close the current audit by the end of June 2023. We were able to distribute draft financial statements to Council on June 14th. Unfortunately, issues mainly related to implementation of the new GASB 87 rules impacted our ability to finish at that time. We have worked diligently with the auditors to provide any additional information they have requested, and they have made great efforts to keep us on their busy schedule to continue moving things forward.

As the FY22 audit draws to a close, I have asked Finance staff to investigate options to accelerate the FY23 audit. Over the last year we've been pulling together resources to make that objective attainable. We have an existing relationship with Porter & Allison, Inc. to assist in the preparation of financial statements, but we also added two accounting firms to our term contract list in fall of 2022 (Resolution 22-068). Earlier this year the Council approved an increase in funding for professional services for the Finance Department in the FY24/25 budget which was requested to help with priority projects like completing the audit in a timely fashion.

While most of the City was able to move on from the fiscal year change without much of a problem, it did create challenges for Finance which were expected to, and did, have an impact for the years immediately following the change. Getting the current two-year budget complete got us past the fiscal year change on the budget side, and getting past the FY22 audit and accelerating the FY23 audit to overcome the delayed starts on the last two audits should get us back to our regular rhythm for auditing. I would like to make significant reductions in the time it takes to complete future audits, but in the short term, we need to clear out the current cumulative factors to give us a clean slate to work from.



Panel Discussion: What is Driving Change in Homer?



Sarah Richardson



Derotha Ferraro



Katie Gavenus



Julie Engebretsen



Brad Anderson

Join us for a discussion on why & how the greater Homer-area is changing:
demographics and healthcare; changing environment; economic
development; small business perspective; and real estate trends.

**Thursday,
October 12**

**6:00 pm - 8:00pm
at the Homer Library
500 Hazel Ave,
Homer, AK 99603**



**Jane Rohr,
Moderator**

WORK SESSION

AGENDA CALENDAR 2023

Council Meeting Dates	4:00 p.m. Worksession Topic
Monday, May 8	
Tuesday, May 22	<i>Coast Guard ws 2 5 COW @ 4</i>
Monday, June 12	<i>2023 City of Homer Salary and Benefits Survey</i>
Monday, June 26	<i>FY24/25 Capital Budget</i>
Monday, July 24	<i>HDR-Homer Harbor Expansion Alternatives Screening and Next Steps</i>
Monday, August 14	<i>HERC & Hazardous Materials Update – Economic Development Manager & Recreation Manager</i>
Monday, August 28	<i>2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan & FY25 Legislative Priorities - Special Projects & Communications Coordinator</i>
Monday, September 11	<i>HHE study funding and timeline status by the USACE Project Development Team</i>
Monday, September 25	<i>Ord 23-49 Amend Title 2 & Re-Organization</i>
Monday, October 9	<i>HERC – Economic Development Manager & Recreation Manager</i>
Monday, October 18 (off cycle)	<i>Joint Work Session with Planning Commission</i>
Monday, October 23	<i>Finance</i>
Monday, November 27	<i>Recreation</i>
Monday, December 11	
Monday, December 18 If needed	