



Agenda

Economic Development Advisory Commission Regular Meeting

Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 6:00 PM

City Hall 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: 990 0366 1092 Password: 725933

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

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, 6:00 P.M.

AGENDA APPROVAL

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA (3 minute time limit)

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA (Items listed below are considered routine and non-controversial by the Commission and are approved in one motion. If a separate discussion is desired on an item, a Commissioner may request that item be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda under New Business.)

- [A.](#) Unapproved Minutes for the Regular Meeting on May 9, 2023
- [B.](#) Unapproved Minutes for the Regular Meeting on January 9, 2024

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS (10 minute time limit)

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. EDC Staff Report
- [B.](#) Chamber Director Report
- [C.](#) Homer Marine Trades Association Report
- D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report
- E. Port Expansion
- F. Guiding Homer's Growth Group
- G. HERC Update

- H. Housing Update
- I. Planning Updates

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Short Term Rental Ordinance
Memorandum from Economic Development Manager as backup
- B. Winter Survey
Memorandum from Economic Development Manager as backup
- C. Looking Ahead to the 2024 Strategic Plan
Memorandum from Economic Development Manager as backup

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. City Manager's Report
- B. City of Homer Newsletter
- C. EDC Meeting Calendar

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE (3 minute time limit)

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCIL (If Present)

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

ADJOURNMENT

Next Regular Meeting is **Tuesday, March 12th, 2024 at 6:00 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 23-05 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:03 p.m. on May 9, 2023 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Mel Kim was welcomed to the Commission by the Chair.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS MARKS, PITZMAN, AREVALO, BROWN, KIM

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS GAMBLE, PEREZ (excused) & STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PEARSON

STAFF: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER ENGBRETSSEN & DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Marks read the Supplemental Items into the record: REPORTS, Item 7 F Port Expansion Project, Homer Harbor Expansion Design Charrette Schedule and Informational Materials, Public Comment Received on Budgetary Requests for Parks and Recreation and requested a motion.

AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA (Items listed below are considered routine and non-controversial by the Commission and are approved in one motion. If a separate discussion is desired on an item, a Commissioner may request that item be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda under New Business.)

5.A. Unapproved April 11, 2023 EDC Minutes

Deputy City Clerk Krause read the Consent Agenda.

AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS READ.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

6. A. Trails as Economic Drivers for the Community, Cameale Johnson, Homer Trails Alliance

Ms. Johnson provided an overview of how outdoor recreation, specifically trails is beneficial to the overall economic vitality of a community. She briefly reviewed work that is performed by the Homer Trails Alliance, the organization's goals, organizations that they partner with to accomplish the

selected projects and maintenance of the trails that are created and where the organization obtains the materials to construct their projects. Ms. Johnson presented highlights of their vision for the area known as Diamond Creek Recreation Area and referenced the strategic planning that was adopted in the management plan by the City of Homer in 2013. The Homer Trails Alliance has applied for the available grant funding known as Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to connect Rogers Loop to Diamond Creek State Recreation Site to establish pedestrian connectivity by constructing off road parking at the Rogers Loop Trailhead, a multi-plate tunnel under the Sterling Highway, which would connect to the proposed detached pathway from Green Timbers Trailhead at MP 167.9 and the Department of Transportation Trailhead at MP 168.9 to Rogers Loop Trailhead on Rogers Loop Road. This would then connect to the existing sidewalk along the Sterling Highway at Milepost 169.9.

Ms. Johnson facilitated discussion on the following:

- RTP Grant is separate from the TAP grant application
- RTP Grant is to fund the pedestrian crossing
 - o Federal Grant
 - o SCORP
 - o LWCF grants have clear criteria
- TAP grant requires 9.6% match requirement
 - o City of Homer has adopted a Resolution supporting the application
 - o City will be constructing the Rogers Loop Trailhead parking
- Communities such as Anchorage have organizations that Homer does not
- It is a very realistic project but very competitive process

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.A. EDC Staff Report for May

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen provided a verbal report on the following:

- Upcoming personnel changes in the Planning Department
- Agenda Changes
- Water & Sewer Rates
 - o Water/Sewer service for Jack Gist Park
- Guiding Growth in Homer
 - o Housing Interest
 - o Port Expansion Project
- Comprehensive Plan Funding in the FY24-FY25 Biennial Budget
 - o Including Town Center
- Numerous Permit Applications
 - o Many construction projects being started

Ms. Engebretsen facilitated discussion on the following:

- parking issues at Jack Gist Park
- Traffic flow onto East End Road

7.B. HERC Update

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen provided a verbal report on the following:

- Testing for PCB was conducted on May 1-2, 2023 and results should be received by mid-June. These results will determine the next steps forward in the process.
- Drafting of a Business Plan using existing user groups to quantify their demand and determine which programs are expected to increase.
- Council approved the budget for recreational software to be able to provide some of the required data for the Business Plan
- Right sizing the new facility
- Flyers posted on a monthly basis on the city website
- Worksession conducted by City Council in March with additional worksessions scheduled for August and September.
 - The August worksession will cover what amount Council would be willing to bond to construct a building.
- Construction Bond, operations maintenance these costs go together and factor into what the City can afford to construct for the community.

7. C. Chamber of Commerce Report

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen verbally reported on the last Chamber meeting. She noted that the Chamber has done the following:

- Conducting mixers on a monthly basis
- hired an events person

Ms. Engebretsen reported that City Council did include them in the FY24-25 Biennial Budget, but did not approve the additional funding requested for the Small Business person in the amount of \$15,000.

Ms. Engebretsen facilitated discussion on how the Commissioners could advocate to Council to include that amount in the budget.

7.C. Homer Marine Trades Association (HMTA) Report

Chair Marks noted that the minutes from the April 5, 2023 meeting that was included in the packet. There was no one present to provide further information from the Homer Marine Trades Association.

7.D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) Report

Chair Marks reported that she attended the April 20, 2023 meeting. She reported on the following:

- funding source outside the areas of interest
- Southern Kenai Peninsula Transit Coalition
- Support for the Homer All Ages and Abilities Pathways
- HEA Studying geothermal and wind energy on oil platforms
- Mariculture grant
- KPEDD 2023 update for the CEDS on their website

7. E. Port Expansion Project

Chair Marks introduce the item by reading of the title and deferred to Ms. Engebretsen.

Ms. Engebretsen noted that this will be a monthly item under reports possibly the Consent Agenda and noted the Charrette schedule provided in the supplemental packet.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

9.A. Housing Update
Action Item Report EDC 23-023

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title. She provided a recap of the Homer Housing Conversation event that took place March 25th and spoke to the live survey links that are available online. This coalition is primarily going to help interested groups learn what next steps to take. The report generated from that event will soon be publicly available and a presentation will take place at City Council.

There was discussion on some of the statistics and facts realized at the event, what will be included in the report, and the commission's desire for housing/rental fact-checking/data collection and vetting.

9.B. EDC Budget Requests FY24 & FY25
Agenda Item Report EDC 23-024

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title and deferred to Commissioner Pitzman and noted the email from Janie Leask requesting the Commission support the PARC Advisory Commission budget request for the recreational software and additional staffing. At the Council meeting last night the Council approved funding for a part time staff person and the recreation software.

Ms. Engebretsen noted that Council did not approve the funding request by the Chamber of Commerce for the staff person and noted that it was unlikely to change as it is not included in the Budget going forward. She further commented on the hesitation to include the funding for the continued Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan implementation, but they did approve that request. She noted the following:

- With the funding approved, consideration of banners for the Port & Harbor and the banners identifying the City of Homer
- The budget request will be included in the next staff report for June so that the Commission can see the individuals components included for the wayfinding.
 - o budget request did not include the major neighborhood signs
 - o This is just a start to the complete wayfinding and streetscape plan which amounts to approximately \$300,000

Commissioner Pitzman stated his appreciation that Council funded the staff and software budget requests for Community Recreation. He noted the cumbersome process of using paper and pencil and the benefits to having a good data collection system.

Ms. Engebretsen stated that the best method would be to have the person providing the report at the next Council meeting, express the Commission support. That is if the Commission agrees by consensus on the funding of the permanent part time staff person and recreation software budgets requested.

The Commissioners agreed by consensus that they supported those budget requests.

Ms. Engebretsen facilitated discussion on the funding of the Small Business Staff position at the Chamber of Commerce by the City and the benefits to the business community and the city as a whole

on having that resource available and the reasons that Council was not supportive of the funding through the budget process. it was determined to address the subject under their strategic planning document.

9.C. EDC Mission Statement
Agenda Item Report EDC 23-025

Chair Marks introduced the item and noted that Commissioner Perez was to provide information on this item and seeing that he was not in attendance for this meeting with the Commission's approval this item will be postponed to the June regular meeting.

Deputy City Clerk Krause reported that she did receive an email from Commissioner Perez requesting excusal due to illness and expressed his apologies for the late notification.

The Commission agreed by consensus to postpone the item to the June meeting.

9. D. Revision to SWOT Analysis
Agenda Item Report EDC 23-026

Chair Marks introduced the item and deferred to Commissioner Arevalo.

Commissioner Arevalo for the benefit of the newest member, Commissioner Kim, provided a brief summary of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis that was performed by the Commission in 2021-2022. A worksession was conducted with the Chamber of Commerce in February and the Commission found that the Chamber was performing much more to support and promote small businesses than they thought in the beginning. In review of the strategic plan, it was discovered that the verbiage in the SWOT was not applicable. Ms. Arevalo then read into the record the proposed new language which she believed would encapsulate what is being done.

“Collaborate with the Homer Chamber of Commerce to help maintain attention towards building up our local small businesses across sectors”

Commissioner Arevalo expressed that she felt this verbiage covered the initial intent and what the Chamber is currently doing to help focus on the small business community in Homer.

Commissioner Pitzman suggested amending the statement to “maintain focus” and stated that he supported it either way it was written.

Chair Marks hearing no further comments, questions or amendments being considered requested a motion and second.

BROWN/KIM MOVED TO ADOPT THE REVISION TO THE SWOT ANALYSIS UNDER CHAMBER MARKETING TO THE LANGUAGE PROPOSED BY COMMISSIONER AREVALO, “COLLABORATE WITH THE HOMER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO HELP MAINTAIN FOCUS TOWARDS BUILDING UP OUR LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES ACROSS SECTORS”

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Ms. Engebretsen noted that she will be participating on a subcommittee of the Chamber's Board and one of the interests is an economic sector analysis.

There was brief discussion on the benefits to perform that analysis to obtain data on what is the Homer economy beyond tourism and how can they capture breadth of the really small businesses that do not maintain a store front. It was believed that it would also benefit in the updates to the Chamber's website. It was unknown if they were focusing on just membership or outside as well. There may be some businesses that can be approached and the website can be used as contact information since phone books are a thing of the past.

NEW BUSINESS

10.A. Election of EDC Officers Agenda Item Report EDC 23-027

Chair Marks introduced the item and clarified the methods to vote for Chair and Vice Chair. She indicated to the Commission that she was willing to serve as Chair once again. Ms. Marks called for nominations of Vice Chair after confirming if Vice Chair Brown would consent to serve again.

Commissioner Brown stated that if there was no interest in serving a Vice Chair by another Commissioner she would serve another term.

There were no further nominations and Commissioner Brown was re-elected as Vice Chair.

Chair Marks then turned the gavel over to Vice Chair Brown.

Vice Chair Brown called for nominations for the office of Chair.

Commissioner Arevalo nominated Commissioner Marks.

Vice Chair Brown hearing no further nominations conducted the vote for the Office of Chair and congratulated Chair Marks on her re-election handing the gavel back to Ms. Marks.

10. B. EDC Bylaws Review Agenda Item Report EDC 12-028

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading of title and reviewed the report provided by Deputy City Clerk Krause. She noted the proposed amendments and process and requested a motion and second to amend the bylaws as noted.

AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO AMEND THE BYLAWS TO REFLECT THE UPDATED TITLE OF THE STAFF LIAISON AND FORMAT OF THE MEETING AGENDA AND BRING THE AMENDED BYLAWS FOR ADOPTION AT THE JUNE REGULAR MEETING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- 11.A. City of Homer Newsletter – May 2023 Issue
- 11.B. City Manager’s Reports
CM April 24, 2023 Report
CM May 8, 2023 Report
- 11.C. EDC 2022-23 Strategic Plan
- 11.D. EDC Meeting & City Council Report Calendar

Chair Marks noted the informational materials and thanked Commissioner Pitzman for requesting an item to be on the agenda, noting that the Commission can contact Ms. Engebretsen or herself to have an item added to the agenda. She welcomed the newest Commissioner, Mel Kim. Ms. Marks then noted that a volunteer was needed to provide the report to City Council at the next meeting on May 22, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. She noted that Commissioner Pitzman was scheduled for August and September. There were no immediate volunteers. After a brief moment of quiet, Commissioner Pitzman asked Ms. Engebretsen to send him the “cliff notes” and he will make the report to Council. Chair Marks expressed her appreciation for Commissioner Pitzman stepping forward.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Krause expressed her appreciation for the Commission’s patience with the packet materials, supplemental packet explaining that there was still a lot of things happening and even being short-staffed in the Clerk’s Office they haven’t slowed down. She looks forward to working with the Commission for the near term.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen welcomed Commissioner Kim and expressed her appreciation for the efforts of the Clerk and having a great meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Pitzman welcomed Commissioner Kim to the Commission and he was looking forward to working with him.

Commissioner Arevalo reported that there were a couple of workshops for people that are interested in growing food locally coming up really soon. One is about growing fruit in Alaska and the challenges and opportunities, and what plants need. The second one is on Lasagna Beds, but the term used could

not be recalled right at the moment. She proceeded to describe the process used in that type of planting. They will be available through the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District's website. She then requested that the Commission be notified when they have attendees present via Zoom at their meetings noting it would be helpful. It was a good meeting.

Commissioner Kim thanked everyone for the welcome and stated that he has been talking with some persons who are working out on the Spit and they have reported the conditions of the bathrooms and those conditions are a persistent issue, additionally there is a lack of parking especially in the high season. They have asked about access to parking during the summer. He acknowledged that he did not know the right avenue to direct those conversations.

Ms. Engebretsen explained that it was always best to contact staff as soon as possible regarding issues.

Chair Marks commented that this Commission operated at a 30,000 foot view whereas other Commissions were focused on specific things. She went on to reiterate that the Commission will be reviewing their Strategic Plan and later the Comprehensive Plan that they may be able to consider the issue. The Port & Harbor would be more focused on that aspect though she believed. She recommended that the Commissioners keep asking questions of the community. Chair Marks related an incident where a business owner along Pioneer complained about the speeding that was occurring, not that the Commission can do anything about the issues but they can pass it along and she believed this was a good place to start. She expressed her appreciation of Commissioner Brown for stepping up to serve as Vice Chair again and the Commissioners for allowing her to serve them in the role of Chair again, stating that the Commission has made a lot of progress. Ms. Marks reminded them that they will be taking July off again and before you know it fall will be here.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers and via Zoom Webinar.

RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: _____

CALL TO ORDER

Session 24-01 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:00 p.m. on January 9, 2024 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS MARKS, AREVALO, BRENNAN, BROWN, HASCHE & KIM

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER PITZMAN (EXCUSED) & STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PEARSON

STAFF: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER ENGBRETSEN & DEPUTY CITY CLERK PETTIT

CONSULTING: MAYOR CASTNER

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Marks read the supplemental items into the agenda: **Under Pending Business Item A Short Term Rentals – Public Comment Received on Short Term Rentals.** She requested a motion and second to approve the agenda as amended.

AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Unapproved Minutes for the Regular Meeting on November 14, 2023

BROWN/BRENNAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING ON NOVEMBER 14, 2023.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. January Staff Report – Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen noted that there is a new staff member in the Planning Office.

B. Chamber Director Report

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen stated that the Chamber of Commerce is celebrating its 75th Anniversary on Friday, January 26th at Land's End.

C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

Chair Marks noted the minutes from the last meeting of the Homer Marine Trades Association that were included in the packet.

D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report

Chair Marks noted that KPEDD's meeting is scheduled for January 18th, and further that she would report back at the Commission's February meeting.

E. Port Expansion Project

Mayor Castner stated that the only update is that the Council is halfway through an ordinance to approve the additional studies that the Corps has requested the City to do.

F. Guiding Homer's Growth Group

Ms. Engebretsen informed the Commission about the potential of the group hosting a movie called "Cruise Boom."

G. HERC Update

Ms. Engebretsen shared her excitement about the new special projects/City engineer coming on board in the next month or so who has experience with Brownfield Grants.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Short Term Rentals

The Commission reached a general consensus to host the February 13th Work Session at 4:30 p.m.

The Commissioners went on to discuss short term rentals and the proposed ordinance. Discussion points included:

- The purpose of the ordinance
- Registration requirements and tax compliance of short term rental owners
- Enforcement and implementation
- Potential future regulations
- Housing and zoning issues
- Data and evidence of perceived issues
- Call for transparency and clarity in the ordinance's wording
- Nuisances and complaints

The Commission agreed that there was a need for further discussion regarding the proposed ordinance.

B. Strategic Plan

Chair Marks suggested calling the plan the “2024-25 Strategic Plan and Goals” given that many of them will fall into next year.

The Commission reviewed its strategic plan, making the following changes:

- Near Term Goals
 - Goal #5: remove this goal as this is a duty that Commissioners are required to fulfill given that it’s built into their positions with the Commission.
- Mid Term Goals
 - Goal #1: add “attend the KPEDD industry outlook forum in Soldotna in April” as an **opportunity**.
 - Goal #2: add to the **tasks** that the EDC will also monitor the work being done in the wayfinding and streetscape implementation.
 - Goal #4: have a speaker from the college and additional people who will speak on specific topics (example: someone from the hospital who discusses housing and child care).

Mayor Castner recommended that the EDC adopt a long-term land planning goal for the City due to the fact that the City is fairly constrained with expansions of existing businesses that are out of compliance in their zoning areas.

C. Housing

Chair Marks suggested moving the “Housing” item into the reports segment of the agenda from here on out as this is a topic that is regularly covered at meetings. There was consensus among the Commissioners to move “Housing” under “**Reports**.”

D. Winter Survey Memorandum from Commissioner Kim as backup

Commissioner Kim spoke to the intent of the survey, noting that its purpose is to build relationships between the City and the various businesses in the City.

The Commission agreed to move this item to pending business for the February 13th Regular Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. City Manager’s Report for January 8, 2024
- B. City of Homer Newsletter for January 2024
- C. EDC 2024 Meeting Calendar & Commissioner Attendance at Council Meetings

Chair Marks noted the informational materials in the packet. She added that a change needed to be made to the Commission's calendar, explaining that the KPEDD Industry Outlook forum has moved from January to April.

Chair Marks then asked for Commissioners to start volunteering themselves for the monthly reports to City Council. Commissioner Kim volunteered to deliver the January report, and Chair Marks volunteered herself for the February report. Commissioner Arevalo tentatively volunteered herself for the March report.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Marcia Kuszmaul stated that she agreed with Commissioner Brown regarding her comment about the problems and the provisions of the ordinance not matching one another. She added that she felt the ordinance is a little premature, voicing that she doesn't think people are non-compliant intentionally, but rather that it's a lack of public education.

Jay Baker, city resident and owner of the Bayview Inn, spoke to the wording of the ordinance, suggesting that the language is ominous. He briefly mentioned the use of third parties to collect the proposed tax instead of implementing an ordinance, but was subsequently informed that Homer would not qualify for "out-of-area sales tax collections."

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Pettit thanked the Commission for a good meeting.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen thanked the audience for attending and thanked the Commission for the good discussions.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR

Mayor Castner commended the ability of the City to effectively manage its various priorities. He briefly spoke to the resilience of the City over the past 4-5 years, stating that no other municipality in Alaska handled the implications of COVID as well as Homer.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Kim thanked the public for attending and sharing their perspectives. He then thanked the Commission and the City Staff for a good meeting.

Commissioner Arevalo shared a public announcement regarding a free workshop at the college about growing food and stewarding land.

Commissioner Brown referred back to the joint work session last summer with the Planning Commission, stating that she felt it was a good thing to do.

Commissioner Hasche said that lots of communities around the U.S. are going through the same struggles in regards to short-term housing. He suggested cherry picking what certain communities have done right and done wrong, and to stay away from the latter. He also brought forth the idea of incorporating Homer Bucks into the tax collection of these B&B's to help soften the blow for local businesses as opposed to giving the money to the City.

Commissioner Brennan thanked the public for attending, and added that she felt the Commission made a lot of progress tonight.

Chair Marks thanked the Commission for working hard on the short-term rentals and thanked the Mayor for attending.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 6:00 p.m., with a work session scheduled to start at 4:30 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers and via Zoom Webinar.

ZACH PETTIT, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I

Approved: _____



January 29, 2024

City of Homer
491 E. Pioneer Ave
Homer, AK 99603

Dear Mayor Castner, City Council, and City Staff,

This letter serves as our quarterly report from October 1 to December 31, 2023. Homer Business Advisor Robert Green finished the year on a high note, supporting 130 business owners and entrepreneurs while receiving 100% client satisfaction on surveys. It was a relatively slow year for capital infusion, with interest rates for business loans often double what they were two years ago. This past year, 78% of Homer clients chose to meet in person with Robert, indicating a strong preference from local business owners and entrepreneurs to have this service in their community rather than travel to Soldotna. Here is a summary of deliverables to the Homer community during the quarter (year):

Client Hours: 122.8 (622.1)	Jobs Supported: 40 (258)
Total Clients: 34 (130)	Capital Infusion: \$0 (\$293,000)
New Businesses Started or Bought: 6 (10)	Client Surveys: 100% positive (100% positive)

This report provides lists of the top advising topics and top industries obtaining technical assistance from the Alaska SBDC in Homer. Assistance to entrepreneurs looking to start new businesses and business planning were the top topics this quarter. Accommodation jumped into the top spot for industries advised, while retail stores and professional guides remained near the top of the list.

Topics

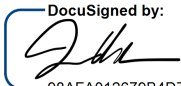
1. Start-up Assistance: 50.7 hrs (41%)
2. Business Planning: 30.8 hrs (25%)
3. General Management: 16.2 hrs (13%)
4. Buy/Sell Business: 9.0 hrs (7%)
5. Legal Issues: 8.1 hrs (7%)

Industries

1. Accommodation: 38.7 hrs (32%)
2. Retailers: 17.9 hrs (15%)
3. Guides: 14.5 hrs (12%)
4. Manufacturing: 13.7 hrs (11%)
5. Entertainment: 9.7 hrs (8%)

We would like to thank the City of Homer for their support of the Homer Business Advisor position. The \$10,000 funding provided by the mayor and city council is critical in retaining the Homer SBDC office in 2024. We greatly appreciate the knowledge, experience, and consistency Robert Green brings to efforts in Homer. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

98AFA012679B4D7...

Jon Bittner
Executive Director
Alaska SBDC

**Homer Marine Trades Association
Regular Business Meeting
January 10, 2024
Harbor Master's Office**

MINUTES

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President, Aaron Fleenor at 6:15 p.m.

Officers/Directors present/quorum: Officers and Directors present were Aaron Fleenor, Eric Engebretsen, Jen Hakala, Cinda Martin, Adam Smude, Bruce Friend, George Hall, Kate Mitchell, Mark Zieset and Communications Director, Amy Woodruff. Matt Alward was absent/excused.

Guest Presentations:

- Harbormaster, Bryan Hawkins reported that the City Council approved moving forward with the study and they appreciated the testimony in support, it actually changed minds. A resolution in support was sent on to the borough which the Assembly supported as well and now will go up to the State. The City ordinance to support funding has had its first reading. Spring projects include re-applying for the PIDP grant for float replacement which they did not receive last year due to additional engineering needed; the tariff update will be on the next agenda; updating the requirement for vessel insurance; updating the airport leases among other things. Bryan also reported that the Harbormasters Association has various scholarships available for 2024.
- KPC – Janel Harris reported that Mark Zeiset is presenting marine electronics on 1/26; Deckhand Skills and Coastal Navigation are planned for the spring. She is working on getting the AB course re-approved so that they can offer again this spring, she will then work on getting the 100-ton re-approved by USCG. She is also researching how to get the marine operator course approved as well as the safety courses required to complete the AB certification.

Approval of Agenda – Motion by Mark Zeiset to approve the agenda as presented, 2nd and carried.

Approval of Minutes of November 29, 2023 meeting: Motion by Kate Mitchell to approve the minutes as written, 2nd and carried.

Treasurer's Report –Jen Hakala gave her report, attached for the record. We have \$22,533 in the checking with \$2,454 in A/R and \$295 in A/P. All other bills have been paid, a list is on the attached report. The cost of the Anchorage Boat Show will be paid in full once invoiced estimated amount of \$12,800 for our share, no deposit required. Bruce noted that he is just about ready to bill out for the Boat Show and Jen will catch up billings for the PME banner.

Communication Director's Report – Amy reported the following:

- Feedback about Christmas Party – great turnout! Adam and Desiree are agreeable to offering the space again in 2024. It would be nice to offer as an annual perk for members.
- Winter King Tournament – HCOC would like HMTA like to participate in the tournament in some way coming in March 2024; discussion held, suggestion to include HMTA ad with tournament invite; Amy will continue discussion with Brad to see what they'd like us to do
- FOL Survey – has been completed and we will schedule presenters based on results; suggested holding an informational event for parents outlining the available offerings for trades, Janel offered to coordinate through the college

Committee Reports:

- Draft Marketing Plan – Amy
- Advertising – Amy/Kate – Fisherman's News proposal for 2 x 2 ads @ \$1,750 for the year with ads running March through December; City funding is available

- Website/Social Media –Amy is still working on website updates and will be getting with Grady to re-align some of the categories to match up with the brochure
- Radio – Mark (re-visit spring agenda)
- Podcast options – Amy reported that there has been no further movement; rough proposal on the table until she, Jen and Shannon Moore have a chance to connect. Kate would like to provide the historical interview clips to be used in the podcasts and post on the website; she and George are working on getting a collection together.
- Workforce Development - Aaron
 - FOLs – Cinda update on survey; 41 students participated, top results were related to welding, underwater welding, designing boats, commercial fishing, boat building and repairs and deck handling. Handed over results to Amy who will coordinate presenters with Damara. Eric mentioned that there is a CTE committee meeting at the HHS on 1/22 to discuss the future of CTE courses at the high school. He plans to attend and will make an introduction to the committee for anyone else interested in attending.
 - KPC courses – Janel Harris jlharris8@alaska.edu
- Hoodies/shirt status – Amy/Jen the shirts have arrived and are with Skiff Chicks for printing; the cost per piece is \$28/each; we will have 48 to award and/or sell @ \$50/each
- Scholarship – Cinda - Financial Aid presentation given at HHS and Flex in December; Spring scholarship application has been posted on KPB One Stop; 7 - AB Scholarships have been awarded for a total of \$3,850; she put in a request to Aleutian Harvester for funding and anticipates \$3,000; requested \$1,000 from Rotary. At this point we have \$150 remaining for the year without further funding from AH.
- Membership – Amy reported on 1 new member, Shoreline Vessel Support/Tyson Alward; she has been brainstorming on other prospects to invite such as SPH

Old Business:

- Annual To-Do List – Mark review/action items
- Anchorage Boat Show –
 - Adam Smude moved to ratify motion made at Round Haul on December 15th to secure spot at Boat Show consisting of 6,400 sf combined space at the same price as the '23 show. Bay Weld will need 2,400 sf but will cover 50% of the cost; \$12,600 will be HMTA's portion. More details to be discussed at January meeting; board members present constituted majority and agreed. Motion to ratify 2nd and carried.
 - Eric reported that there is roughly double the square footage as last year for the price with the space reconfigured and moved to the rear of the show; he plans to bring 3 vessels, Halpin's, 36' flagship vessel with 3 - 1,000hp mercury outboards, a trooper vessel, and 33' catamaran. The Troopers will likely be present. There are 15 booths total to sell, Bruce has sold several spots but there are several spaces remaining.
 - Banner – there is 90' of wall space which would be ideal for hanging the banner

New Business:

None

Action Items for Amy:

FOL – schedule presenters

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 13th at the Harbor Office

Adjourn: There being no further business to come before the board members, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cinda Martin, Secretary



AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Short Term Rental Ordinance

Item Type:	Action Memorandum
Prepared For:	Economic Development Advisory Commission
Meeting Date:	13 Feb 2024
Staff Contact:	Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

Summary Statement: Review the “EDC February Draft” of the Short Term Rental Ordinance, and make comments and a recommendation to City Council.

Work Session

The EDC has a work session scheduled at 4:30. The structure of the work session is as follows:

1. Short presentation by staff on the process to date
2. Presentation of the “EDC” draft ordinance
3. Q&A on the draft ordinance
4. Group conversation (or break out groups if there are a lot of attendees)

Council asked the Commission to comment on the ordinance. Based on the discussion at the last meeting, I drafted the version titled “EDC February Draft”. The Commission can move to send this version to Council with your comments. The Commission can freely edit this EDC version.

How is the EDC Draft Different?

- All mention of housing in the wheareas clauses are struck
- Regulations move from title 5 to title 8. (not a big change but puts it in the same place as mobile food permits
- Further refined definition of short term rental
- Change the requirement from a permit for each STR unit, to each parcel of land; if you have two rental cabins, you need one permit for the property that covers both, rather than one for each unit. City records generally follow property and this will streamline recordkeeping.
- Changed the permit term from one year to two years – permits would be good for two years.
- The non-conforming uses section is struck. Its confusing and conflicts with Title 21.
- Capacity: removed maximum occupancy for bedrooms. (Staff doesn’t see how the city would enforce this currently). The standard of five guest rooms and 15 guests, which is a standard under title 21 and the state fire marshal is used instead.
- Emergency contact info would only be shared with the police department, and the requirement to notify neighboring properties within 300 feet has been removed.
- Enactment date would be January 1, 2025

Wrapping Up at the Regular Meeting:

- The Commission can edit the draft; come to the meeting with your ideas for changes and the line numbers you'd like to see amended.
- Council has said they appreciate seeing each person's comments. Therefore, after the Commission votes on the motion, I am requesting that you provide brief comments on why you voted the way you did, and why you support or don't support the ordinance. This is not a discussion time between Commissioners; this is for each Commissioner to say their piece.

Next Steps

- EDC comments will be sent to Council, in time for the February 26th meeting packet.
- The Planning Commission will discuss this topic at their February 21st meeting. I will be explaining the process and EDC recommendations, followed by discussion of the ordinance and taking their comments.
- Council on Feb 26th: There is a work session at 4:00 on the ordinance. I will be presenting a version of the EDC work session PowerPoints, and including Planning Commission comments. If the Council sponsors have a substitute ordinance, that will also be covered. Council has a public hearing on February 26th at the regular meeting. They can adopt the original ordinance as is, make changes, postpone... lots of things could happen.
- This topic will be on the March EDC agenda for any follow up.

Summary Statement: Review the "EDC February Draft" of the Short Term Rental Ordinance, and make comments and a recommendation to City Council.

Attachments

EDC February Draft Ordinance

Two comment documents from Charles Anderson

January staff report and attachments

1 **CITY OF HOMER**
2 **HOMER, ALASKA**

Aderhold/Davis

3
4 **ORDINANCE 23-61 (EDC February Draft)**

5
6 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA
7 AMENDING HOMER CITY CODE TITLE 5-8 TO ADD CHAPTER 58.48
8 05 SHORT TERM RENTALS.
9

10 ~~WHEREAS, The Council and the public are very concerned with the impacts of housing~~
11 ~~availability on seasonal workers and year-round community members; and~~
12

13 ~~WHEREAS, Short term rentals have been identified as one of many challenges facing~~
14 ~~housing availability in the City; and~~
15

16 WHEREAS, The use of private residences has been a very common source of income for
17 property owners in the City which also supports our visitor-serving businesses; and
18

19 WHEREAS, Visitors staying in short term rental have many positive impacts, however,
20 they also consume City services in ways that are difficult to recoup financially when short term
21 rental owners fail to collect existing sales taxes; and
22

23 WHEREAS, The City has no existing regulations for short term rentals; and
24

25 WHEREAS, There is an interest to enact reasonable regulations related to short term
26 rentals to ensure that they are operated safely, not creating public nuisances, and are
27 remitting the appropriate taxes; and
28

29 WHEREAS, The Council intends for this to be an iterative process whereby the short
30 term rental regulations will be adjusted over time to best fit the needs of the community and
31 short term rental operators.
32

33 NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF HOMER ORDAINS:
34

35 Section 1. Homer City Code is amended to include Chapter 5.488.09, entitled “Short
36 Term Rentals”, to read as follows:
37

38 **Chapter 5.48 8.09 Short Term Rentals**

39
40 **Sections: (all sections to be changed from title 5 title 8)**

41
42 **5.48.010 Definitions**

43 **5.48.020 Intent**

44 **5.48.030 Short Term Rental Permits**

45 **5.48.040 Permit Renewals**

46 **5.48.050 Nonconforming Uses**

47 **5.48.060 Public Safety, Noise, and Nuisances**

48 **5.48.070 Violations and Penalties**

49 **5.48.080 Appeal of Decision**

50

51 **5.48.010 Definitions**

52

53 **“Short-term rental” means a dwelling unit as defined in HCC Title 21, or portion thereof,**
54 **that is offered or provided to a guest for compensation for a period of less than 30**
55 **consecutive days. Short-term rentals may be in standalone buildings, individual rooms in**
56 **single-family homes, units in apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and multifamily**
57 **dwellings. They may be operated as a bed and breakfast, rooming house, not to include**
58 **commercial accommodations such as lodging, hotels and motels as defined in Title 21.**

59

60 **“Guest” means an individual, corporation, partnership or association paying monetary**
61 **or other consideration for the use of a short-term rental.**

62

63 **“Operator” means a person, firm, corporation, or other designated legal entity, who**
64 **offers for rent or otherwise makes available in the City dwelling units for monetary or**
65 **other consideration.**

66

67 **“Property” means real estate offered by an operator as a short term rental.**

68

69 **5.48.020 Intent**

70

71 **The intent of this chapter is to protect general health and safety of the public within the**
72 **City of Homer while ensuring short term rentals are operated in such a way that they pay**
73 **any applicable fees or taxes and do not create a public nuisance which decreases quality**
74 **of life for neighboring residences.**

75

76 **5.48.030 Short Term Rental Permits**

77

78 **a. Any owner wishing to make a dwelling unit available for use as a short term rental**
79 **must apply for and receive approval of a short term rental permit for each parcel**
80 **of land with an intended unit.**

81

82 **b. An annual short term rental permit application shall be submitted on a specified**
83 **form or platform provided by the City before offering a dwelling unit for rent. The**
84 **application shall include a fee as set by the City Council in the City’s fee schedule.**

85

86 **c. No short term rental operator shall offer, advertise, or facilitate the short term**
87 **rental of property in the City unless the operator possesses a valid short term**
88 **rental permit. Any offer or advertisement for the short term rental of property in**
89 **the City that does not contain a valid short term rental permit number, or which**
90 **the City identifies as illegal, shall be immediately removed.**

91
92 **d. Required Information and Documentation: Applications shall provide:**

93
94 **1. Name, address, phone number, and email of the property owner, and, if**
95 **different from the owner, the short term rental operator.**

96
97 **2. A general description of the dwelling unit to be used as a short term rental**
98 **to include address, zone district, number of bedrooms, and available**
99 **parking spaces compliant with City code.**

100
101 **3. A 24-hour emergency contact residing within 50 miles of city limits.**

102
103 **4. State business license number.**

104
105 **5. Certification by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Finance Department in a tax**
106 **compliance certificate that the applicant is current in the payment of any**
107 **sales tax to the City and the Kenai Peninsula Borough.**

108
109 **6. Completed fire safety inspection form for the dwelling unit.**

110
111 **e. Permit Number: Short term rental permits will be issued a unique permit number**
112 **which must be displayed in all advertisements and public listings for the short**
113 **term rental.**

114
115 **f. Permit Renewal: Short term rental permits must be renewed ~~annually~~ every two**
116 **years and are valid from January 1 to December 31.**

117
118 **g. Transfer of Permits: ~~Annual~~ short term rental permits are transferrable between**
119 **owners with City Manager or designee approval, provided the use and operations**
120 **remain consistent. Permits are not transferrable between units or parcels.**

121
122 **5.48.040 Permit Renewals**

123
124 **a. Short term rental permits may be renewed starting November 1 each year using**
125 **the form or platform provided by city, and shall include a fee as set by Council in**
126 **City Fee Schedule.**

129 **b. Permits are eligible for renewal if the property and dwelling unit comply with all**
130 **applicable City regulations, taxes, fees are paid, and there are no outstanding**
131 **public safety or public nuisance violations.**

132
133 **c. Expired permits require a new application to resume short term rental use.**
134

135 **5.48.050 Nonconforming Uses**
136

137 ~~**a. Existing short term rentals with proof of operation and sales tax remittance to the**~~
138 ~~**Kenai Peninsula Borough within the period between January 1, 2020 and**~~
139 ~~**December 31 2023 will be exempted as non-conforming uses if they meet all other**~~
140 ~~**short term rental standards, even if they are located in zones no longer principally**~~
141 ~~**permitting such use.**~~

142
143 ~~**b. Non-conforming short term rentals not used for 18 months or not permitted by**~~
144 ~~**[DATE] will cease to be available on the property.**~~

145
146 ~~**c. Approvals of non-conforming short term rental permits are transferrable to new**~~
147 ~~**property owners upon request, provided updates are made to the information on**~~
148 ~~**file with the City.**~~

149
150 **5.48.060 Public Safety, Noise, and Nuisances**
151

152 ~~**a. Capacity: Maximum occupancy for a vacation short term rental is two persons per**~~
153 ~~**bedroom plus an additional two persons (e.g., a two-bedroom unit may have six**~~
154 ~~**occupants). Children aged 12 and under are not counted toward the occupancy**~~
155 ~~**total. five guest rooms or 15 guests, whichever is less.**~~

156
157 **b. Emergency Contact: The Emergency Contact provided on the permit application**
158 **will be shared with the Homer Police Department and all neighboring properties**
159 **within 300 feet of the parcel containing the permitted short term rental unit(s).**
160 **The permit holder must promptly notify the City of any changes to the designated**
161 **emergency contact information.**

162
163 **c. Fire Department Access: Properties with gated entries must have a Fire**
164 **Department approved device that allows emergency response access.**

165
166 **d. Noise: Short term rentals are subject to HCC 21.59.010 (b) regarding noise.**

167
168 **e. Nuisance: Any property with an unresolved nuisance complaint under HCC**
169 **Chapter 5-16-8.09 is ineligible for short term rental permit approval or renewal.**
170

171 **f. Parking: Short term rentals must have sufficient off-street parking, validated by**
172 **the City planner or designee.**

173

174 **5.48.070 Violations and Penalties**

175

176 **a. Operating a short term rental without a permit, or in violation of this chapter, is**
177 **unlawful.**

178

179 **b. The City Manager, or designee, may revoke a permit for a short term rental upon**
180 **finding one or more of the following:**

181 **1. Negligence in responding to emergencies more than two times in a rolling**
182 **12-month period.**

183

184 **2. More than two documented law enforcement violations related to the short**
185 **term rental in a rolling 12-month period.**

186

187 **3. Chronic non-compliance with the requirements this chapter's**
188 **requirements.**

189

190 **4. Failure to pay required sales taxes to the Kenai Peninsula Borough.**

191

192 **5. Failure to correct noted Building or Fire code violations.**

193

194 **6. Documented, significant violations supported by citations, written**
195 **warning, or other documentation from relevant authorities.**

196

197 **c. The penalty for an offense in this chapter is the fine listed in the fine schedule in**
198 **HCC 1.16.040. If no fine is listed for the offense in HCC 1.16.040, then the defendant**
199 **must appear in court, and, if convicted, is subject to the general penalty as**
200 **provided in HCC 1.16.010 unless another penalty is specifically provided.**

201

202 **5.48.080 Appeal of Decision**

203

204 **Judicial review by the superior court of a final decision on a short term rental permit**
205 **issued by the City may be had by filing a notice of appeal in accordance with the**
206 **applicable rules of court governing appeals in civil matters. The notice of appeal shall be**
207 **filed within 30 days of notice of the final decision on the permit. Appeals of short term**
208 **rental permits are heard solely on the administrative record which shall be prepared by**
209 **the City. A copy shall be filed in the superior court within 30 days after the appellant pays**
210 **the estimated cost of preparing the complete of designated record or files a corporate**
211 **surety bond equal to the estimated cost.**

212

213

February 6th 2024

To the Economic Development Commission Members

Housing Analysis in Homer, Alaska: Navigating Affordability and Crisis Perspectives

*Presented by Charles Anderson

Overview:

This comprehensive analysis delves into the housing landscape of Homer, Alaska, addressing prevalent terms like "The housing crisis" and "Lack of affordable housing." By combining statistical insights with real-world observations, the paper aims to demystify these terms, providing a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the local housing market.

Key Findings:

1. **Affordable Housing Criteria:**

- Definition: Not more than 30% of income allocated to housing (rent/mortgage).
- Statistical Baseline in Homer, Alaska: \$1,743.92 per month.
- Homeowner vs. Renter Affordability Discrepancies.

2. **Rental Market Dynamics:**

- Survey of Long-term Rentals: Average cost trends and availability.
- Affordable Housing Accessibility: Wage thresholds and rental affordability.

3. **Housing Crisis Evaluation:**

- Comparative Analysis: New housing starts, median home prices, and rental statistics.
- Homer's Position: Significantly high housing starts per capita, below-state-average median home price.

4. **Inflation's Role in Housing Costs:**

- Unpacking Speculations: Non-resident buyers, short-term rentals, and the true culprit.
- 1992 vs. 2022: Inflation-adjusted median home prices in Alaska.

5. **Affordability in Rental Market:**

- Navigating Individual Experiences: Challenges and successes in securing affordable housing.
- Ebbs and Flows: Impact of market dynamics on rental availability.

6. **Argentinian Experiment:**

- Lessons from Legislation: Consequences of government intervention in the housing market.
- Repeal Impact: Inventory increase and price reduction in Argentina.

****Conclusion and Recommendations:****

- Homer's Housing Landscape: A closer look at the statistics and facts.
- Future Steps: Advocating for free market dynamics and strategic city interventions.

****Recommendations for City Action:****

- Financial Participation in Utility Extensions.
- Property Tax Reductions and Increased Exemptions.
- Strategies for Lowering Water/Sewer Rates.
- Incentives for Multi-Family Housing.
- Sales Tax Exemption for Year-Round Rental Housing.

****Note:**** *2022 statistics were used due to the unavailability of complete 2023 statistics from the State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.*

When discussing public policy on housing, "The housing crisis" and "Lack of affordable housing" are terms that are thrown about, and used quite a bit. They tend to convey a sense of desperation, doom, and despair, especially for young people and those who are trying to establish themselves in a given community. Given that shelter is one of our basic human needs, it is no wonder that people get concerned and agitated when those terms are used. They are often used to justify public policy discussions and action, but rarely defined. So let's dive in and analyze what they actually mean statistically vs what some people mean when they use those terms. Then we can look at what criteria would need to be met to justify the use of the terms objectively.

****Affordable Housing:****

The generally accepted definition of affordable housing is that no more than 30% of your income is to go toward your housing (rent/mortgage).

According to the latest census data gathered at census.gov, the median home price in Homer, Alaska is \$348,000. With the median monthly owners' cost for someone in Homer, Alaska with a mortgage is \$1,945 (for homeowners without a mortgage, the fixed costs such as insurance, taxes, etc. are \$632). For rentals, the median gross rent in Homer, Alaska is \$1,180 per month. The median household income for Homer is \$69,757. The median household income divided by 12 months is \$5,813. 30% of that is \$1,743.92. \$1,743.92 per month is the statistical baseline in Homer, Alaska for affordable housing.

Some quick math tells us that the average homeowner with a mortgage in Homer is spending 33.45% of their income on housing, slightly above the affordability threshold. When we do the same math for median gross rent, we have 20.29% of median income spent on housing, well below the baseline for affordable housing. A survey of available rentals over the last 2 months (Facebook Marketplace was the primary source, as Craigslist use has all but ceased) has shown an average of 19 long-term rentals on the market at any given time. (Care was given to exclude short-term winter rentals, dry cabins, and rentals past Diamond Ridge and past Fritz Creek.) Of the 22 rentals available in Dec. 2023, only 3 were over \$2,000 a month, 15 of them were under \$1,500, and 4 were under \$1,000. An average cost of \$1421.30. In January 2024, the average had dropped to \$1,349. One major finding was that the East End Cottages (the low-income, subsidized apartments across from the gear shed) have never been full since they opened several years ago. They have units available now under \$1,000.

Someone making \$24.58 an hour working full time would still come in at the 30% affordability threshold if they were renting. A couple or two roommates could make starting wages at McDonald's (\$13 an hour for normal shifts, \$15 an hour for premium shifts) and still afford housing at or below the threshold for affordable housing. The starting wage at Safeway is \$17 an hour.

****Housing Crisis:****

Housing crisis generally refers to a limited/short supply compared to the demand. This can be a bit more tricky to pin down; however, new housing starts, median home prices, rolling average of long-term rental availability, average rental costs, etc. all compared to the state average and compared to other municipalities can be an indicator of how your city is faring. Like so many questions, "compared to what?" is crucial.

Single-family loan activity for 2022 reported at live.laborstats.alaska.gov has the statewide average sales price at \$422,584. The state does not have individual statistics for Homer; however, the average sales price for the Kenai Peninsula is \$385,049. To corroborate this information, a local lender provided the information that of the 40 loans they closed in Homer in 2023, the average was \$390,580. This is anecdotal evidence indicating that the State of Alaska Statistics for the Kenai Peninsula are close to that of Homers. Given that these are sales statistics, and that the US census states the median value of an owner-occupied home is \$348,000, we can reliably say that Homer is solidly below the state average.

Using 2022 data found @ live.laborstats.alaska.gov, Homer is second in the state for new housing starts, only behind Anchorage. Anchorage had 402 new housing starts (combined single-family and multi-family), and Homer had 74 total new units. With Anchorage's population of 291,247, that is one new housing start per 725 people. Homer's population is 5522 and has one new housing start per 75 people. Homer is second in the state overall and has over 10 times more housing starts than Anchorage when adjusted for population. (The next closest in overall

was Juneau, with 64 new housing starts with a population of 32,255, one new start for every 504 people.)

When it comes to new lots and building opportunities in the non-view more affordable range, the new subdivisions on Early Spring and the one across from East Hill provide over 50 new opportunities on the "non-view" more affordable end.

According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (live.laborstats.alaska.gov), 30 years ago in 1992, the average sales price for a single-family home in Alaska was around \$133,952. In 2022 that number was \$422,584.

Many speculate on the cause of such a tremendous rise in cost. Non-resident buyers driving up demand, short-term rentals, greedy real estate agents, greedy contractors, etc., are all popular scapegoats.

However, the most significant factor contributing to the rise in housing costs is inflation. Clearly demonstrated when we look at what that 1992 median home cost would be today when adjusted for inflation. According to the State of Alaska statistics, it turns out the Average sales price in Alaska for 2022 would only be about \$209,744 (for Homer, Alaska, it would be about \$192,316) when adjusted for inflation.

A modest rise that could easily be attributed to a better-built product and reasonable rise in demand. While the tendency is to find a group to blame perceived housing problems on, the true culprit is inflation.

Homer, Alaska, has affordable housing when it comes to the rental market. It is understood that this statement will be triggering for many and contested. This statement is not meant to ignore or discount people's past and current challenges when searching for and procuring housing. There are many factors that go into a landlord and a tenant's mutual agreement to contract. Not every rental is suitable for every tenant, and not every tenant is suitable for every rental. When discussing housing to guide public policy, it is important to resist the tendency to reference a given individual's experience with housing and infer or conflate that their experience constitutes the statistical norm. It is important to look at statistical data and use facts.

For example, someone could share their experience of having a near impossible time finding a suitable place to rent at a price that fits their budget and could make the claim that "Homer doesn't have affordable housing". While the next person can share their experience of finding a place quickly, that meets all their needs at a price that doesn't even take up 20% of their income. "Homer has great rental opportunities" would be the takeaway. While both sides of the argument would be quick to use their preferred examples, the reality is that the circumstances surrounding each instance can affect the situation drastically. The person having difficulty could be working only 20 hours a week, have a negative rental history, and also have several pets. While the person who had no trouble may be well-established in a good job and received a below-market deal from a family friend. Either scenario does not provide a clear picture, and it is the individual circumstances that have the most bearing on the experience, not the overall rental market. Many

times life and lifestyle decisions will impact the options available to you. Both positive and negative.

There is also ebb and flow when it comes to the rental market. In 2020, the demand for short-term rentals significantly increased due to the rise in domestic travel caused by international travel restrictions. Some units were shifted from the long-term market to the short term, along with new units that were created to capitalize on the short-term spike in demand. Fast forward 3 years, and due to falling prices in the short-term market, former short-term units are being offered back on the long-term market, including units built initially for the short-term boom. In this instance, the initial rise in demand of short-term rentals eventually subsidized and brought to market more long-term rentals. Using government regulation to try to chill one sector of housing in favor of another will have the effect of decreasing supply overall.

The major point being that housing is housing. An increase in any type of housing supply will ultimately increase all supply over time, no matter how it is initially allocated.

Argentina's 4-year experiment with government intervention in the housing free market is a textbook case of unintended consequences and opposite results. In an alleged attempt to help renters and the public secure affordable housing, in 2020 Argentina's government implemented a series of laws and rent controls. The result was many owners simply exiting the rental market, driving up prices, and shrinking supply. When newly elected President Milei scrapped the 2020 rent control laws in December 2023, within a month the rental inventory had doubled, and prices had fallen 20 to 30%.

As demonstrated recently in Argentina, attempts to mitigate the lag effects between rents and inflation, via legislation, only make the problem worse and have the opposite effects.

Statistics and facts indicate that Homer's rental market can be classified as affordable.

As to a Housing Crisis, I do not see where a credible case can be made that we are experiencing a housing crisis in Homer. New housing starts are the highest per capita in the state (by a large margin) while our median home price is well below the State average. Homer is growing and there will be peaks and valleys. However, the facts and statistics make a strong case for us to keep doing what we are doing. Let the free market work, and over time it will smooth out the highs and lows, and ultimately provide for growth that is inevitable.

****Next Steps:****

It is clear that compared to other municipalities in the state, free market forces are doing a better than average job of responding to the housing demand in Homer. In discussions with several developers who have recently worked with the city on new subdivisions, they expressed their frustration at the resistance they received from the city and the planning commission, despite meeting all codes and regulations.

****Some Recommendations:****

- The city could participate financially with utility main extensions, instead of the cost being shouldered 100% by the developer. The extension, after all, is bringing the city new customers.
- Help reduce property taxes - lower mill rate
- Increase primary home exemption in City to Match the KPB at \$350,000 (vs \$150,000 current)
- Strive to lower water/sewer rates. The most expensive in the state (perhaps the country).
- Create tax incentives for building multi-family housing - a tax abatement for a period of time.
- Remove sales tax from year-round rental housing. (Short-term rentals still pay tax on their business)

****Note:****

2022 statistics were used due to the fact that the State of Alaska Department of Labor Workforce and Development site did not have all of 2023 statistics published yet.

Charles Anderson

Charlesgoldenanderson@gmail.com

907-756-1973

February 6th 2024

To the Economic Development Commission Members

The memorandum Submitted Sep. 27 2022 titled Short term rental basics appears to be the foundation and Start of the push to regulate Short term rentals.

There is a distinct theme that emerges that tries to tie STR business to the lack of housing and affordability.

The first 2 WHEREAS paragraphs in ordinance 23-61 try to do this.

Not only has the city has yet to provide any clear link from STR to a housing crisis or shortage.

Furthermore analysis of the statistics and data from [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov) and live.laborstats.alaska.gov

Make the case that Homer is doing better than most municipalities when it comes to housing availability and affordability.

No compelling evidence has been presented that there is a problem with safety or nuisance as stated as intent in section 5.48.020 .

1. Requirement that they operate safely.

There is not a single case in Homer of a STR burning down. There is no evidence that emergency services have not been able to respond to a situation because it was a STR.

Safety is already a function of the STR websites (ie Airbnb, Vrbo). You are required to declare if you have smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. Additionally, Every single person that stays in your unit writes a review and lets new potential guests know exactly what they are getting when they book with you. A high level of scrutiny, detail and accountability is built into the system. The potential guests have much more information and detail about parking, number of beds, safety equipment, etc. than anything this ordinance would supposedly cover.

And because of the accountability factor, the hosts are very attentive to details , especially the safety and comfort of their guests. If not, they are taken out of the rotation by market forces.

2. Nuisances.

A records request to the City of Homer on Dec. 13 2023 revealed that from May to October In the 2023 tourist season , there was not a single call to HPD of a nuisance caused by a STR. Interestingly the majority of the calls were from long term rentals and Hotels.

In that same time period there was only 1 call to HPD referencing a parking complaint tied to a STR. The issue was resolved, and there was no indication that a law was broken, just a single complaint.

There are already systems in place to handle any nuisance or parking complaints if they become an issue in the future.

4. Taxes.

Collection of Taxes is a function of the KPB.

The Borough is currently using the Harmari software to identify, educate and enforce tax compliance.

As of Feb. 2024 they have Identified 154 individual accounts/operators that have short term rentals in Homer city limits. They are at over 80% compliance and of the remaining 32 operators, they have identified them and are reaching out to facilitate compliance.

The Borough is doing their job and has tremendous momentum.

My overall sense is that there was a desire to regulate Short Term rentals as a reaction to an unproven and emotional narrative that short term rentals are bad.

This was an ordinance looking for a problem.

There is no good, or demonstrated reason to re-write or modify this ordinance. It needs to go away, and I recommend that this ordinance be abandoned.

Charles Anderson

Charlesgoldenanderson@gmail.com

907-756-1973



AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Short Term Rentals

Item Type: Action Memorandum
Prepared For: Economic Development Advisory Commission
Meeting Date: 9 Jan 2024
Staff Contact: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

Requested Action:

1. Conduct the work session and discuss the ordinance at the regular meeting.
2. Provide direction to staff on potential changes and problems.
3. Set a time and desired outcome for the EDC work session in February.

Background

The City Council introduced an ordinance on Monday November 13th regarding the regulation of Short Term Rentals (STR's). The ordinance was referred to the EDC for review and comment, with a return date to City Council of February 26th. This ordinance was an agenda item at the November EDC meeting, and members of the public commented. A work session for January and February were scheduled for the EDC. See the city website for a list of meetings where the public can participate (attached). Return to City Council: When comments go to the Council on February 26th for public hearing and second reading, it is likely there will be a substitute ordinance with changes based on Commission and public comments. The Commission can ask for more time to review the ordinance and Council could grant it.

January 9th Work Session and Regular Meeting

Work Session Plan

4:30 EDC Work Session Begins

10 Minute staff presentation

10 Minute Q&A

20 Minutes; break into two groups. Ryan Foster, City Planner, and myself will facilitate. We will need volunteer note takers! *This time will be used to ask public two questions, and for the EDC to listen to comments and concerns.*

1. For Short Term Rental owner/operators: problems do you see with the ordinance? Suggestions?
2. For everyone, what other comments or concerns do you have? Suggestions?

30 Minutes report back and full group facilitated conversation

10 Minutes Public Comments

10 Minute break before start of the regular meeting at 6 pm.

Regular Meeting

The draft ordinance is on the regular agenda and the public can comment. The Commission can have a discussion about the results of the work session, and provide direction to staff on changes to the ordinance.

Items already under review, based on feedback:

1. Lines 53-56. There have been questions about what constitutes a “Dwelling.” The zoning code has a definition, but I will be working with the attorney to fine tune the language here.
2. Line 76: Rather than a permit for each unit, staff suggests per lot or parcel. IE if someone has three rental cabins, they only need one permit for the property. This is how the City and Borough land records are set up and would most reasonable for tracking.
3. Line 84, (and 109) requirement for all advertisements to include the City permit number. There have been questions on if this can be accommodated across all online booking platforms. I don’t have an answer for all platforms; it appears most platforms do have a way to do this.
4. Line 107 – Life Safety inspection form; this is NOT an inspection by any city official or fire department staff or state fire marshal. This is simply a list of checkboxes that the permit holder self certifies they have installed items like fire extinguishers and CO2 detectors.
5. 113: one year permit term. What does the Commission think about a two-year license?
6. Line 133 Nonconforming Uses part a: This section will be revised with attorney guidance.
7. Line 150: Capacity: Do we want to be specific about the number of people per bedroom and the inclusion or exclusion of children?
8. 218: Enactment date: Staff recommends that permits be free and voluntary through 2024, and valid through 2025. If a business waits until 2025 to register, then they would pay a fee and have a permit valid through 2026. This would incentivize early registration, and potentially spread out all the business seeking permits. (No new staff is added to handle the administrative load).

Attachments

1. Draft Short Term Rental Regulations – City of Homer Website
2. Ordinance 23-61
3. Memo 23-260
4. 9 27 22 CC WS memo on Short Term Rentals
5. State of Alaska Property Rental FAQ’s
6. Kenai Peninsula Borough Brochure, Landlords or Lodging Providers



Draft Short Term Rental Regulations

The City of Homer is considering adopting regulations for Short Term Rentals, such as Airbnb and VRBO. You can read the draft regulations and memorandum [here](#).

Some notes based on questions received as of 12/22/23:

*As of 12/23, the concept is for business to be able to register, for free, through 2024, with required registration and fee payment beginning in 2025. Typical fees in the City are \$50-\$300; City Council will determine the final fee and enactment date of the regulations.

* There is NO cap or limitation proposed on the number of short term rentals within the City.

* No life safety inspection is required. Operators will self certify they have appropriate fire extinguishers, etc. A checklist is under development and will be posted here by the end of January.

Draft Meeting Timeline - 2024

There are several opportunities to speak about the proposed regulations. Attend whichever meeting time and date works for you! You can also provide comments on the webform below. As dates and times are confirmed, this page will be updated.

- **January 9th**, Economic Development Advisory Commission (EDC) Meeting. This includes a work session with small group breakout conversations. Work session starts at 4:30 pm. Regular meeting starts at 6 pm.

- **January 17th**, Chamber of Commerce Panel, noon at the college
- ~~**January 24**, Lunch time Q & A at the college, hosted by grassroots group Guiding Growth. (time tbd)~~
- **February 7**, Planning Commission (PC) Meeting (tentative)
- **February 13**, EDC Work Session (time tbd) and Meeting
- **February 21**, PC Meeting
- **February 26**, City Council Public Hearing. * It is likely there will be a substitute ordinance at this meeting, based on public comments received through February 15th.

Past Work

- [Homer Housing Event, March 2023](#)
- [Short Term Rental Report, Fall 2022 - see Council Work Session packet HERE](#)

Resources

- [State law on rentals and business licensing](#)
- [Kenai Peninsula Borough FAQ's on sales tax](#)
- [Kenai Peninsula Borough Brochure "Landlords or Lodging Providers" \(download\)](#)

Questions?

If you have questions, contact 907-435-3119, email planning@ci.homer.ak.us, or use the comment form below.

Please comment on the proposed regulation with the form below.

Name *

Comment *

STR owner or employee? Y/N *

Describe your interest in this topic: STR owner or operator/employee, or general public

Submit



Planning

[City Code](#)

[Planning Commission](#)

[Documents](#)

[Coastal Bluff Information](#)

[Flood Maps, Permits and Flood Protection](#)

[HERC 1 Historical Information](#)

[Long Range Planning](#)

[Map Resources](#)

[Permits](#)

[Signs](#)

[Helpful Links](#)

[How Do I](#)

[FAQs](#)

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planning@ci.homer.ak.us

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907-235-3118

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

[View Full Contact Details](#)

Planning Public Hearings

There are no upcoming public notices posted at this time.



City of Homer (907) 235-8121
491 E. Pioneer Avenue Homer, AK 99603

1 **CITY OF HOMER**
2 **HOMER, ALASKA**

3 Aderhold/Davis

4 **ORDINANCE 23-61**

5
6 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA
7 AMENDING HOMER CITY CODE TITLE 5 TO ADD CHAPTER 5.48
8 SHORT TERM RENTALS.
9

10 WHEREAS, The Council and the public are very concerned with the impacts of housing
11 availability on seasonal workers and year-round community members; and
12

13 WHEREAS, Short term rentals have been identified as one of many challenges facing
14 housing availability in the City; and
15

16 WHEREAS, The use of private residences has been a very common source of income for
17 property owners in the City which also supports our visitor-serving businesses; and
18

19 WHEREAS, Visitors staying in short term rental have many positive impacts, however,
20 they also consume City services in ways that are difficult to recoup financially when short term
21 rental owners fail to collect existing sales taxes; and
22

23 WHEREAS, The City has no existing regulations for short term rentals; and
24

25 WHEREAS, There is an interest to enact reasonable regulations related to short term
26 rentals to ensure that they are operated safely, not creating public nuisances, and are
27 remitting the appropriate taxes; and
28

29 WHEREAS, The Council intends for this to be an iterative process whereby the short
30 term rental regulations will be adjusted over time to best fit the needs of the community and
31 short term rental operators.
32

33 NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF HOMER ORDAINS:
34

35 Section 1. Homer City Code is amended to include Chapter 5.48, entitled “Short Term
36 Rentals”, to read as follows:
37

38 **Chapter 5.48 Short Term Rentals**

39
40 **Sections:**

41
42 **5.48.010 Definitions**

43 **5.48.020 Intent**

44 **5.48.030 Short Term Rental Permits**

45 **5.48.040 Permit Renewals**

46 **5.48.050 Nonconforming Uses**

47 **5.48.060 Public Safety, Noise, and Nuisances**

48 **5.48.070 Violations and Penalties**

49 **5.48.080 Appeal of Decision**

50

51 **5.48.010 Definitions**

52

53 **“Short-term rental” means a dwelling unit, or portion thereof, that is offered or provided**
54 **to a guest for compensation for a period of less than 30 consecutive days. Short-term**
55 **rentals may be in individual rooms in single-family homes, units in apartments,**
56 **condominiums, townhouses, and multifamily dwellings.**

57

58 **“Guest” means an individual, corporation, partnership or association paying monetary**
59 **or other consideration for the use of a short-term rental.**

60

61 **“Operator” means a person, firm, corporation, or other designated legal entity, who**
62 **offers for rent or otherwise makes available in the City dwelling units for monetary or**
63 **other consideration.**

64

65 **“Property” means real estate offered by an operator as a short term rental.**

66

67 **5.48.020 Intent**

68

69 **The intent of this chapter is to protect general health and safety of the public within the**
70 **City of Homer while ensuring short term rentals are operated in such a way that they pay**
71 **any applicable fees or taxes and do not create a public nuisance which decreases quality**
72 **of life for neighboring residences.**

73

74 **5.48.030 Short Term Rental Permits**

75

76 **a. Any owner wishing to make a dwelling unit available for use as a short term rental**
77 **must apply for and receive approval of a short term rental permit for each**
78 **intended unit.**

79

80 **b. An annual short term rental permit application shall be submitted on a specified**
81 **form or platform provided by the City before offering a dwelling unit for rent. The**
82 **application shall include a fee as set by the City Council in the City’s fee schedule.**

83

84 **c. No short term rental operator shall offer, advertise, or facilitate the short term**
85 **rental of property in the City unless the operator possesses a valid short term**

86 **rental permit. Any offer or advertisement for the short term rental of property in**
87 **the City that does not contain a valid short term rental permit number, or which**
88 **the City identifies as illegal, shall be immediately removed.**

89
90 **d. Required Information and Documentation: Applications shall provide:**

- 91
- 92 **1. Name, address, phone number, and email of the property owner, and, if**
93 **different from the owner, the short term rental operator.**
 - 94
 - 95 **2. A general description of the dwelling unit to be used as a short term rental**
96 **to include address, zone district, number of bedrooms, and available**
97 **parking spaces compliant with City code.**
 - 98
 - 99 **3. A 24-hour emergency contact residing within 50 miles of city limits.**
 - 100
 - 101 **4. State business license number.**
 - 102
 - 103 **5. Certification by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Finance Department in a tax**
104 **compliance certificate that the applicant is current in the payment of any**
105 **sales tax to the City and the Kenai Peninsula Borough.**
 - 106
 - 107 **6. Completed fire safety inspection form for the dwelling unit.**

108
109 **e. Permit Number: Short term rental permits will be issued a unique permit number**
110 **which must be displayed in all advertisements and public listings for the short**
111 **term rental.**

112
113 **f. Permit Renewal: Short term rental permits must be renewed annually and are**
114 **valid from January 1 to December 31.**

115
116 **g. Transfer of Permits: Annual short term rental permits are transferrable between**
117 **owners with City Manager or designee approval, provided the use and operations**
118 **remain consistent. Permits are not transferrable between units or parcels.**

119
120 **5.48.040 Permit Renewals**

121
122 **a. Short term rental permits may be renewed starting November 1 each year using**
123 **the form or platform provided by city, and shall include a fee as set by Council in**
124 **City Fee Schedule.**

127 **b. Permits are eligible for renewal if the property and dwelling unit comply with all**
128 **applicable City regulations, taxes, fees are paid, and there are no outstanding**
129 **public safety or public nuisance violations.**

130
131 **c. Expired permits require a new application to resume short term rental use.**

132
133 **5.48.050 Nonconforming Uses**

134
135 **a. Existing short term rentals with proof of operation and sales tax remittance to the**
136 **Kenai Peninsula Borough within the period between January 1, 2020 and**
137 **December 31 2023 will be exempted as non-conforming uses if they meet all other**
138 **short term rental standards, even if they are located in zones no longer principally**
139 **permitting such use.**

140
141 **b. Non-conforming short term rentals not used for 18 months or not permitted by**
142 **[DATE] will cease to be available on the property.**

143
144 **c. Approvals of non-conforming short term rental permits are transferrable to new**
145 **property owners upon request, provided updates are made to the information on**
146 **file with the City.**

147
148 **5.48.060 Public Safety, Noise, and Nuisances**

149
150 **a. Capacity: Maximum occupancy for a vacation rental is two persons per bedroom**
151 **plus an additional two persons (e.g., a two-bedroom unit may have six occupants).**
152 **Children aged 12 and under are not counted toward the occupancy total.**

153
154 **b. Emergency Contact: The Emergency Contact provided on the permit application**
155 **will be shared with the Homer Police Department and all neighboring properties**
156 **within 300 feet of the parcel containing the permitted short term rental unit(s).**
157 **The permit holder must promptly notify the City of any changes to the designated**
158 **emergency contact information.**

159
160 **c. Fire Department Access: Properties with gated entries must have a Fire**
161 **Department approved device that allows emergency response access.**

162
163 **d. Noise: Short term rentals are subject to HCC 21.59.010 (b) regarding noise.**

164
165 **e. Nuisance: Any property with an unresolved nuisance complaint under HCC**
166 **Chapter 5.16 is ineligible for short term rental permit approval or renewal.**

167
168 **f. Parking: Short term rentals must have sufficient off-street parking, validated by**
169 **the City planner or designee.**

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5.48.070 Violations and Penalties

- a. **Operating a short term rental without a permit, or in violation of this chapter, is unlawful.**

- b. **The City Manager, or designee, may revoke a permit for a short term rental upon finding one or more of the following:**
 - 1. **Negligence in responding to emergencies more than two times in a rolling 12-month period.**

 - 2. **More than two documented law enforcement violations related to the short term rental in a rolling 12-month period.**

 - 3. **Chronic non-compliance with the requirements this chapter’s requirements.**

 - 4. **Failure to pay required sales taxes to the Kenai Peninsula Borough.**

 - 5. **Failure to correct noted Building or Fire code violations.**

 - 6. **Documented, significant violations supported by citations, written warning, or other documentation from relevant authorities.**

- c. **The penalty for an offense in this chapter is the fine listed in the fine schedule in HCC 1.16.040. If no fine is listed for the offense in HCC 1.16.040, then the defendant must appear in court, and, if convicted, is subject to the general penalty as provided in HCC 1.16.010 unless another penalty is specifically provided.**

5.48.080 Appeal of Decision

Judicial review by the superior court of a final decision on a short term rental permit issued by the City may be had by filing a notice of appeal in accordance with the applicable rules of court governing appeals in civil matters. The notice of appeal shall be filed within 30 days of notice of the final decision on the permit. Appeals of short term rental permits are heard solely on the administrative record which shall be prepared by the City. A copy shall be filed in the superior court within 30 days after the appellant pays the estimated cost of preparing the complete of designated record or files a corporate surety bond equal to the estimated cost.

Section 2. Homer City Code 1.16.040, entitled “Disposition of scheduled offenses – Fine Schedule” is hereby amended as follows:

213

Chapter 5.46 HCC	Special event – Permit required	\$1000
Chapter 5.48 HCC	Short term rental – Permit required	\$100 per day
HCC 8.08.020	Itinerant or transient merchant – License required	\$300.00

214

215 Section 3. This Ordinance is of a permanent and general character and shall be
216 included in the City Code.

217

218 ENACTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA this ____ day of _____, 2018.

219

220

CITY OF HOMER

221

222

223

224

KEN CASTNER, MAYOR

225

226

227

228 ATTEST:

229

230

231 _____
MELISSA JACOBSEN, MMC, CITY CLERK

232

233

234 YES:

235 NO:

236 ABSTAIN:

237 ABSENT:

238

239 First Reading:

240 Public Hearing:

241 Second Reading:

242 Effective Date:



MEMORANDUM

Ordinance 23-61 An Ordinance of the City of Homer, Alaska Amending Homer City Code Title 5 to Add Chapter 5.48 Short Term Rentals. Aderhold/Davis.

Item Type: Backup Memorandum
Prepared For: City Council
Date: 25OCT23
From: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager

Short term rentals are a very common business operated by property owners in Homer. These businesses support the local tourist economy, and, when in compliance with existing sales tax regulations, create revenue to support City services. Short term rentals are also perceived as creating pressure on the local housing market making it difficult for seasonal workers and year-round community members to find housing within the City. Homer’s housing challenges are significantly more complex than this one issue, however, short term rentals are clearly a contributor to the lack of availability and affordability in our local housing market.

Ordinance 23-60 seeks to create a very basic framework for short term regulations with the goal of ensuring these rentals are operated safely, do not create public nuisances, and are contributing their fair share of sales tax as required by existing code. We expect this to be an iterative process where a basic code is put in place in 2024. That code should then be reviewed in future years to adjust and fine tune the short term rental program to best meet the needs of the City and the community.

It is recommended that this ordinance be introduced and then sent down to the Planning Commission and Economic Development Commission for extensive review and commentary. There are many questions which need to be investigated by each Commission. We also have stakeholder groups we’d like to engage with this draft.

A companion ordinance will be required to add short term rentals to Title 21 as a specific use that is either principally or conditionally allowed within specific zone districts. I suggest that the Planning Commission take up the zoning discussion in parallel to the short term rental ordinance and send their recommendations to Council when complete.

RECOMMENDATION: Introduce Ordinance 23-61, refer to the Planning Commission and Economic Development Advisory Commission, and schedule Public Hearing and Second Reading for February 24, 2024.



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Manager

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov

(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
DATE: September 27, 2022
SUBJECT: Short Term Rentals – Research Findings

The City struggles with a shortage of available housing and short-term rentals (STRs) are perceived as a significant contributor to the problem. STRs, generally defined as rooms and dwellings rented for 30 days or less, have proliferated around the country in recent years. STRs are particularly popular in Homer, and many individuals benefit from the revenues generated by STR opportunities. Unfortunately, there are also negative externalities associated with STRs, the most commonly referenced by the public at this time is that STRs are a perceived to be a major impediment to housing for Homer's workforce.

A deep dive into housing challenges was identified as a Council priority during the 2022 Visioning work session held in March at the Pratt Museum. Since that time, staff have been working to analyze the STR issue to see if the available data matches with the perceptions of the public.

The special projects team is delivering a series of informational memos and work session presentations to get Council up to speed on the current STR context in Homer and showcase solutions that are employed in other parts of Alaska and the Western United States. Here are the steps taken thus far:

1. Background research – Research into the basics of short-term rentals, short-term rentals in Homer, and case studies
2. Public engagement – Economic Development Commission; Chamber of Commerce Luncheon
3. Information work session October 10, 2022: Present foundational data and case studies

We expect that after our first work session, we will reconvene with Council in a follow up session to discuss preferred pathways for moving forward.

Attachments

Background Information Memorandum

Case Study Comparison Matrix

Presentation Slides



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

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Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council

FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager; David Parker, Special Projects Coordinator; and Ryan Foster, Special Projects Coordinator

DATE: September 27, 2022

SUBJECT: Short Term Rental Basics

The popularity of short-term rentals (STRs)¹ have exploded in the last decade with the development and proliferation of online and app-based services such as Airbnb and VRBO. STRs are particularly popular in Homer with an estimated 326 units available, a significant portion of the local housing stock. This memo presents the positive and negative impacts of STRs, local context for STRs, and provides case study information regarding STR regulations methods found in other communities.

Impacts of STRs

For many years, the public perceptions around STRs in Homer have been largely positive. Anecdotally, STRs have been a method that many residents have used to enhance their income and ensure that they are able to continue to afford living in Homer as a permanent resident. The problem is that as this “side hustle” has grown more common, STRs are also seen as a force that is displacing potential residents and seasonal workers. While the increase in STR inventory is great for tourists, it appears to be coming at the price of the labor required to service the tourists that flock to Homer every summer.

Potential positive effects from STRs are many, perhaps the most acknowledged is that an increase in available STRs in areas with an established or burgeoning tourist industry can augment the number of hotel rooms, increasing opportunities for both businesses and tourists. For non-corporate STR operators, there is increased revenue from “home sharing” in which they rent a portion of their residence to supplement their income. Investors who purchase properties to generate rental income can often find a more financially lucrative benefit from an STR than a long-term rental, including increased revenue and lower costs. In a 2019 study published in the Harvard Business Review² home sharing through Airbnb contributes to ~20% of the average annual rental increases in the US and approximately 7% of housing cost. Other studies have similarly found that STRs can result in higher property prices and rents for homeowners.³ One public upside

¹ Short-term rentals (STRs) are commonly defined as the rental of all or part of a residential dwelling unit for a duration of occupancy of less than 30 days. There are three basic varieties of short-term rentals: (1) hosted sharing, where the primary occupants of a residence remain on-site with guests; (2) unhosted sharing, where the primary occupants of a residence vacate the unit while it is rented to short-term guests; and (3) dedicated vacation rentals, where there are no primary occupants.

² <https://hbr.org/2019/04/research-when-airbnb-listings-in-a-city-increase-so-do-rent-prices>

³ Zou, Z. (2019). Examining the impact of short-term rentals on housing prices in Washington DC: Implications for housing policy and equity. *Housing Policy Debate*.

to the increased costs is the potential for increased tax revenues for local governments.⁴ Additionally, some researchers have found that there is a correlation between STRs and increases in tourists and tourism jobs.⁵ While many of these factors are positive for landowners, they don't necessarily benefit year-round residents nor seasonal workers.

There are several associated downsides to the proliferation of STRs. The negative externality most feared by those in Homer is that whole unit STRs reduce the number of available rental properties for residents and seasonal workers. This reduction of housing has a ripple effect across the local economic system, impacting businesses who need employees, customers of those businesses who need services and products, and local governments who rely on property taxes. Other negative impacts of STRs can include increased competition for parking; reduced security and increased disruption by noise and steady flow of strangers within neighborhoods⁶; closure of lower end hotels, income disparity among residents;⁷ an undermining of community character and reduction in residents which support community activities;⁸ and gentrification, residential segregation, and inequality.⁹ Research suggests that the density of STRs in any one neighborhood is a major contributor to the level of disruption caused by the land use. Areas with higher owner occupancy rates are less impacted by the influences of STRs, indicating that whole unit rentals are mostly rented by landlords who are not "on site," indicating that most impacts on the community are from STRs resulting from an investment property.¹⁰

Short Term Rental (STR) Context for Homer, AK

The housing market is known to be tight in Homer. Many locals perceive one of the major issues to be an overabundance of STRs versus long-term rentals. Looking at the available non-commercial residential parcels (2,201), the number of active STR listings (~326), and an average of only eight active Craigslist postings per week for long-term rentals, it's not difficult to see how people have come to believe that there is a serious housing problem in Homer.

The City of Homer has approximately 5,922 full-time residents living in 2,261 households, of which 1,415 (62.6%) are owner occupied.¹¹ According to the most recent tax census from the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB), the City of Homer includes 4,458 parcels, of which 2,201 (49.4%) are non-commercial residential. Of the residential parcels, 83.5% (1,837) are listed as containing a single residential dwelling, 7.5% (163) are parcels with 2 – 4 residential dwellings, 4.7% (105) are condominiums, 3.6% (79) contain mobile homes (1 – 4), and less than 1 % (17) is a single residential cabin. A common assertion from some members of the public is that corporations are actively buying up residential properties and displacing regular homeowners. At this time, the data does not appear to back that assertion as only 4.4% (96) of residential

⁴ Kasturi, P., & Loudat, T. (2014). Economic impact of transient vacation rentals (TVRs) on Maui County, Hawaii. *Global Journal of Management and Business*, 14(1).

⁵ Jorday, E., & Moore, J. (2018). An in-depth exploration of residents' perceived impacts of transient vacation rentals. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 35(1), 90-101.

⁶ Wegmann, J., & Jiao, J. (2017). Taming Airbnb: Toward guiding principles for local regulation of urban vacation rentals based on empirical results from five US cities. *Land Use Policy*, 69, 494-501.

⁷ Lee, D. (2016). How Airbnb short-term rentals exacerbate Los Angeles's affordable housing crisis: Analysis and policy recommendations. *Harvard Law & Policy Review*, 10.

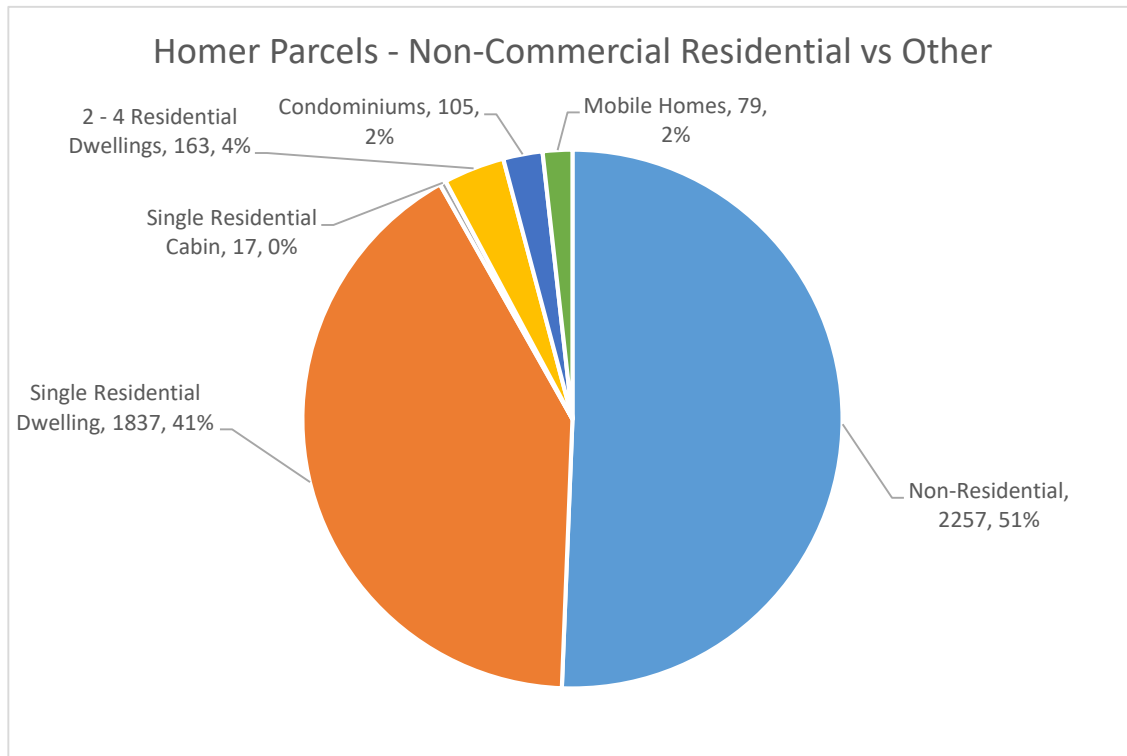
⁸ Jorday, E., & Moore, J. (2018). An in-depth exploration of residents' perceived impacts of transient vacation rentals. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 35(1), 90-101.

⁹ Lee, D. (2016). How Airbnb short-term rentals exacerbate Los Angeles's affordable housing crisis: Analysis and policy recommendations. *Harvard Law & Policy Review*, 10.

¹⁰ <https://hbr.org/2019/04/research-when-airbnb-listings-in-a-city-increase-so-do-rent-prices>

¹¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/homercityalaska>

parcels are owned by a limited liability corporation (LLC). A further 12.4% (272) are owned by a trust, however, that does not necessarily indicate that the home is not owner-occupied.



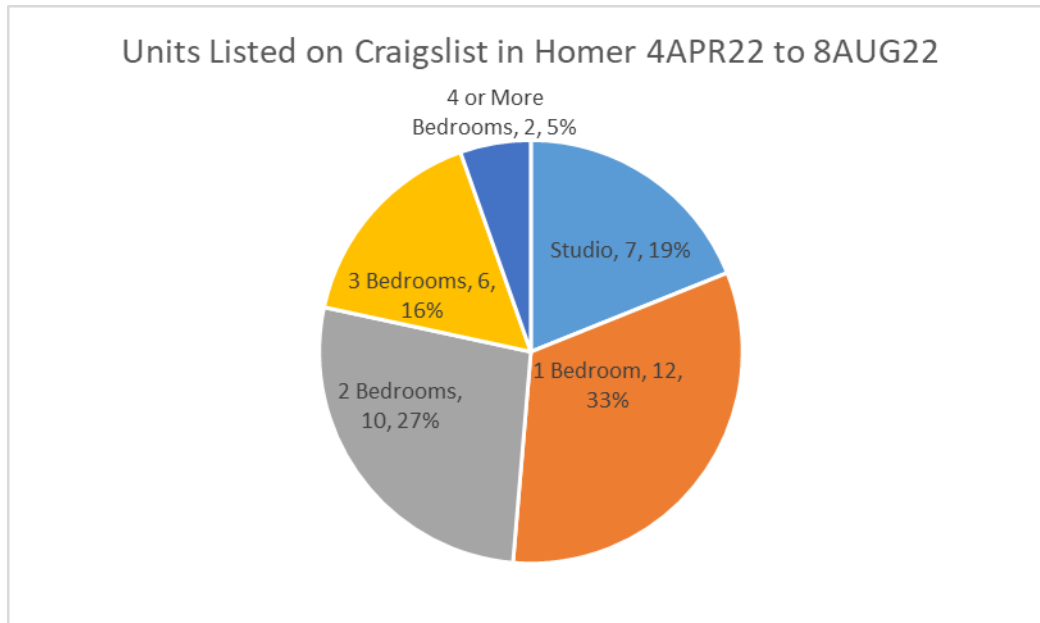
Current estimates on the number of short-term rentals (STRs) listed on Airbnb, VRBO, and other sites for the City of Homer is 326 units, which accounts for almost 15% of all the residential dwellings in Homer and 38.5% of all non-owner-occupied housing (per 2020 US Census statistics)¹². At an average of 2.63 people per household in Homer¹³, STRs may have displaced as many as 769 potential year-round residents. The average daily rent for the high season (May, June, July) is \$295 and \$195 for the low season. During the lower rent season, both the daily average rent and the number of units listed decrease, while the number of available units increases. A conservative estimate on the revenue generated for the high rental season using an average daily rent of \$295 for 326 units at 85% occupancy is \$7,520,494. For the lower rental season, assuming a 30% occupancy of 296 units at a reduced average cost of \$195 per night for half the remaining nights of the year (137) would generate \$2,372,292 in total rent. The total estimated rent for STRs annually is \$9,892,786. Assuming 60% of the units are currently registered as a business and are paying the appropriate tax, this unrealized revenue to the City of Homer would be \$191,920. This represents 4.85% sales tax.

The long-term rental market is difficult to track. People in Homer use Craigslist, Facebook, community message boards, word of mouth, and other methods to find housing. As a representative sample of the health of the long-term rental market, we tracked listings on Craigslist from April 4, 2022, to August 8, 2022. Every Monday, we would visit the site and use the map tool to identify listings that were available within the city. During the 17-week period of observation, only 38 unique listings were recorded. Of those, only 35% were available as year-round rentals and only 62% were available during all, or part, of the summer tourist season. The average price for a rental during this period was \$1,591 and the median was \$1,500. Daily prices

¹² <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/homercityalaska>

¹³ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/homercityalaska>

ranged from \$520 for a dry cabin to \$4,000 for a larger property with six bedrooms. Most of listings were one-bedroom or studio apartments, and 68% of listings came either fully or partially furnished.



When comparing the income potential for a long-term rental (net income of \$19,092 per year) versus the (possible but unlikely) scenario of an STR that is booked daily (net income of \$106,200 at \$295/night average), it's easy to see why so many homeowners are tempted to exit the long-term rental market. Using the more realistic and conservative booking estimate from earlier in this memo of 85% occupancy at \$295/night in May through July and 50% occupancy at \$195/night the rest of the year, the average unit would be on track to generate over \$30,000, a significant increase in annual profit over a traditional long-term rental.

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Avg. Long Term Rental	\$52.31	\$367.15	\$1,591	\$19,092
Avg. Short Term Rental –	\$295	\$2,065	\$8,850	\$106,200

A Look at STR Regulation

As the STR market increases across the US, there is no reason to believe these trends will decrease. Because of the impact on local communities, it is important for municipalities and units of government to develop guidance, policy, and codes to regulate this industry. The City of Homer is starting with a blank slate, we currently have no regulations related to STRs. As we begin to consider options for regulation, staff is very conscious of the need to balance efforts between maintaining the community, promoting economic opportunity, and ensuring businesses are registered and taxed. This will require an intentional effort to educate and engage the community. It will also require a significant amount of leadership from Council and Administration to carefully change the culture and regulatory structure around STRs.

There are several benefits to short-term rental regulatory programs:

- Life Safety inspections can ensure that rentals are safe for commercial use.
- Ensures short-term rental owners are remitting both city and borough sales tax

- Permitting can provide vital information for policies related to short-term and long-term rentals.
- Permitting that is both easy to understand and transparent.
- Improves management of public nuisances such as noise and parking

Along with benefits, there are challenges to short-term rental regulatory programs:

- May discourage STR small businesses
- Permitting and regulations can be an administrative/cost burden
- Fear of uncertainty
- Unintended consequences, such as leapfrogging STRs outside City limits
- Ensuring regulations fit the community
- Housing is a multifaceted challenge and STR regulations alone cannot fix a housing availability issue

As there is no bed tax in Homer, the taxes charged would be the regular sales tax of 4.85% daily up to \$500 rental per day.

Case Studies

Issues surrounding STRs are not unique to Homer. All over the country different municipalities are struggling to find solutions that fit their cities appropriately. The following provides an analysis of eight similar sized, outdoor oriented communities, each with substantial vacation visitors, and the steps they have taken to create a regulatory framework for short-term rentals. The attached Short-Term Rentals Case Study Comparison Matrix provides a detailed comparison of all eight-case study short-term rental regulatory programs.

Seward, AK

In 2019, Seward introduced a permit application for all short-term rentals and began using automated software that tracks vacation rental apps and websites 24/7 so city staff can compare that information to tax rolls. This ensures vacation rental owners are in compliance with the program, including remitting both city and borough sales tax, as well as the city's local bed tax. The regulatory program for Seward is unique in several aspects:

- A City of Seward and Alaska State Business license is required.
- There is no short-term rental application fee.
- Principal owner is required to be on-site in single family and two-family zoning districts.

Palmer, AK

In 2018, Palmer introduced a permit application for all short-term rentals. This ensures vacation rental owners are in compliance with the program, including remitting both city and borough sales tax, as well as the city's local bed tax. The regulatory program for Palmer is unique in two key aspects:

- There are 5 permit types, the most of eight case studies evaluated.
- Certain permit types and zoning districts require adjacent property notification.

Other Alaska Cases

Sitka, AK is currently considering a one-year moratorium and a short-term rental regulatory program. Juneau, AK is currently considering a short-term rental regulatory program.

Taos, NM

On April 1, 2022, the City of Taos Planning Department began accepting applications for short term rentals, with a maximum of 120 permits available in the City. Applications are submitted through an online portal. The regulatory program for Taos is unique in several aspects:

- A maximum of 120 Short-Term Rental permits available.
- Short- term rentals are explicitly prohibited from the Central Business District and Historic Districts/Overlays.
- Violations can result in a misdemeanor offense.

Aspen, CO

In December 2021, Aspen City Council approved a temporary moratorium on the issuance of short-term rental (STR) permits. Council’s decision to impose this moratorium was a direct response to community impacts from under-regulated land use. Ordinance No. 26, Series 2021 was a necessary tool to create space for engagement, analysis, policy development, and decision making. This temporary moratorium on the issuance of STR permits is currently in effect and is scheduled to extend until September 30, 2022, with the City accepting applications in October of 2022. There will be three permit types differentiated based on the permittee’s residency, zone district, and usage of the unit, and each permit type has different regulatory and financial requirements:

- *Lodge-Exempt (STR-LE) Permit*
 - Available to lodging and condo-hotel properties which meet the definition of “lodge” and/or “condo-hotel” per Ordinance No. 9, Series 2022.
 - No annual limit on the number of nights per year the STR may operate.
 - Not limited by number in any zone district where STR is a permitted use.
 - One permit may cover the entirety of the lodge and/or hotel.
 - Batch filing of taxes is allowed.
- *Owner-Occupied (STR-OO) Permit*
 - Available to title property owners who reside in their City of Aspen residential property as their primary residence for a minimum of 6 months per year.
 - Limited to 120 STR rental nights per year.
 - Not limited by number in any zone district where STR is a permitted use.
 - Permittee must submit two pieces of documentation indicating that the STR address is the permittee’s primary residence.
- *Classic (STR-C) Permit*
 - Available to non-owner occupied OR owner-occupied residential properties.
 - No annual limit on the number of nights per year the STR may operate.
 - Limited by number in certain residential zone districts; new applicants will be subject to a waitlist in zones with capped numbers of available STR-C permits.
 - Property owner name required on the application; LLCs without a verifiable name of a natural person will not be accepted.

Durango, CO

The City of Durango has allowed and regulated ‘Tourist Homes’ in certain parts of the City since 1989. The rise in popularity of online vacation rentals has led to the adoption of regulations that limit this use to appropriate areas. The goal of Durango’s vacation rental program is to provide opportunities for property

owners to pursue this use while reducing potential impacts on neighborhood character and housing availability for City residents.

Vacation rentals are only permitted in the following zones: the Central Business zone, Mixed-Use zones, select Planned Development zones, and Established Neighborhoods (EN) 1 & 2. There is a cap on the number of available permits in the EN zones, with a total of 22 vacation rentals allowed in EN-1 and 17 in EN-2. In the other zones where vacation rentals are permitted, caps are applied on a development-specific basis, so that only a certain number of residential units may be permitted as vacation rentals within a certain building or development. Caps have been reached in most cases and properties must be placed on a wait list before being eligible to apply.

Pacific Grove, CA

Pacific Grove, CA provides two types of short-term rentals: a Short-Term Rental License for renting an entire dwelling unit, and a Home Sharing License for renting individual rooms of a residence. The regulatory program for Pacific Grove is unique in several aspects:

- Rentals are limited to Coastal and Commercial zones.
- The subject property must comply with the 55-foot Zone of Exclusion at the time of application. The zone of exclusion is the distance of fifty-five (55) lineal feet from an existing STR parcel boundary.
- Licenses are capped, with a maximum limit of 250 City-wide.
- Owner or property manager must reside within 30 minutes of property.

Palm Springs, CA

In April 2017 Palm Springs, CA amended the City's adopted Vacation Rental Ordinance. The new Ordinance imposed additional restrictions on occupancy and use of Vacation Rental properties in Palm Springs, and additional enforcement oversight. The regulatory program for Palm Springs is unique in several aspects:

- There are two main permit types: Vacation Rental Owner and Vacation Rental Agency, with an Estate Home Addendum for homes with more than 4 bedrooms.
- No limits on the number of rental nights, but a maximum of 36 contracts annually.
- Owner or property manager must respond to property within 30 minutes.
- Rentals are allowed in all zoning districts, though applications are limited to single family, duplex, and condominiums.

McCall, ID

The City of McCall, ID adopted new codes regarding Short-Term Rentals (STR) within the City on effective March 01, 2020. McCall is the least restrictive of the eight evaluated case studies, with no limits on zoning, the number of rental nights, the number of total rental permits, and no requirement for principal owner or operator to be on-site. McCall has two types of permits, less than 20 persons in a rental requires a declaration of compliance form, and 20 or more persons at a property requires a conditional use permit.

Summary of Case Study Findings

Most case study regulatory programs were created or updated recently, in roughly the 2017-2022 time period, in reaction to a new technology that has been highly utilized in only the last 10 years or so. While each of the case studies created a unique approach to a regulatory framework that fit their community, they generally fell into three categories:

Light Regulation:

- No limits on zoning, the number of rental nights, or total number of permits
- No requirement for life safety inspections
- No requirement for principal owner or operator to be on-site

Moderate Regulation:

- No cap on the number of permits
- Moderate zoning district limitations
- Requires life safety inspections

Robust Regulation:

- Caps the total number of permits
- Limits to the number of rental nights
- Strong zoning district limitations
- Owners or operators must reside within 30 minutes of rental

STR Criteria	Seward, AK	Palmer, AK	Taos, NM	Aspen, CO	Durango, CO	Pacific Grove, CA	Palm Springs, CA	McCall, ID
Population	2,717	5,888	5,950	7,004	19,071	15,090	44,575	3,485
Primary Tourism Draw	Outdoor Recreation/ Fishing	Outdoor Recreation/Alaska State Fair	Skiing/ Art/Outdoor Recreation	Skiing/Outdoor Recreation	Outdoor Recreation/Cultural Sites	Beaches/Outdoor Recreation/Victorian Architecture	Outdoor Recreation/Cultural Events	Skiing/Outdoor Recreation
Types of STR Permits	STR Permit: requires permission of owner/operator	Type 1: Owner Occupied Type 2: Single Family/Duplex and Not Owner Occupied Type 3: Multi-Family and Not Owner Occupied Type 4: Owner Occupied B&B with 5 or fewer rooms Type 5: Resident Managed B&B with up to 15 rooms	STR Permit: requires permission of owner/operator	Lodge-Exempt Owner-Occupied Classic	Vacation Rentals require a Limited Use Permit	Short Term Rental License for entire dwelling unit Home Sharing License for renting rooms	Vacation Rental Owner Operator Certificate Vacation Rental Agency Operator Certificate Estate Home Addendum for homes with more than 4 bedrooms Homershare Certificate	Less than 20 persons in a rental requires declaration of compliance 20 or more persons requires a CUP
# Permits Limit	No limit	No limit	120 permits total City- wide	Limited by number in certain residential districts for Classic Permit	Yes, in 2 districts: EN-1: 22 total permits EN-2: 17 total permits	250 permits total City- wide	No limit	No limit
# Nights per Year	No limit	No limit	No limit	Owner Occupied Permit Limited to 120 nights a year	No limit	No limit	No limits on the number of nights. A maximum of 36 contracts annually	No limit
Principal Owner On-site Required	Yes, in single family and two family zoning districts	Required for Permit Type 1 and 4	Not required, but owner/operator must be available 24/7	Required for Owner Occupied Permit and optional w/ Classic STR Permit	Local designated property manager must be available 24/7	Owner or property manager within 30 minutes of property	Owner or property manager within 30 minutes of property	Not required
STRs Allowed in All Zoning Districts	Limited to certain zoning districts	Limited to certain zoning districts. Some districts require a CUP	Limited to certain zoning districts, prohibited in CBD/Historic Districts	Limited to certain zoning districts	Limited to certain zoning districts	Limited to Coastal and Commercial zones and a 55' parcel boundary exclusion zone	Yes, though applications limited to single family, duplex, and condominiums	No limit
Public Hearing Process	None	Certain permit types and zoning districts require adjacent property notification	Public notice sent to HOA and property owners within 200'	Public notice must be sent to neighbors	Public notice is sent to properties within 300 feet	Notices are sent to neighboring properties	None	Public notice is sent to properties within 300 feet
Inspections for Life Safety	Yes	Must comply with building codes	Yes	Yes	Must comply with building codes	Yes	Yes	Not required
Application Process Administration	Community Development on annual basis	Community Development on annual basis	Planning, Community & Economic Development on annual basis	Community Development on annual basis	Community Development on annual basis	Community & Economic Development on annual basis	Department of Special Program Compliance on annual basis	City Clerk Office and Planning Department on annual basis
Business License Required	Yes, City of Seward and State of Alaska	Yes, City of Palmer and State of Alaska	Not required	Yes, \$150 annually	Yes, City of Durango	Not required, short Term Rentals are licensed	Not required, short Term Rentals are certificates	Yes, \$140 application fee \$70 renewal fee
Application Fee	\$30 for City Business License Application	\$75 STR Permit Application Fee	\$350 for inspections/ application \$525 STR Permit per unit	\$148 per unit annually for Lodge Permit \$394 all other permit types	\$750 application fee	\$413 Application fee \$680 license fee	\$1,009 Vacation Rental Certificate fee \$252 Homershare Certificate fee \$426 Estate Home Addendum fee	\$0 Declaration of Compliance \$600 Conditional Use Permit
Lodging Tax	Bed Tax 4.00%	Bed Tax 5.00%	Lodging Tax 5%	11.3% for all permit types	Lodging Tax 2%	12% Transient Occupancy Tax	11.5% Transient Occupancy Tax 1.0% Tourism Business Improvement District	3% Lodging Tax 3% Streets Tax
Enforcement Mechanism	Inspections, licenses, citizen complaints, permitting, fines/penalties	Permit Registration Suspension or Revocation	Violations can result in misdemeanor and revocation of STR permit	Inspections, citizen complaints, audits, permitting, fines/penalties	Permit Registration Suspension or Revocation	License denial, suspension, and revocation	License denial, suspension, and revocation, criminal sanctions, administrative penalties	Inspections, citizen complaints, licenses, permitting, fines/penalties

been high enough to cover mortgages on single-family homes. You can find that deal on a rare occasion, but it is usually a distressed sale. Most of our single-family home investments were in other areas of the state where rent fees would cover the mortgage with a little left over.

Homer is a destination that many in the world desire to move to, at least for some part of the year, and they are doing just that. So, unless we stop nonresidents from moving to Homer, this will always be a market driver. In addition, the world is trying to recover from the turmoil the pandemic created. As a result, inflation is high, and expenses on most everything are high, including construction costs. So, taxing ourselves into affordable housing will not work. *However, the solution that will help the issues at hand is tax incentives to create long-term rentals.*

Imposing taxes on something makes the costs higher for the consumer. But on the other hand, creating tax incentives gives the free enterprise an incentive to create what is needed. Right now, it does not financially make sense for someone to lease out their home for a fixed long-term rental as current market value rents do not cover the principal payment, interest, taxes, and maintenance on their home. There is currently no incentive to rent your property as a long-term rental. So be cautious about taxing a single sector; you could be next. Let's look at all the possible tax options; a beer tax, a fishing pole tax, a meal tax, a flight tax, a kayak tax, and on and on. These are all possibilities for the City of Homer to tax. **TO BE CLEAR, I DON'T LIKE ANY OF THOSE**, nor am I recommending these additional taxes; I'm just making a point on taxing a single sector.

Some final thoughts:

The City of Homer's recent case study only pulled rental availability data from Craigslist. Craigslist is not the best way to find rentals today; it is outdated, and there are many better options now with endless social media options.

Please don't assume every nice person is qualified to own or rent. As long-term rental owners, we see many unqualified applicants. Yes, this is something that should be considered. Some people do not qualify to live on someone's property: too many dogs or cats, owner of a dangerous breed, a criminal history, no job or not enough income to cover rents, no or bad rental history, no or poor credit, and many other factors. To make a long-term rental work, the owner needs to know that their property will not incur damage, that rents are paid, and that they will make some sort of profit in order to make the trouble of being a landlord financially beneficial.

If Short term rental owners are not paying the required sales tax, then the City needs to enforce the law/rules on the books; not look for ways to create new ones.

I appreciate your consideration of creating tax incentives instead of additional private sector taxation.

Thank you.

Dave Mastolier
Long-time Homer resident.
(907)399-1775

2885 Kachemak Drive
Homer, AK 99603

Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic
Development

DIVISION OF CORPORATIONS, BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSING

[State of Alaska / Commerce / Corporations, Business, & Professional Licensing / Business Licensing / PropertyRentalFAQs](#)

BUSINESS LICENSING

AirBnB, mother-in-law apartments, and property rental FAQs

1. I want to operate an AirBnB. Do I need an Alaska Business License?

Airbnb is an accommodation-sharing online marketplace which lets people rent out their properties or spare rooms to guests.

Yes, if you are collecting rental income then you are engaged in business activity and an Alaska Business License is required.

Per [AS 43.70.020\(a\)](#) a business license is required for the privilege of engaging in a business in the State of Alaska.

Per [AS 43.70.110\(1\)](#) "Business" means a for-profit or non-profit entity engaging or offering to engage in a trade, a service, a profession, or an activity with the goal of receiving a financial benefit in exchange for the provision of services, or goods, or other property.

Per [AS 43.70.020\(f\)](#) a business license may cover multiple lines of business. For more information go to: [Multiple Lines of Business FAQs](#)

In addition, if your business structure is an entity (i.e. corporation, LLC, LLP, LP, etc.), per Alaska Statute Title 10, then you must register your entity prior to obtaining an Alaska Business License; for more information go to: [Corporations Section](#)

TIP: prepare before you begin to get licensed by going to: [How To Get Licensed](#)

2. I have a “mother-in-law” apartment and I want to rent it out. Do I need an Alaska Business License?

A “mother-in-law” apartment is a small apartment attached to or next to a house, ostensibly intended for occupancy by a mother-in-law or other relative, but potentially also rented out to a stranger.

Yes, if you are collecting rental income then you are engaged in business activity and an Alaska Business License is required.

Per [AS 43.70.020\(a\)](#) a business license is required for the privilege of engaging in a business in the State of Alaska.

Per [AS 43.70.110\(1\)](#) “Business” means a for-profit or non-profit entity engaging or offering to engage in a trade, a service, a profession, or an activity with the goal of receiving a financial benefit in exchange for the provision of services, or goods, or other property.

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TIP: prepare before you begin to get licensed by going to: [How To Get Licensed](#)

3. I have a room I want to rent it out. Do I need an Alaska Business License?

Yes, if you are collecting rental income then you are engaged in business activity and an Alaska Business License is required.

Per [AS 43.70.020\(a\)](#) a business license is required for the privilege of engaging in a business in the State of Alaska.

Per [AS 43.70.110\(1\)](#) “Business” means a for-profit or non-profit entity engaging or offering to engage in a trade, a service, a profession 62 an activity with the goal of receiving a

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TIP: prepare before you begin to get licensed by going to: [How To Get Licensed](#)

4. I have rental property I want to rent out. Do I need an Alaska Business License?

Yes, if you are collecting rental income then you are engaged in business activity and an Alaska Business License is required.

Per [AS 43.70.020\(a\)](#) a business license is required for the privilege of engaging in a business in the State of Alaska.

Per [AS 43.70.110\(1\)](#) “Business” means a for-profit or non-profit entity engaging or offering to engage in a trade, a service, a profession, or an activity with the goal of receiving a financial benefit in exchange for the provision of services, or goods, or other property.

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TIP: prepare before you begin to get licensed by going to: [How To Get Licensed](#)

5. Will I need a business license from my local government, municipality, city, or village?

Check with your local government or agency for any additional business licensing requirements, potential restrictions per local ordinances, and/or sales tax requirements.

6. IMPORTANT – Check with other agencies.

After you have met the requirements of this Division there will be other agencies you need to work with to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal government requirements.

For more information go to: [Business Structure FAQs and click your entity type.](#)

For additional resources, which may provide technical, informational or advisory assistance, go to:

- [Alaska Small Business Development Center](#)
- [IRS Small Business Center](#)
- [Small Business Assistance Center](#)
- [U.S. Small Business Administration](#)
- [Workshops for Small Business](#)

In addition, you may wish to contact a professional association or organization affiliated with your business activity.

If you need further assistance you are advised to seek the services of an attorney or other qualified professional.

7. Where can I find additional information on landlord and tenant rights?

[Landlord and Tenant Information](#)

[The Alaska Landlord & Tenant Act: what it means to you](#)

In addition, landlords and tenants should read and familiarize themselves with the Alaska Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act ([AS 34.03.010 – 34.03.380](#)).

Complaint FAQs

[Complaint FAQs](#)

This Division does not provide legal advice. The information contained within these webpages is provided for your convenience and is not to be interpreted as legal advice. It is

your responsibility to know what your registering, reporting and filing requirements are based on your specific business activities. Not knowing what is expected of you may not preclude you from the legal obligation to meet these requirements and compliance with the law. You are encouraged to seek the advice of a professional, such as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and/or Attorney if you need additional assistance.

Contact Us

When contacting this office, please direct your questions to the appropriate Section: Corporations, Professional Licensing, or Business Licensing. Each Section specializes in its own requirements per Alaska statutes and regulations.

Professional Licensing Section

Email: License@Alaska.Gov

Corporations Section

Email: Corporations@Alaska.Gov

Business Licensing Section

Email: BusinessLicense@Alaska.Gov

Mission Statement

Ensure that competent, professional and regulated commercial services are available to Alaska consumers.

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Investigations Fax: (907) 269-8195

Office Hours

Monday-Friday

8:00am-11:30am

12:30pm-3:00pm

Juneau

USPS must use PO Box

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Landlords or Lodging Providers

Helpful Tips Regarding the Sales Tax Code



Sales Tax Division
Finance Department
Kenai Peninsula Borough
Soldotna, Alaska 99669
salestax@kpb.us Email
(907) 714-2170 Office
(800) 478-4441 Toll Free
(within the borough)

Introduction

The Kenai Peninsula Borough Finance Department (Department) is responsible for educating and confirming compliance with the Borough's Sales Tax Code (Code).

Education

Written Material - The Borough makes information available in order to assist sellers in understanding their responsibilities under the KPB Code. This includes: KPB Code publication; jurisdictional calculation charts; return forms; notification of changes in the KPB Code; forms required to claim refunds, to file a protest, or to apply for a resale or exempt certificate. Forms are found on our webpage: kpb.us/finance-dept/salestax

Assisting Sellers - The Staff in the Finance Department are willing and glad to answer any of your questions concerning sales tax. This includes specific questions regarding the KPB Code or help with compilation of returns. Please feel free to call upon the Staff if you have questions.

Confirm Compliance

Random Review of Borough Records - The Department monitors significant account changes, delinquent accounts, and changes in industries to ensure all sellers are treated fairly according to the KPB Code.

Random Audits - The Department performs audits on sellers to: check the correctness of the Borough's records; determine the accuracy of the seller's reported sales versus their bookkeeping records; and to answer the seller's questions.

Confirm Registration - The Department investigates and assists in registering all sellers conducting business in the Borough.

Reminders

As a seller registered to collect sales tax there are a few items you may want to keep in mind.

Landlord - Defined as any seller who is providing rent or leasing services for land, building, or dwelling units regardless of the amount of time (nightly or longer).

Temporary Lodging - The KPB Code requires that all temporary lodging (lodging services provided for less than 30 days to the same party) be taxed on a per room - per night basis subject to the first \$500 maximum per sale transaction, on a per room - per night basis, KPB 5.18.430(D).

Utilizing \$500 Maximum Gross Sale Exemption - Sales tax shall be applied only to the first \$500 of each separate sale, rent, or service transaction except:

- 1) The payment of rent, whether for real or personal property, in excess of \$500 and for more than one month, shall be treated as several separate transactions covering the rental/lease for one month each. This means that a lease agreement needs to be broken down into individual months, KPB 5.18.430(A).

Example: A 3 month rental for \$900 equates to 3 months of \$300 each month, therefore, in a 6% tax jurisdiction, \$54 in tax is collected for the 3 months, or \$18 per month.

- 2) When it relates to temporary lodging (refer to above).

- 3) Recreational sales shall be treated on a per person per day basis and therefore the maximum tax computation shall be calculated on a per person per day basis. For purposes of this subsection, the term "person" means an individual human being.

Using an online marketplace or online travel agency for booking lodging - When landlords utilize online facilitators to market their rental properties whether for monthly rentals or recreational lodging, it is the responsibility of the property owner to properly collect and report the correct sales tax. When creating the online listing, it is incumbent on the landlord to assess sales tax based on the total price of rental; total price includes all additional

charges such as cleaning or pet fees passed on to the tenant. The rate of sales tax is to be based on the total sale, taxing at the jurisdiction rate where the property is located. Recreational lodging is taxed based on the total per unit per night charge, and is only eligible for "Maximum Tax", consideration when the nightly per unit rate exceeds \$500.

- Examples of online market places are: VRBO, AirBnB, Orbitz, Tripadvisor, etc..

Determining Taxing Jurisdiction

The taxing jurisdiction for rentals is the place where the real property is located.

- Restriction on Imposition of Tax - The seller shall, whenever feasible, separately state the tax to the buyer on each taxable transaction, KPB 5.18.410(A).
- Agent - The seller is acting as an agent for the Borough by collecting and remitting sales tax to the Borough. Taxes collected from the buyer are Borough funds.
- Determination of Charging Tax - The seller is responsible for all sales tax collected and those taxes that should have been collected. It is the responsibility of the seller to determine if a sale is exempt or not exempt from sales tax. If there is doubt, collect the sales tax and contact the Borough for a determination. A refund to the buyer is possible.
- Personal Property Tax - All businesses are required to file a Business Personal Property Statement with the Borough Assessing Department prior to February 15th of each year. Business Personal Property consists of items used to operate a business, such as washers, dryers, all types of furniture, etc. For more information on what items are taxable contact the Assessing Department at 262-4441.
- Accounting Records - If the seller's business is audited by the Borough, the seller's accounting records, federal tax returns, and filed sales tax returns will be reviewed to determine if reported gross sales coincide. Therefore keeping accurate and complete records is very important.

Package Deals

If sellers are providing a recreational package by themselves or with another business which offers recreational services (services provided by a seller for amusement, relaxation, diversion of attention, or play), the sales tax is to be calculated on each activity on a per-person per day basis at the rate of the jurisdiction where each day's service is rendered. The lodging component of the package is taxed on a per room per night basis at the rate of the jurisdiction where the lodging facility is located.

- Use of Resale Certificates by the Seller of Recreational Packages.
If any of the services included in the package are provided by other businesses and the seller of the package provides a valid resale certificate to those businesses, then the provider of the services would not charge sales tax to the package seller. If the seller of recreational packages does not have a valid resale certificate, the provider of the services would charge tax to that seller.
- Reporting the Sale of Package Deals – Assuming that no individual activity costs the purchaser of a package more than \$500 per person per day, the seller of the package collects sales tax on the full price of the package for the jurisdictions in which the activities of the package take place. The seller of the package would report the entire sale in gross sales. The provider of the service would report the sale as a sale for resale (a non-taxable item) if a valid resale certificate was provided by the seller of the package deal. If there was no valid resale certificate provided, the provider of the services would report the sale in his gross sales and also report the sales taxes collected.

Your Rights

If the seller disagrees with the Borough's final audit result, estimate result, exemption determination, or other sales tax determination, the seller has the right to appeal the final determination to court within 30 days.

- 1) If the seller disagrees with the written determination of the Borough Auditor, a protest may be filed with the Finance Director, KPB 5.18.580. The Director will review the methods used, documents presented, and results of the audit or estimate. The Director will issue a written decision regarding the validity of the audit or estimate. If the determination involves estimate results, as opposed to audit results, the Borough may require the seller to submit to an audit. If the seller disagrees with the Director's final written decision, the decision may be appealed within 30 days of distribution to the Superior Court in Kenai, Alaska.

- 2) If the seller or consumer believes a sale is exempt, either the seller or the buyer may protest taxing the sale by filing a protest with the Borough within 60 days of the date of the sale. The Mayor will issue a written determination regarding the exemption. The seller must continue to collect the tax until the Borough issues a determination regarding the exemption. If the exemption is allowed, the sales tax paid will be remitted to the consumer with the determination. The determination may be appealed within 30 days of distribution to the Superior Court at Kenai, Alaska, KPB 5.18.250.

- 3) If a written decision has been issued by the Mayor regarding application of the KPB Code to a particular factual situation, the decision may be appealed by the seller or taxpayer within 30 days of distribution to Superior Court at Kenai, Alaska, KPB 5.18.140(C).



AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Winter Survey

Item Type: Action Memorandum
Prepared For: Economic Development Advisory Commission
Meeting Date: 13 Feb 2024
Staff Contact: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

Summary Statement: Make a recommendation on the winter survey

Background:

Commissioner Kim brought forward a proposal for a winter survey – please see attachment. The Commission has discussed this at the November and January meetings.

Staff recommends this idea for a survey be forwarded to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. That project includes extensive public outreach and has a lot more resources to accomplish a survey. The Committee can work with staff and the consultant to design and conduct a survey that can inform the Comprehensive Plan.

Attachment

November staff report



MEMORANDUM

EDC-23-xxx

Winter Survey

Item Type: Action Memorandum
Prepared For: EDC
Date: November 7, 2023
From: Mel Kim

Winter Business Survey

I am writing to suggest the implementation of a Winter Business Survey for Homer. As we approach the colder months, it is crucial to gather insights from our local businesses to better understand their needs, challenges, and opportunities during this time of year.

The objective of this survey would be to:

1. Assess the Impact of Winter on Local Businesses:
 - Understand how the winter season affects sales, customer traffic, and overall business operations.
2. Identify Supportive Measures:
 - Gather feedback on existing support programs and identify areas where additional assistance may be required.
3. Promote Collaboration:
 - Encourage dialogue and collaboration among local businesses, helping them leverage each other's strengths and resources.
4. Inform Economic Development Strategies:
 - Provide valuable data to inform town-wide economic development initiatives and policies tailored to the winter season.
5. Foster a Resilient Business Community:
 - Equip businesses with insights and resources to thrive during the winter months, ultimately contributing to a more robust and sustainable local economy.

I propose that the survey cover areas such as:

- Seasonal Staffing Needs
- Marketing and Promotion Strategies for Winter
- Winter-specific Challenges (e.g., Weather-related issues)
- Suggestions for Community Events or Initiatives

Furthermore, I recommend employing a combination of online surveys and targeted interviews to ensure comprehensive participation.

This initiative aligns with our ongoing efforts to support the local business community and foster a resilient and thriving economy in Homer. I believe that a Winter Business Survey will be instrumental in tailoring our support and resources to meet the unique needs of our businesses during this time.

I would be happy to assist in any way necessary, including drafting the survey questions, collaborating on distribution strategies, or analyzing the collected data.

Thank you for considering this proposal. I look forward to discussing this further and working together to enhance the economic vitality of our town.

RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss conducting a winter survey



City of Homer

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TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager
DATE: February 13, 2024
SUBJECT: Strategic Plan

Requested Action: Review the 2024/2025 EDC Strategic Plan, make final edits and adopt the plan.

Annually, the EDC prioritizes a list of ongoing short, medium and long-term goals to aid the commission in charting a general course for the year and keeping on-task. Staff uses this document as a guideline to schedule speakers and make agendas. We've spent a few meetings reviewing and editing the plan; the final version is attached for any revisions and adoption by the Commission. The 2023/24 EDC strategic plan is provided for your review and any edits.

Recommendation: Review the final plan, make any edits, and adopt the plan by motion.

Attachments

Draft 2023-2024 Strategic Plan

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
2024 -2025 STRATEGIC PLAN & GOALS**

<p>Ongoing Goals</p>	<p>1. Use the Commission’s SWOT analysis to develop strategies to implement policies that support Homer’s quality of life.</p>
	<p>2. Keep our ears to the ground and seek out areas of "lack." Confer with Julie about communicating with City Council and advising them on ways to overcome barriers- "the nexus of economic goals."</p>
	<p>3. Be familiar with smart growth principles and best practices, and also green infrastructure concepts. Have these in our toolbox when development decisions come our way for consideration.</p>
<p>Near Term Goals < 6 Months</p>	<p>1. Become familiar with the Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Invite a speaker from MaPp to educate this EDC on these plans and how they relate to community and economic health.</p>
	<p>2. View economic development through the lens of balancing growth with quality of life.</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Define positive economic development, and what is the role of the EDC is in balancing growth and quality of life.</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Review the Business Retention and Expansion Plan for quality of life elements</p>
	<p>3. Housing: affordable short and long term housing. Seasonal workers, general work force, seniors, etc. affordable year round housing. (Marks, Kim)</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Stay engaged with the City for all housing conversations</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Have a meeting on housing options and final housing report.</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Stay engaged with the Guiding Homer’s Growth Conversation</p>
	<p>4. Engage in the Comprehensive Plan Process</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Participate in public events</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Encourage business participation at public events</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Host a Commission event targeted to small businesses</p>
<p>Mid Term Goals 1 - 3 Years (2024 – 2027)</p>	<p>1. Refine how the EDC can work with KPEDD; Economic resiliency planning and other topics as they arise.</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Attend annual KPEDD Industry Outlook Forum</p>
	<p>2. Downtown vitalization momentum and wayfinding/streetscape plan</p> <p><i>Status:</i> Wayfinding and Streetscape work ongoing through implementation activities in 2024-2025</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Participate in the Transportation Plan, focusing on a walkable town with greenspace and connected business districts</p> <p><i>Longer term:</i> Consider storefront/Downtown and landscaping improvement program</p>

	<p>3. Engage in land planning for city property as well as the larger problems of constraints on the Spit, and within the Central Business District.</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Participate in the Land Allocation Plan annual review</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Participate in Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Rewrite projects</p>
	<p>4. Assess jobs training needs, workforce development, availability of workers and workforce supports including child care, housing.</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Invite speakers to talk about workforce development such as KPB, South Peninsula Hospital</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Engage in Comprehensive Plan and other outreach opportunities</p>
<p>Long Term Goals 5 Years or More (2025+)</p>	<p>1. Multipurpose community center (HERC) Pioneer redevelopment vs new facility in a new location.</p> <p><i>Status:</i> The City is applying for funding to remediate the existing HERC site. Separately, there is discussion about finding a different site for a new facility.</p> <p>2. Plan for a new Business Retention and Expansion Plan BR&E</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Consider a funding request for the FY 2026-27 budget</p>

OVERALL EDC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Economic Development Advisory Commission will act in an advisory capacity to the City Manager and the City Council on the overall economic development planning for the City of Homer in accordance with Homer City Code Chapter 2.76; www.codepublishing.com/AK/Homer. The EDC also assists with official City planning documents including the following:

- Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) – Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (link will bring you to all KPEDD reports): <https://kpedd.org/reports>
- Homer’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS): www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/economicdevelopment/comprehensive-economic-development-strategy
- Business Retention and Expansion Survey Report (BR&E): <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/economicdevelopment/2017-business-retention-expansion-survey-report>
- Homer Comprehensive Plan: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/planning/comprehensive-plan>

DUTIES OF COMMISSION/STAFF

Commissioners

- Attend City Council meetings as assigned.
- Attend work sessions and training opportunities.
- Come prepared to make a motion for action at meetings, or ask staff before the meeting for more information.
- Communicate with City Council members to gain support on EDC-related projects that need sponsorship at the Council level.

Staff (Julie Engebretsen)

- Aid the Chair in setting the agenda.
- Compile packet material from commissioners, write backup memos, and submit to Clerk.
- Provide information on items the commission needs to review annually.
- Inform the Commission of City Council actions and discussion of economic development related issues.

Clerk's Office

- Aid Staff in compiling packet materials and print/distribute them to the Commission.
- Aid Staff and Chair in setting the agenda.
- Tracking yearly items such as reappointments and elections.
- Help the Commission learn to be more efficient and effective in their meetings.
- Support the Commission's ability to communicate with the Mayor and City Council (through Memorandums, Resolutions, and Ordinances).



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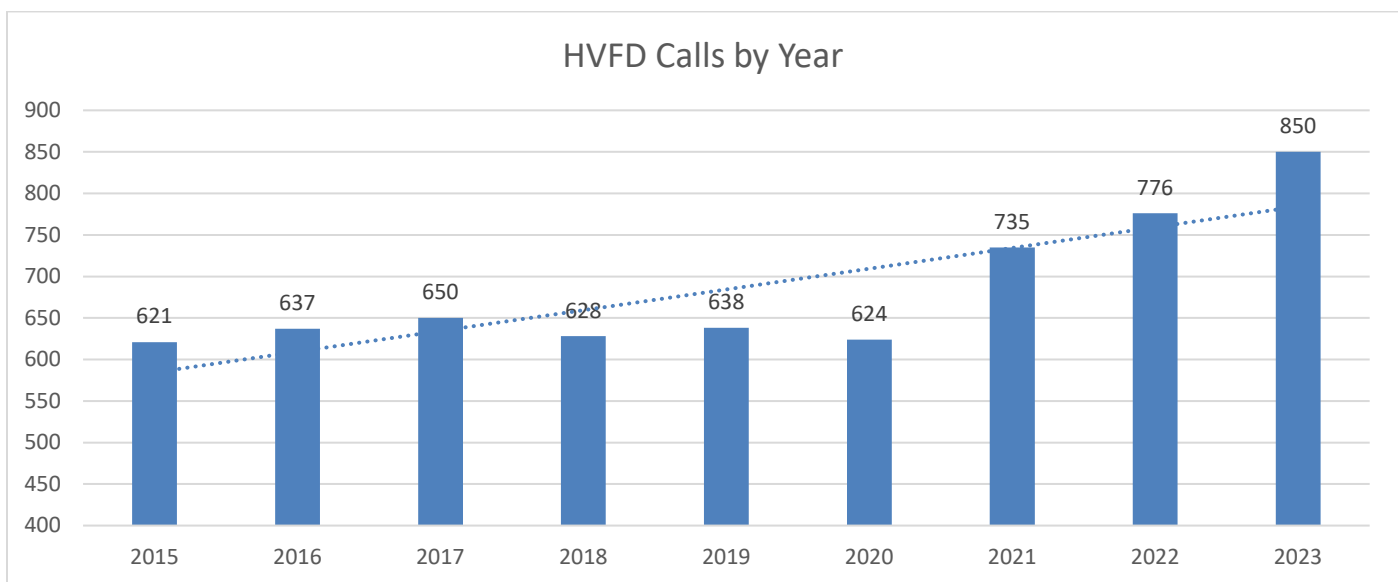
(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
DATE: February 7, 2024
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for February 12, 2024 Council Meeting

HVFD Calls for 2023

The Homer Volunteer Fire Department (HVFD) has seen significant growth in calls for service over the last decade. For many years, calls hovered in the 620-650 range annually. In 2021 HVFD saw a big jump up to 735, and in 2023 the Department hit 850 calls which is a 34% increase over the average for 2015 to 2020. The Department's staff and volunteers are putting considerable effort into keeping pace with the growing requests for service. Our fleet is doing its best as well, but we continue to have challenges with aged vehicles and slow supply chains. We are fortunate that Council has supported some major fleet purchases across the last couple years which are helping HVFD meet this increasing need – the City's first ladder truck was delivered recently; the new pumper/tanker is on order and in line to be built this year; and a new ambulance has been funded and staff are attempting to lock down a unit that can be delivered in the next year. We have many more fleet replacements to be considered in the near future, and, unfortunately, supply chain issues continue to make it difficult to receive fire apparatus in a timely fashion (lead times on many items have pushed past 2 years!).



Transportation Plan Update

The Transportation Plan will be making its way to the Planning Commission on March 6th. The plan is a little behind schedule due to the very full schedule the Planning Commission has had across the last couple months. The most recent draft is available at <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/planning/planning-commission-draft-transportation-plan-2024>.

Homer Projects Included in Draft STIP

Alaska's 2024-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) includes mention of a number of projects important to the City of Homer which were considered thanks to input received in Resolution 21-065, Resolution 23-083(A), and comments provided by the City during the STIP's public comment period. It's important to note that the STIP is not final until approved by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. The STIP can be viewed at: <https://dot.alaska.gov/admsvc/stip/final/2024.01.19%20%20STIP%20Final%20for%20Approval.pdf>

Comprehensive Plan Update

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee had its first meeting on February 5th. They are currently reviewing the draft public participation plan developed by Agnew::Beck. More to come soon regarding public engagement opportunities.

Visit from Strong Towns and Screening of the Movie "Cruise Boom"

In February we have some interesting events happening for folks interested in planning and tourism. Charles Marohn from Strong Towns will be in Homer on February 20th to give a talk at the college at 6pm. Strong Towns has a mission to promote a "pattern of development that is financially strong and resilient" and works "to elevate local government to the highest level of collaboration for people working together in a place." This event will be a great opportunity for the public to learn more about planning in preparation for the Comprehensive Plan update which will have multiple public meetings in the spring and early summer.

A week later on February 27th, there will be a free showing of the movie "Cruise Boom" at the Homer Theater. The movie was filmed in Sitka and takes a look at the cruise ship industry and the impacts of tourism. The Port & Harbor and Economic Development have partnered to bring this movie to town and engage in conversations related to the impacts of tourism on small cities in Alaska.

Short Term Rental Update

The short term rental (STR) ordinance's (23-61) public engagement tour continues with stops at the Economic Development Commission on February 13th and the Planning Commission on February 21st. By the time the ordinance gets back to the Council on February 26th, staff and Council Champions Aderhold and Davis expect to have a substitute ordinance influenced by the public comment received across the last few months. STR information for this project is available on the City website including the schedule of public participation opportunities and a public comment form: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/planning/draft-short-term-rental-regulations>

2023 Library Report

The Homer Public Library's 2023 Annual Report is now available (attached to this report). The document gives an overview of all the activities that took place during 2023 at the library. Over 125,000 visits were logged to the library last year!

Homer Public Library 2023 Annual Report



Seldovia Adopts Resolution Supporting Harbor Expansion Study Update

On January 22nd, the Seldovia City Council approved a resolution (24-26) expressing support for the Homer Harbor Expansion General Investigation. The resolution from our neighbors acknowledged the regional importance of our harbor and its critical importance to those living in the City of Seldovia. Mayor Castner, Councilmembers Aderhold and Hansen, and I will be sharing this, along with other supporting documents, with the state legislature later this month.

Finance Reports

This report will be accompanied by some new financial reports related to cash and fund balances. Expect that these reports will evolve across the next year. If Council has questions or suggestions please forward them to my office and we will work with you to address your concerns.

Hornaday Park Master Plan Update

The Parks, Arts, Recreation, and Culture Advisory Commission will hold a special work session on Thursday, February 15th at 4:30 PM. This commission will be reviewing and commenting on the draft Karen Hornaday Park Master Plan. The whole plan will be up for conversation, but the commission intends to focus much of their energy on the future of Upper Hornaday which has previously been operated as a campground. The work session will be followed at 5:30 PM by their regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

AMLJIA Meeting

On January 26th I attended a quarterly meeting of the Alaska Municipal League Joint Insurance Association (AMLJIA) as a member of the board of trustees in Anchorage. My travel and participation is funded by the AMLJIA. The most notable update from that meeting is the continued progress on the potential consolidation

between AMLJIA and the state's other public entity risk pool Alaska Public Entity Insurance (APEI). A consolidation is intended to produce a stronger pool that can provide more services to its membership. The two groups have been meeting and developing a vision and framework for implementation of a new entity that would be called the Alaska Public Risk Alliance (APRA). Much more work remains to develop the concept, and acceptance of a consolidation would require votes of each entity's board and then their membership (which includes the City of Homer). The earliest a consolidation could be complete and APRA operational is July 1, 2025.

Attachments:

- February Employee Anniversaries
- Memorandum from City Clerk re: Memorandums 101
- 2023 Homer Public Library Annual Report
- AKDOT Commissioner Anderson Letter Re: 2024-2027 STIP
- Seldovia Resolution 24-26 Supporting Homer Harbor Expansion General Investigation
- Building a Strong Town Presentation Flyer
- Cruise Boom Homer Screening Flyer
- SBDC Quarterly Report



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Memorandum

TO: MAYOR CASTNER AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: Andrea Browning
DATE: February 12, 2024
SUBJECT: February 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.

Jenny Carroll	Admin	8	Years
Morgan Tracy	Police	7	Years
Kevin Co	Library	5	Years
Tyler Jeffres	Police	5	Years
Matt Swerdzewski	Fire	1	Year
Mike Swoboda	PW	1	Year



MEMORANDUM

Memorandums 101

Item Type: Informational Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
Date: February 7, 2024
From: Melissa Jacobsen, MMC, City Clerk

At the January 22, 2024 City Council Meeting, Council Member Lord asked for some guidance related to the use of Memorandums related to Council actions.

For City Council, Boards, Commissions, Committees, and etc, there are three types of memorandums that are used, informational memos, backup memos, and action memos.

Informational memos, such as this one, are used to relay non actionable information to the body it's prepared for. Another example is the Council Champion memos that give information but don't require action.

Backup memos provide information that provides information on a specific matter the body will be taking action on. For example, back up memos to ordinances or resolutions.

Action memos are used for routine actions that don't rise to the need of having ordaining or resolving language. Action memos are used for matters such as appointments to boards and commissions, to voice non objection to alcohol and marijuana licenses, to review and approve letters from Mayor and Council being sent on behalf of the City of Homer.

Homer Public Library 2023 Annual Report



On January 20, chilly patrons waited forlornly for Storytime to begin

- Jan.-Mar.: The Art in the Library program displays acrylic and graphite paintings by Counsel Langley.
- Jan. 1: The balance in the Library Endowment Fund stands at \$42,460.95.
- Jan. 13: Showing of *King Lear*.
- Jan. 17: The Library Advisory Board responds to the petition to remove titles from the children's and young adult collections.

The year opened with ongoing debate about a petition to remove all the LGBT materials from the children's and young adult areas in the library. On Jan. 17, following hours of public testimony and hundreds of written comments, the Library Advisory Board (LAB) voted to leave all 55 titles in their existing locations. The controversy regarding library materials continues, however: on Nov. 16, the state Attorney General issued an open letter to all public and school libraries in Alaska, advising them of the laws concerning distribution of sexually-explicit materials.

From February through August, staff worked with the Friends of the Library, the Library Advisory Board and the City Council to completely overhaul and modernize all the library's policies. In the last six months of the year, City staff and Council worked on reorganizing the City's administrative structure. Effective Jan. 8, 2024, the library became an official department for the first time since 1985.

The project to upgrade the western lot moved forward. On April 10, Council adopted Resolution 23-030, supporting improvements to the grounds. During the summer, the Friends of the Library hired local experts to conduct a survey of plant species in the area. In October, work crews laid the gravel for the first part of the trail upgrades.

- Jan. 18: New microform reader set up.
- Feb 1-28: National Love Your Library Month. Prize drawings in the library each week.
- Feb. 3: Library videophone replaced.
- Feb. 4 and 9: Alice Porter teaches two workshops on making accordion-book boxes.
- Feb. 6: Scan-to-email function set up on the library's public copier.
- Feb. 25: Celebration of Lifelong Learning honors Samantha Cunningham and Thea Person.
- Mar. 4: In-person workshop led by Dimi Macheras and Casey Silver, authors of *Chickaloonies*.
- Mar. 9: Local writer Derek Stonorov, author of *Living in Harmony with Bears*, visits the library.
- Mar. 14: Lt. Browning from the Homer Police Department delivers a talk on *Parenting in the Digital Age*.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed so much. Our hardworking staff prove every day that the library is the heart of Homer. The Friends of the Library poured their energies into a huge range of public programs and provided invaluable support for library operations, especially the summer reading program. Members of the LAB carried out their duties thoughtfully and considerately, spending many hours reading the challenged titles, hearing input from the public, and debating revisions to library policies. Volunteers donated more than 2,400 hours of labor, not to mention thousands of dollars to the Giving Tree, the library endowment and the Friends of the Library. Finally, a big thank you to all the library patrons and community organizations that gave their time and expertise to speak up at public meetings, collaborate on programs, participate in events and just come in to read. The library is what it is because of your efforts.



Homer High School Swing Choir performed at the Celebration of Lifelong Learning, February 25

January

The library hosted a showing of the Royal Shakespeare Company's *King Lear* on Jan. 13. The new microform reader was set up on Jan. 18, offering much greater zooming, contrast adjustment, cleaner prints and the ability to save and email images.

At the Jan. 17 meeting, the LAB heard more public testimony on the petition to remove LGBT+ books from the children's and young adult collections, then voted to retain each of the 55 items in its existing location.

- Mar. 16: The library upgrades from version 3.1 to version 3.9 of the catalog software.
- Mar. 23: Public phone replaced with a new armored model.
- Mar. 24, 6:15-7:45: Margaret Willson visits the library to talk about her newest book, *Woman, Captain, Rebel*.
- Mar. 31: First-ever wedding in the library.
- Apr.-Jun.: The Art in the Library program displays photographs by R. J. Nelson.
- Apr. 1: Monthly checkout limit on Kanopy is raised to 5 videos per patron.
- Apr. 6: Community Poetry Reading.
- Apr. 7: Final memorial plaque for Duffy Murnane installed in the front entryway of the library.
- Apr. 10: Council adopts Resolution 23-030, supporting improvements to the library grounds.



The memorial bench for Duffy Murnane was completed and dedicated on April 26

February

Community Recreation and SPH kindly donated four sun lamps to the library for checkout. The library videophone was replaced, and the main public copier was upgraded with the ability to scan to email, not just to USB. Interlibrary loan fees increased by \$2 to cover the rise in postage costs. The LAB and PARCAC committees passed motions of support for improvements to the western lot, and the ADA Commission expressed verbal approval.

Staff began overhauling the library policies, combining them all into a single document and editing to remove duplication, internal contradictions and out-of-date material, as well as adding sections to cover new and emerging policy concerns.

The Celebration of Lifelong Learning on Feb. 25 was a smash hit! Nearly all 80 tickets sold out and the building was packed. Congratulations to Samantha Cunningham and Thea Person, our adult and youth awardees, respectively.

March

Marylou Burton, a long-time member of the Friends of the Library, received the Audrey Kolb Award from the Alaska Library Association. The award is given to individuals who “have shown a significant contribution in the life and activities of libraries,” a description which fits her perfectly.

On March 16, the library shifted the catalog into the cloud and jumped eight versions of the software. The new catalog brought significant improvements to workflows and greatly reduced the burden on the City IT staff.

- Apr. 10, 13, 17 and 20:
Workshops teach participants how to make an accordion book-in-a-box out of a poem and pictures.
- Apr. 21: Reading by local poet Peter Kaufmann.
- Apr. 26: Ceremonial lighting of the lotus lamp marks the completion of the Duffy Memorial Bench.
- May 5-6: Spring Book and Plant Sale.
- May 6: Bookmobile at the Safe and Healthy Kids Fair.
- May 15: *Little Loon Finds His Voice*, by Yvonne Pearson, is the first book of the season featured on the Story Walk Trail.
- May 21: Volunteers with Serve the City help clean up the landscaping at the library.
- Jun. 3: Summer@HPL kicks off with crafts, games and storytime.
- Jun. 6-Aug. 1: Outdoor Adventures and Stories in partnership with the Center for Alaska Coastal Studies.

Building maintenance staff replaced the public phone with a new armored model. The lock on the front door broke in mid-March, forcing us to leave one door closed until March 28.



Friends of the Library volunteers handed out more than 800 free books during the Independence Day parade

April

Community members gathered in the library on April 6 to share their favorite poems, and local author Peter Kaufmann gave a reading on April 21. The Duffy Murnane memorial bench reached completion this month, with a plaque installed on April 7 and a ceremony of lighting the lotus lamp on April 26.

- Jun. 6-8: In partnership with Challenger Learning Center of Alaska, *Science in the Summer: Be a Physicist* teaches kids about science and science careers.
- Jun. 9: After nine years of invaluable work at the library, Jackie McDonough steps down as Library Technician I.
- Jun. 12: In partnership with Pier One Theatre, kids perform a book.
- Jun. 14: Leap into Science explores light and shadow.
- Jun. 15: The Story Walk Trail features *Butterfly Park*, by Elly MacKay.
- Jun. 17: Cartoonist Lee Post teaches families and adults how to tell a story in cartoon form.
- Jun. 20: David Scheel, author of *Many Things Under the Water*, visits the library to talk about his book and his research on octopi.
- Jun. 19-20: Midsummer Magic takes kids on a trip to find Shakespearian sorcery both indoors and outside.



Young writers read their work on-air at KBBI on July 18

May

The book and plant sale was successful, as always. On May 19, Samantha Cunningham from the Homer Fire Department provided all staff with training in using the AED machine at the front desk.

Volunteers carried out a day of service on May 21, helping to clean up the library grounds. Parks staff also surveyed the grounds and noted a number of issues, including invasive species, problems with drainage and settling and various minor maintenance tasks. Going forward, the City will care for the Margaret Pate garden on the south side of the library and the flowerbed at the base of the Homer Public Library sign.

June

The summer reading program kicked off on June 3. On June 21, local community members celebrated the summer solstice with a street fair on Hazel Avenue. David Scheel's author talk was a great success, with more than 50 attendees. The bookmobile received a new access ramp.

After nine years with the library, Jackie McDonough stepped down as Library Technician I on June 9. Over that time, she did superb work staffing the front desk, repairing materials, training volunteers, assisting with policy rewrites, organizing materials in the vertical files and duplicates collections, and generally being amazing. We will miss her!

- Jun. 21: Summer solstice celebration and street fair on Hazel Avenue.
- Jun. 22-Jul. 14: Teens collaborate to produce their own 'zine.
- Jun. 28: Leap into Science explores balance.
- Jul.-Sept.: The Art in the Library program displays oil paintings by Achim Jahnke.
- Jul. 4: The bookmobile participates in the Independence Day parade.
- Jul. 5: The library implements automatic renewals.
- Jul. 11-18: Mercedes Harness leads a writers club for young participants. Authors have the chance to add their books to the library's collection and read their work on KBBI.
- Jul. 12: Leap into Science explores wind.
- Jul. 15: The Story Walk Trail features *I Got Rhythm*, by Connie Schofield-Morrison.
- Jul. 19-22: LEGO contest.



Volunteers from Global Credit Union provided mountains of food for the End of Summer Reading Party on July 29

July

The library implemented automatic renewals on July 5, which means items renew themselves without human effort unless a) they're on hold, b) the renewal limit has been reached, or c) the patron's card is blocked. Patrons who have email addresses in the system receive a notice that the item has or has not renewed.

The entryway of the library displayed a friendship banner, painted by local schoolkids in honor of Homer's sister-city relationship with Teshio, Japan. It will hang there all through 2024, the 40th anniversary of the relationship.

Our tiny Friends of the Library volunteers were very enthusiastic about handing out books in the July 4 parade—we distributed 800-1,000 titles.

The summer reading program reached its grand conclusion on July 29! Upwards of 100 people attended, with lots of chalk-drawing, game-playing and hot-dog-eating. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped set up and take down, to say nothing of local businesses which donated prizes and food.

Much of the equipment in the server room was replaced on July 1-2. The new upgrades allow for better routing of traffic within the building and improvements to the wi-fi system. The public works department cut a new drainage channel from the staff parking lot and dredged the ditch at the south side of the main lot.

- Jul. 27-28: In partnership with Challenger Learning Center of Alaska, *Science in the Summer: Be a Physicist* teaches kids about science and science careers.
- Jul. 29: End of summer reading party includes music, games, ice cream and hot dogs, with prizes for reading-challenge participants and LEGO contest winners.
- Aug. 6: Commemoration of the Hiroshima bombing features a replanting of the memorial ginkgo tree.
- Aug. 8: Corky Parker, author of *La Finca*, visits the library to talk about her book.
- Aug. 15: The final Story Walk Trail book of the season is *Blueberry Shoe*, by Ann Dixon.
- Aug. 28: City Council passes Resolution 23-082, adopting the revised Homer Public Library Policies and Procedures.
- Sept. 5: Dawn Brooks begins work as a Library Technician I.
- Sept. 8-9: Fall Book and Plant Sale.



Staff from Public Works dredged out the drainage channel on the south side of the parking lot on August 15

August

On Aug. 6, the library hosted a ceremonial replanting of the ginkgo tree, commemorating the bombing of Hiroshima. On August 8, author Corky Parker delivered a talk about her life running a bed and breakfast in Puerto Rico.

On Aug. 29, City Council voted to approve the revised library policies and also allocated funding for upgrading the trail surface on the western lot. The Homer Public Library sign at the corner of Heath and Hazel received repairs and a fresh coat of paint. Thanks to artist Brad Hughes, who both created and repaired the work.

The library submitted three building-related projects for Homer's 2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan: replacing the siding, installing a sliding gate at the entrance, and an engineering study for possible future remodeling.

September

The library hosted a candidate forum for borough mayor and borough assembly on Sept. 14, and a forum for city council candidates on Sept. 18. Despite some technical issues with the first one, both fora gave candidates a chance to present themselves directly to constituents. Many thanks to KBBI, KDLL, the Peninsula Clarion, the League of Women Voters and the other volunteers who put the event together.

Building maintenance installed new burners in the boiler room, which proved their worth during the later months of the year. The September book and plant sale went w

- Sept. 14: Candidate forum for Homer assembly seat and borough mayor.
- Sept. 18: Candidate forum for Homer city council.
- Sept. 26: Zoom author visit by Margaret Willson, author of *Woman, Captain, Rebel*. This is a followup to her in-person talk on March 24.
- Oct. 1-Jan. 31: Art in the Library displays works by Elizabeth Kandror.
- Oct. 6: Author visit by John Messick, author of *Compass Lines*.
- Oct. 12: Discussion panel with Guiding Growth.
- Oct. 20: New fish added to the fish wall in front of the library, honoring donors who contributed to the library endowment fund or the Friends of the Library endowment.
- Oct. 24-31: Wi-fi nodes upgraded throughout the library, allowing faster data and more simultaneous users.



Halloween in Homer is serious business

October

On Oct. 20, Moose Run Metalsmiths installed new fish on the fish wall, for the first time in nearly 20 years. The fish wall is an art installation in the plaza outside the library and features copper fish adorned with the names of major donors. Current policy awards a small fish to donors who contribute \$500 in direct financial assistance to the library (preferably through one of the endowment funds), while donors who give \$2,500 or more qualify for a large one.

On Oct. 10, work crews began spreading gravel for resurfacing the Story Walk Trail. Crews from public works have since made some changes to address drainage issues. The survey of plants on the western lot is complete, and the western lot committee chose a few plants to explore further for signage and programs. City IT staff upgraded the wi-fi system, which increases the number of simultaneous users from 40 to 60 and allows higher bandwidth.

- Oct. 26: Author visit by local writer Robert Stark, author of *Warflower*.
- Oct. 31: Trick or treat in the library.
- Nov. 30: *Juneau to Juneau* travelogue by Marylou Burton.
- Dec.: Revisions to the teen area, including new seating, tables and lighting.
- Dec.: Giving Tree up in the lobby.
- Dec. 31: The balance in the library endowment fund stands at \$56,496.11.

November

On Nov. 16, the Attorney General of Alaska posted a public letter to all school and public libraries in the state. The letter reviews state laws governing sexual offenses against minors, and warns librarians that including “indecent materials” in the library collection may be a prosecutable offense if minors are able to find those materials.

The library hosted an excellent travel program by Marylou Burton on Nov. 30, describing her six-and-a-half-year voyage around the world with her husband. Ninety-six people attended!

December

We added new chairs, tables and lighting in the teen section. Throughout the month, patrons purchased 38 books from the Giving Tree and donated more than \$900 in gift certificates to the Homer Bookstore.

We revived the digital picture frame that displays Homer patrons with their library cards from 2011, and it’s out on the table by the front desk. During 2024, the Friends of the Library will add new photos to the show.



In 2011, City IT Network Administrator Tomasz Sulczynski showed off his library card for the slide show

Thank you!

Our deepest thanks to all those who supported the library over the past year. Many members of the public contributed their time, energy and money to guarantee the success of the institution. We here recognize those who donated to the library's long-term sustainability:

Library Endowment Fund

Anonymous (2)

National Philanthropic Trust

Donna and Wayne Aderhold

Dave Berry

Marcia Kuszmaul

Kerry Ozel

Friends of Homer Public Library Endowment Fund

Anonymous

Doug and Landa Baily

2023 by the numbers at Homer Public Library



125,675

Visits to the library



157,634

Items checked out

729

New library cards issued

13,504

Patrons attended programs

2,919

sessions
Study Rooms + Meeting Room

1,135 attended
Summer Reading events

25,595

sessions
Public computers + library WiFi

2,466

Volunteer hours logged





THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

**Department of Transportation and
Public Facilities**

Office of the Commissioner

3132 Channel Drive
P.O. Box 112500
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2500
907.465.3900
dot.state.ak.us

January 9, 2023

Jennifer Carroll
Special Projects & Communications Coordinator
City of Homer
491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, AK 99603

Dear Ms. Carroll:

Thank you for your comments on the draft 2023-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. We greatly value stakeholder engagement and appreciate your attention to the draft STIP. This letter is in response to City of Homer Resolution 21-065, Resolution 23-083A as well as the City of Homer's comments provided in publicinput.com.

We note your request to add Homer Harbor Expansion to the 2024-2027 STIP and that the Homer Harbor Expansion project is estimated at \$278,000,000. The project description will describe that the project completes a US Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study with the purpose of constructing a large vessel harbor to the north of Homer's existing Port and Harbor. We apologize that this was missed in the initial draft, and this will be added as a community driven project seeking funding in the final STIIP.

We also appreciate the City's diligence in maintaining the Homer Harbor port infrastructure. As you note, we have included the Homer Harbor Critical Gloat System Replacement project in the community driven not yet funded portion of the STIP.

Access to the Homer Spit is critical to the Kenai Peninsula and Alaska. We recognize the need for the Homer Spit Coastal Erosion Mitigation project, and value our partnership in applying for discretionary grants to support mitigation and stabilization efforts. We also appreciate the City of Homer's support for the M/V Tustumena Replacement Vessel project, and recognize the AMHS reliance on the Homer Spit for the ferry terminal.

We note that the city of Homer is officially requesting the inclusion of the REACH (Realizing Equitable, Accessible Connectivity in Homer) project in the Alaska 2024-2027 STIP as an illustrative project. This project involves Planning, pre-development and construction activities to comprehensively transform Homer's major travel routes into complete streets with pedestrian pathways. We understand this initial effort is estimated at \$1,400,000. This will be added as a community driven project seeking funding in the final STIP.

We note your support for the Kachemak Drive pavement preservation project to include non-motorized accommodations and your desire to add it to the STIP. We will add this project to our needs list, and also encourage you to consider it for a discretionary grant opportunity in the future. We would be interested in collaborating with you on this effort.

"Keep Alaska Moving"

Thank you for your comments on the Sterling Highway Milepost 157-169 Reconstruction Project (Anchor Point to Baycrest Hill). We have passed your comments along to our design team, and will consider the improvements suggestions to Baycrest Overlook and Dimond Creek Crossing. We have received many comments in support of the Diamond Creek Crossing.

Thank you for your support of the Transportation Alternatives Program, the Community Transportation Program, the ADA Implementation and Guidance efforts, as well as the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure formula program.

We also note your proposal to add the following road projects to the STIP:

- Sterling Highway Milepost 172 Drainage Improvements. DOT&PF appreciates attention to this area, and the potential drainage problems. We have added to our needs list, and will be evaluating this area for subsequent projects in the near future.
- Homer Main Street Rehabilitation and Sidewalk. We appreciate your description of the need and have added this to our needs list.
- East Hill Road and West Hill Road Bike Lanes. We note this request and have added this project to our needs list.
- Sterling Highway Milepost 169-175 Pavement Preservation and Safety Upgrades. We note this request and have added this project to our needs list.

Sincerely,



Ryan Anderson, P.E.

Commissioner

Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

**CITY OF SELDOVIA
RESOLUTION 24-26**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SELDOVIA, ALASKA
EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE HOMER HARBOR EXPANSION GENERAL
INVESTIGATION STUDY**

WHEREAS, Homer’s Port & Harbor is a regional port and community hub which is critically important to those living in the City of Seldovia; and

WHEREAS, Homer’s Port & Harbor serves the needs of commercial vessels operating across southcentral and western Alaska, and the Arctic in the maritime industrial, marine transportation and commercial fishing industries and, over time, the increased demand for services provided by the Homer Port & Harbor has outgrown Homer harbor’s ability to safely and efficiently serve this fleet; and

WHEREAS, the City of Homer (“City”) has identified a new large vessel port expansion among its highest ranked priority capital improvement projects since 2004 to (1) meet the growing needs of our commercial fleet, (2) address overcrowding and associated navigational safety concerns and high maintenance costs, and (3) support emerging regional and national economic opportunities; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of this need, the City and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (“USACE”) entered into a Federal Cost Share Agreement in March 2023 to initiate a Homer Harbor Expansion General Investigation (“GI”) that investigates all planning aspects needed to build a large vessel harbor at the Homer Spit including, but not limited to: selecting a preferred design alternative and construction methods, evaluating social, economic and environmental factors, determining costs and conducting a cost benefit analysis; and

WHEREAS, the initial cost of the Homer Harbor Expansion GI study was set per the USACE Project Management Plan (PMP) at \$3,000,000, as a shared partnership between the USACE, the State of Alaska, and the City (\$1.5M federal/\$750,000 State of Alaska/\$750,000 City of Homer; and

WHEREAS, after reaching the study’s Alternatives and Measures Milestone, the USACE project development team updated the PMP to include two additional activities in the GI scope (geotechnical analysis and ship simulation) so that the study would have sufficient data to develop the most realistic benefit to cost ratio; and

WHEREAS, the additional work increases the cost of the GI study by \$1,154,093 to be similarly shared between the Federal and local partners; and

WHEREAS, Homer City Council passed Resolution 23-130 agreeing to the revised scope and cost of the GI under the PMP, stating it is prudent to continue to explore options for a harbor expansion to relieve congestion and improve navigational safety within Homer’s Port and Harbor; and

WHEREAS, consistent with the shared local match partnership, Homer City Council Resolution 23-130 additionally expresses the City of Homer's intent to appropriate funds in the amount of \$288,524 for fifty percent of the required local sponsor match and to seek State matching funds for the remaining fifty percent; and

WHEREAS, investment in the GI supports current and future maritime, marine transportation, and commercial fishing industry promoting the livelihood of individuals in the Kenai Peninsula, the City of Homer and its surrounding remote communities, and the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, support of for the GI study and the completion of the Homer Harbor Expansion project, aligns with the City of Seldovia's Comprehensive Plan and regional priorities and partnership between the City of Homer, City of Seldovia, and Seldovia Village Tribe;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SELDOVIA, ALASKA :

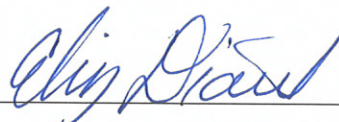
SECTION 1. That the City of Seldovia supports the State of Alaska providing \$288,523 in additional match funds in the FY25 State budget in order to fully fund local match requirements for the Homer Harbor Expansion General Investigation study in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Homer as the development of this public facility will help enhance safety and economic prosperity among the many Alaskan communities who depend on services operating out of Homer Port and Harbor.

SECTION 2. That copies of this resolution be sent to Governor Dunleavy and legislative delegates for the Kenai Peninsula.

SECTION 3. That this resolution is effective immediately upon adoption.

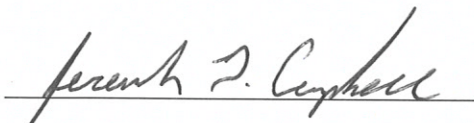
PASSED AND APPROVED by a duly constituted quorum of the City Council of the City of Seldovia on this 22nd day of January, 2024.

ATTEST:

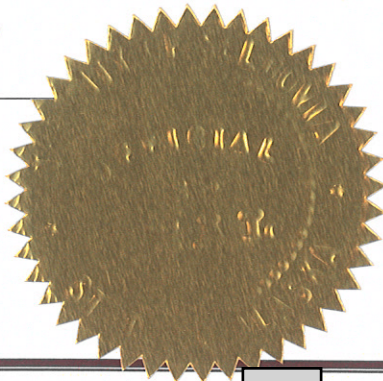


Liz Diamant, City Clerk

APPROVED:



Jeremiah Campbell, Mayor



Building a Strong Town

FREE • OPEN TO EVERYONE

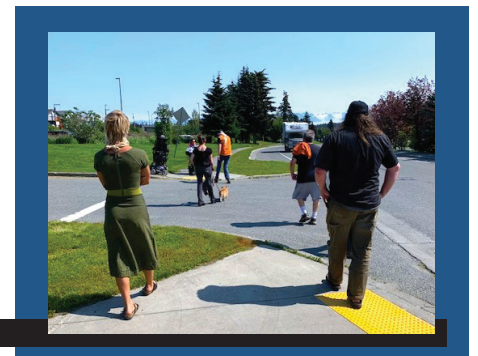
Homer community members, groups, and the City of Homer are actively seeking solutions to local challenges like sustainable growth, affordable housing, a walkable and bike-able community, and fiscally responsible local government.



A COMMUNITY PRESENTATION WITH CHUCK MAROHN STRONG TOWNS FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

Charles “Chuck” Marohn is the founder and president of Strong Towns. He is a land use planner and civil engineer with decades of experience. He holds a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering and a Master of Urban and Regional Planning, both from the University of Minnesota.

Visit <https://www.strongtowns.org> for more info.



Tuesday February 20, 2024 • 6 pm - 7:30 pm

Doors open at 5:30 pm. Talk begins at 6 pm followed by Q&A

In Person: Kachemak Bay Campus, Room 202

Online: Zoom



<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81377496791>
Meeting ID: 813 7749 6791
Passcode: 99603

Join the City of Homer and community partners for a special guest presentation, “Building a Strong Town” by Strong Towns founder Chuck Marohn. Strong Towns advocates for a new way of thinking about the way we build our world, and supports thousands of people across the United States and Canada who are working to make their cities safe, livable, and financially resilient.

We look forward to connecting Marohn and his organization’s experience with Homer residents interested in building a resilient and prosperous community, and to spark conversation and solutions as the City of Homer begins development of a new Comprehensive Plan that will guide our community for the next 10-20 years.

SPONSORED BY THE CITY OF HOMER

For more event info, contact:
planning@ci.homer.ak.us
Phone: (907) 101 3119



STRONG TOWNS

A FILM BY ELLEN FRANKENSTEIN & ATMAN MEHTA

CRUISE BOOM

A community on the cusp of change

- FREE ADMISSION -

HOMER SCREENING

sponsored by the City of Homer

TUESDAY | FEB 27TH | 6 PM | HOMER THEATRE



Archange Inc. presents
Directed, Filmed & Edited by Ellen Frankenstein & Atman Mehta
Consulting Editor Shirley Thompson - Animation Ryan Morse
Audio Post Tom Disher - Original Music by Bryan Lovett, Graham Lebron,
Fred Knowles, Rita ... & Ethan Vastola
www.cruisefilm.com



Watch the Trailer



January 29, 2024

City of Homer
491 E. Pioneer Ave
Homer, AK 99603

Dear Mayor Castner, City Council, and City Staff,

This letter serves as our quarterly report from October 1 to December 31, 2023. Homer Business Advisor Robert Green finished the year on a high note, supporting 130 business owners and entrepreneurs while receiving 100% client satisfaction on surveys. It was a relatively slow year for capital infusion, with interest rates for business loans often double what they were two years ago. This past year, 78% of Homer clients chose to meet in person with Robert, indicating a strong preference from local business owners and entrepreneurs to have this service in their community rather than travel to Soldotna. Here is a summary of deliverables to the Homer community during the quarter (year):

Client Hours: 122.8 (622.1)	Jobs Supported: 40 (258)
Total Clients: 34 (130)	Capital Infusion: \$0 (\$293,000)
New Businesses Started or Bought: 6 (10)	Client Surveys: 100% positive (100% positive)

This report provides lists of the top advising topics and top industries obtaining technical assistance from the Alaska SBDC in Homer. Assistance to entrepreneurs looking to start new businesses and business planning were the top topics this quarter. Accommodation jumped into the top spot for industries advised, while retail stores and professional guides remained near the top of the list.

Topics

1. Start-up Assistance: 50.7 hrs (41%)
2. Business Planning: 30.8 hrs (25%)
3. General Management: 16.2 hrs (13%)
4. Buy/Sell Business: 9.0 hrs (7%)
5. Legal Issues: 8.1 hrs (7%)

Industries

1. Accommodation: 38.7 hrs (32%)
2. Retailers: 17.9 hrs (15%)
3. Guides: 14.5 hrs (12%)
4. Manufacturing: 13.7 hrs (11%)
5. Entertainment: 9.7 hrs (8%)

We would like to thank the City of Homer for their support of the Homer Business Advisor position. The \$10,000 funding provided by the mayor and city council is critical in retaining the Homer SBDC office in 2024. We greatly appreciate the knowledge, experience, and consistency Robert Green brings to efforts in Homer. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

98AFA012679B4D7...

Jon Bittner

Executive Director
Alaska SBDC

CITY OF HOMER NEWSLETTER



VOL. III - ISSUE VI | FEBRUARY 2024

WHAT'S INSIDE?

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

HOMER ANNUAL WINTER CARNIVAL ORGANIZED BY HOMER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Parade on Pioneer Avenue

Winter Carnival Parade Saturday, February 10th, at Noon on Pioneer Avenue

The annual Homer Winter Carnival is here! It's time to shake off the winter blues! Bring the whole family, bundle up, grab a hot drink, and come join the excitement of the parade on Pioneer Avenue.

Let's see how creative participants can get this year with the theme of "What's old is new"! You'll see custom floats, marching bands, groups from our local schools, antique cars, animals, bikers, walkers and more!

This year's featured performer is the Krewe Music Group.

After the parade, pop into some local shops, take a walk through downtown, and mingle with your neighbors. It's the perfect opportunity to get out into the fresh air and enjoy our charming town.

<https://www.homer.alaska.org/events/winter-carnival-celebration/>

A Bit of History

The Winter Carnival in Homer has been celebrated for over 70 years! The tradition began when residents from surrounding areas would come into town to celebrate and break the mid-winter cabin fever.

104

- Homer Annual Winter Carnival
- Library Events
- Community Corner
- Community Recreation
- City Hall
- Parks
- Homer Public Library
- Economic Development
- Port & Harbor
- Harbor Expansion Study Update
- Public Safety Corner
- Fire Department
- Hazard Mitigation
- Public Safety Corner
- 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

[Click Here to Subscribe](#)

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 libraryc.org/homerlibrary/upcoming.

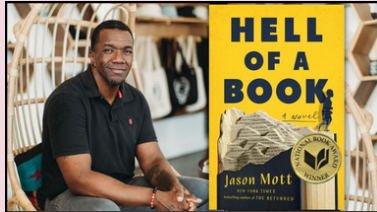
February 8 at 4 pm

Spice, Spirit, and Swoon—A Guaranteed Happily Ever After with Rom-Com Author **Tessa Bailey**



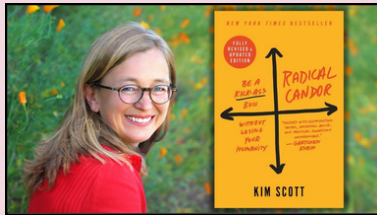
February 20 at 12 pm

Exploring Identity, Love, and Being Black in America in Fiction Writing: A Conversation with Award-Winning Author **Jason Mott**



February 28 at 10 am

Be a Kick-Ass Boss Without Losing Your Humanity: An Author Talk with **Kim Scott**



SPECIAL & ONGOING EVENTS



Big Read 2024

Read with your community! Ongoing events for the month of February.

<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library/nea-big-read-2024>

Book copies are available at the library circulation desk.



Councilmember Conversations

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

February 13: Shelly Erickson

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

SALSA DANCE CLASSES

When: Thursdays, 6:30 - 8 pm
Where: Homer High Green Room
Fee: \$10 person, per class (ongoing)



Register Here:

<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec/salsa-dance-classes-winter-2024>

This friendly introductory dance class begins February 1st. Whether you come alone or with a partner, you're welcome to be part of the group and explore Salsa dance fundamentals.

SELF-DEFENSE CLASS



Attention Ladies!

Homer Police Department is having it's 5th self-defense class!

When: March 2, 2:00 - 6:00 pm

Fee: FREE

To Register: Email Lt. Browning at rbrowning@ci.homer.ak.us

Tech Help



Twice each month you can drop by the library and get help with whatever computer or e-reader questions you have. These sessions are FREE!

When: 1st and 3rd Thursdays from 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Where: Homer Public Library

Fee: FREE

COMMUNITY RECREATION



Check out all that Community Recreation has to offer! To view the programs and events, go to <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec>

Adult Basketball League Playoffs and Championship Game

Six teams will compete for the basketball championship title. Check out the draft bracket and schedule [here](#).

When:

Saturday, February 3 at 11 am - 6:30 pm
Sunday, February 4 at 2:00 - 7:30 pm

Where: Homer High School

Fee: Free

Women's Drop In Basketball

Drop in basketball time for women and girls only. This is for participants in 7th grade to adults. Please bring separate clean indoor shoes. Please call 907-235-6090 for more information.

When: Mondays, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Where: Homer Middle School Gym

Fee: \$5/adults (punch cards and 3 month passes available), FREE for 7th-12th graders

Youth Pickleball After School Winter 2024

Youth Pickleball! Classes for 4th, 5th, 6th grade students (min. 4, max. 14) TWO Sessions offered.

When: Mondays & Fridays; 3:15 - 4:25 pm

Where: the HERC gym (large building next at the skateboard park).

Fee: \$25 per session

To sign up: Contact Jeanne to register and get on the list at 907-299-2437 or jeannemena@gmail.com

Drop-In Volleyball

Drop in/Pick up volleyball! Learn elements of the game such as positions on the court and basic skills including set, bump, and spike. Good sportsmanship and separate clean indoor shoes are required. When playing at Homer Middle School, participants should enter through the Multiple Purpose Room.

When & Where:

Sundays, 6:30 - 8:30 pm at Homer High

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 6:30 - 8:30 pm at Homer Middle

Fee: \$5/visit for adults, FREE for 7th-12th grade students



Jewelry Making Classes Taught by Art Koeninger

City of Homer Community Rec Presents:
JEWELRY MAKING CLASSES
WINTER 2024
Taught by Art Koeninger
CHECK IT OUT
INTRO TO SILVERSMITHING February 17-18
LOST WAX CASTING February 23-25
INTERMED SILVERSMITHING March 2-3
COST: \$150 or \$90 for repeat students in addition to cost of materials (average project \$5-15). Classes at Homer High.
Contact Art to Register: 907-235-1014 or akoeninger@me.com
Scan for more info

When:

Intro to Silversmithing: February 17-18

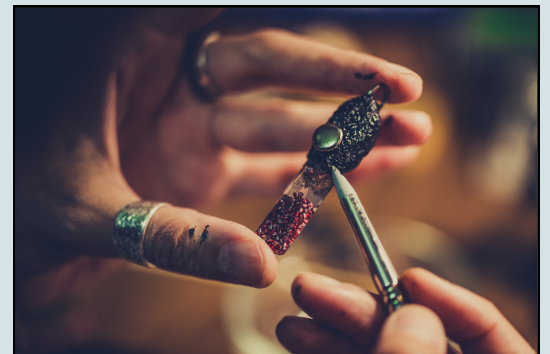
Lost Wax Casting: February 23-25

Intermediate Silversmithing: March 2-3

Where: Homer High School

Fee: \$150 or \$90 for repeat students in addition to cost of materials (average project \$5 - \$15)

<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec/jewelry-making-classeswinter-2024>



Making Jewelry



CITY HALL

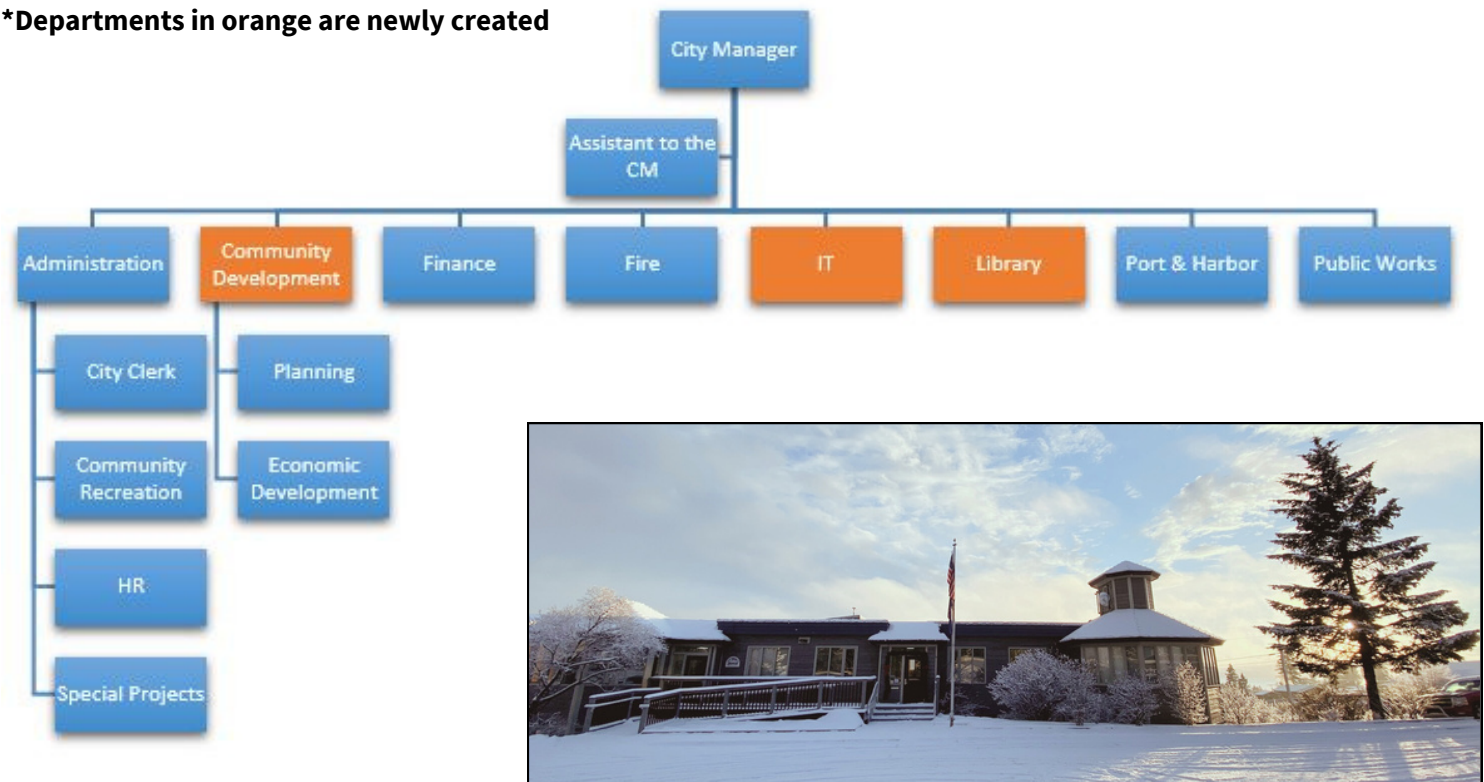
RESTRUCTURING

In January the City Council approved a restructuring of the City organization which resulted in the creation of three new departments. We now have independent departments for the Library, Information Technology, and Community Development.

The City's organization design has not changed much since the mid-1980s. After a bit of a shuffle in 1985 we've only seen two significant changes: the deletion of the Department of Health in 1991 and the split of the Department of Public Safety into separate Police and Fire Departments in 2017.

The City Manager proposed the reorganization with the intent of better matching organizational design with how the City operates. The new structure provides a more transparent view of City operations through documents like the budget and increases the organization's effectiveness at providing services to the City's residents, businesses, and visitors. City staff will be working to implement the changes over the next month.

***Departments in orange are newly created**



Homer City Hall

STAY IN THE LOOP

There are multiple ways you can stay up to date on important issues. We want to hear from you and welcome public input when making decisions that affect you.

All scheduled meetings can be found through the link below, on the City of Homer website. By clicking on each meeting, you can view the current Agenda. You can voice your comments and concerns during any of the Public Comment sections of a meeting. During the Comments from the Audience section, each person is allowed 3 minutes to comment on whatever topic they wish. There is no response as it is a one-way open forum for the Mayor, City Council Members, the City Manager, and Commissioners to hear what the public has to say.

<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/meetings>

PARKS

PARK PLANS

City staff met recently with the Parks, Arts, Recreation, and Culture Advisory Commission (PARCAC) to review the most recent drafts of the Park Master Plans for Bayview and Karen Hornaday Park.



How You Can Help: There will be a work session to review some more options. The meeting is open to the public. The Agenda will be posted to the [PARCAC Worksession Meeting Details](#) page closer to the meeting date.

When: February 15, from 4:30 - 5:30 pm

Where: City Hall, Cowles Council Chambers

Please provide feedback on these projects by clicking the links below.

Bayview Park Master Plan Update:



<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/publicworks/bayview>

Karen Hornaday Park Master Plan Update:



<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/publicworks/karen-hornaday-park-master-plan-update>

LIBRARY

BENCH DESIGN PROPOSALS

The Friends of the Homer Library (FHL) and the National Park Service are collaborating to establish a new community space on the 2.24-acre land parcel located between the library and Poopdeck Trail. This initiative aims to expand the library's mission beyond its physical confines, transforming the area into a cultural, educational, and recreational asset for the community.

To enhance the space, FHL has released a Request for Proposals (RFP), inviting designs for two public benches. The first bench will be positioned at the western end of the trail where it intersects with Poopdeck Trail, while the second bench, featuring a "wraparound" design, will encircle a spruce tree in the knoll area. Local artists and craftworkers are encouraged to submit their creative proposals for consideration.

All proposals must be received by FHL **no later than 8:00 pm on February 20, 2024.**

Proposals can be submitted in three ways:

1. Via email to dberry@ci.homer.ak.us (preferred)
2. In-person at the Homer Public Library
3. By mail to: Homer Public Library Attn: Dave Berry 500 Hazel Ave. Homer, AK 99603

[Click HERE to view the full Request for Proposals \(RFP\) Document](#)

The full details of this RFP and additional information about the Western Lot Project can be found on the Homer Public Library's website. <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library/western-lot-project>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SHORT TERM RENTALS

In the Spring of 2022, Homer City Council identified community housing as a priority issue. Since then, many efforts have been made to gather data and look at potential solutions. In November 2023, Council introduced Ordinance 23-61 that has been a topic for public meetings, conversations, and recommendations.

The proposed Ordinance 23-61 would amend Homer City Code, adding a section on short-term rentals. The initiative stems from concerns about housing availability for both seasonal workers and year-round community members. Acknowledging the economic benefits and challenges posed by short-term rentals, the ordinance aims to establish regulations to ensure safe operation, prevent public nuisances, and facilitate the collection of appropriate taxes, with a commitment to ongoing adjustments based on community needs and feedback.



Cabin with a View

Share Your Thoughts

Coming up, on **February 26**, there will be a Public Hearing. We want the public to get involved! Click the link to comment on the proposed regulation.

What does the Ordinance do?

- Requires registration with the City and provides state business license and KPB sales tax compliance form.
- Requires Self-Certify Basic Life Safety; are there smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, etc.
- Requires an emergency contact be provided for the police department and neighbors within 300 feet.

What the Ordinance does not do.

- Does not cap the number of units in a neighborhood or city wide.
- Does not require life safety inspections.
- No change in city capacity; no new staff, no increased enforcement.

COMMENT HERE



<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/planning/draft-short-term-rental-regulations>

READ MORE



Click the Links Below

- [Ordinance 23-61](#)
- [Memorandum for Ordinance 23-61](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Strong Towns Presentation

When: Tuesday, February 20 at 6:00 pm
Where: Kachemak Bay Campus, Room 202
Fee: FREE

Homer welcomes nationally renowned speaker Charles Marohn of Strong Towns.

Free Movie “Cruise Boom”

When: Tuesday, February 27 at 6:00 pm
Where: Homer Movie Theater
Fee: FREE

This 60-minute film takes a current look at the effects of cruise ship tourism in Sitka Alaska.

<https://artchangeinc.org/cruiseboom>



Cruise Ship in Whittier, AK

PORT & HARBOR

HOMER FISH DOCK AND ICE PLANT: A HUB OF PRODUCTIVITY AND SUPPORT

The Homer Fish Dock and Ice Plant public use facilities built in 1983, have played an important role in the maritime activities of Homer.

Stretching 383 feet, the Fish Dock boasts two 50-foot side berths and is equipped with eight public-use cranes, including two 5-ton and six 2.5-ton cranes, making it a versatile resource for various marine operations. The dock also offers 8,600 cubic feet of bait storage. Open 24/7 throughout the year, the Fish Dock caters to a diverse group. It serves fishermen, fish buyers, charter operators, Cook Inlet Aquaculture, researchers, Cook Inlet Spill Prevention & Response, Inc. (CISPRI), communities without road service, non-profits, government agencies, marine contractors and salvage operations. The dock employs three full-time operators with diverse skill sets.



Homer Fish Dock with Cranes



Maintenance Supervisor Del Masterhan giving a tour of the ice plant to Councilmember Hansen with fish dock operators Japheth McGhee & Tom Gilbert.

At the heart of its operations is the Ice Plant, operational from February through November, and capable of producing 40 tons of ice per day. This ice is sold and delivered to boats, fish processors, and buyers, supporting the needs of the fishing industry. In its 40 years of service, the Ice Plant has supplied nearly 130 thousand tons of Flake Ice.

Our dock and ice plant staff hold many skills that range from Ammonia Refrigeration Engineer/Operator to mechanical, electrical, plumbing, hydraulics, and some IT expertise, making it a comprehensive hub for maritime activities and support in the region.



Fish Totes

DID YOU KNOW?

The 30th Anniversary of the Homer Winter King Salmon Tournament is this year!

The tournament will take place on **March 23, 2024**

For more information and to register, go to www.homerwinterking.com



HOMER HARBOR EXPANSION



STUDY UPDATE



At the [January 22 City Council Worksession](#), Ronny McPherson and KC Kent of HDR provided an overview of the Baseline Conditions Report they completed and have submitted to the US Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Homer Harbor General Investigation.

HDR collected new field data and utilized the plethora of existing data along with existing studies to document and create a model of the wave and tidal action, storm surge and sediment transport in the study area.

Understanding the existing ocean and meteorological (or Metocean) conditions is important to the design process. The modelling tool will be used to evaluate the performance of different design option. Taken together with data from the geophysical investigation and environmental review, it allows the project development team to tailor designs to the specific conditions of the proposed site to best meet project objectives.

At the regular meeting on January 22nd, Homer City Council passed two pieces of legislation in support of the Homer Harbor Expansion General Investigation. They unanimously approved [Ordinance 24-05](#), committing additional match funds for the Harbor Expansion Study. Mayor Castner and Councilmembers all expressed commitment to maintaining positive city-state-federal partnerships and the importance of the tasks added to the General Investigation, so we have solid information on which to better evaluate feasibility.

[Resolution 24-012](#) was also adopted, which supports the State of Alaska's continued partnership in the General Investigation and requests funds in the State's FY25 Capital budget to complete the other half of the additional local sponsor match requirement study.

If you missed the Council worksession or the Regular meeting, you can still listen to the meeting or read the minutes on the City's website. [Check it out here.](#)

Keep engaged with the study at www.homerharborexansion.com

CAMPGROUND HOST NEEDED FOR MARINER PARK

The city of Homer, Port & Harbor department is currently seeking one campground host for Mariner Park, April 1 through October 31, 2024.

In exchange for campground host services provided, the City of Homer's Port & Harbor will provide one free, dedicated camp space (plus room for a commuter vehicle), a \$100/week stipend, plus a \$50/month utility stipend.

Interested parties can contact harbormaster, Matt Clarke, for further information at (907) 235-3160 or mclarke@ci.homer.ak.us.

Find more information here: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/port/campground-host-needed-mariner-park>

FIRE DEPARTMENT

PROMOTION CEREMONY



Joe Kahles, Samantha Cunningham, Councilmember Shelly Erickson, Captain Jake Richter, Captain Jaclyn Arndt, Councilmember Caroline Venuti, Chief Mark Kirko

The Homer Volunteer Fire Department (HVFD) celebrated a significant moment with its first promotion ceremony in the history of the department. This ceremony celebrated the promotions of Jaclyn Arndt and Jake Richter to the rank of Captain.

Surrounded by fellow firefighters, family, and friends, the ceremony was led by Chief Kirko who offered words of gratitude and encouragement to the two new Captains. This promotion reflects Jaclyn's and Jake's dedication, hard work, sacrifice, and commitment to the safety and well-being of Homer. We are so proud of you both for this accomplishment!



Former HVFD Captain Tim Yarbrough and Captain Jaclyn Arndt



James Squires Pinning Captain Jake Richter



Councilmember Caroline Venuti, Captain Jaclyn Arndt, Councilmember Shelly Erickson

HVFD EMT 1 CLASS NOW UP AND RUNNING!



2024 EMT I Class

The Homer Volunteer Fire Department started its annual EMT I class in January with ten students! Some are familiar faces who were already essential in our 911 responses at the department last year, and some are brand new, but all of them are enthusiastic about joining our team and running calls with us. Students will spend 160 hours in the classroom and countless more hours on their own study time. They will learn a whole new language, perfect hands-on skills, and learn the steps needed to assess and treat those critically ill and injured. At the same time, they will be learning how the Volunteer Fire Department works and become familiar with the equipment and fleet that we use to take care of Homer. We are looking forward to welcoming students into our volunteer family as they complete their training.

Excerpt by Assistant Chief of EMS Samantha Cunningham

HVFD LADDER TRUCK HAS ARRIVED



HVFD Ladder Truck

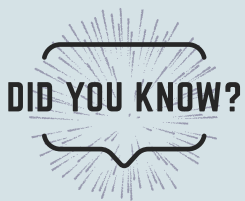
A long-awaited ladder truck is a welcome addition to the Homer Volunteer Fire Department (HVFD) fleet. The addition of this truck gives the department the ability to quickly and safely rescue people trapped by fire on elevated floors and assists with reaching windows and roofs faster to create ventilation paths. It also provides the ability to more effectively combat fire in commercial and industrial facilities and can be used in many technical rescue situations by providing safe lifting with anchoring capabilities.

The new Ladder truck is a 1998 E-One with a 100-foot ladder and has a 1,500 Gallons Per Minute (GPM) pump. The elevated waterway is capable of delivering 1,250 GPM. It has seating capacity for 6 firefighters and will carry a host of firefighting and rescue equipment and tools.

The addition of this truck, purchased from the City of Ketchikan, helps ensure that the department can respond promptly and effectively to emergencies, ultimately improving its service to the residents of Homer.



HVFD Ladder Truck Extended



The first successful aerial ladder truck was invented and patented by Daniel D. Hayes in 1868. This horse-drawn truck had a ladder attached that could extend to a height of 85 feet. Four to six men were able to fully extend the ladder in under 40 seconds by turning a crank. It was mounted onto a turntable and could swing to where it was needed.

MITIGATION STRATEGY

Homer's Hazard Mitigation Plan is a blueprint to help make Homer a resilient community. The Mitigation Strategy section identifies key resources, ensuring effective responses to potential hazards.

1. Identification of Resources:

The plan examines human, technical, and financial resources and examines their ability to expand. For example, authorities like the Police Chief and the City of Homer Finance Department play vital roles in providing law enforcement and financial support.

2. National Flood Insurance Program Participation:

Active involvement in this program equips communities like Homer with valuable tools to implement effective floodplain management, reducing flood-related risks.

3. Mitigation Goals:

Goals focus on enhancing climate protection, creating a healthy community, and safeguarding critical facilities against hazards.

4. Recommended Actions:

Tailored actions are recommended, ranging from education and awareness; structure and infrastructure projects; preparedness and response; and local plans and regulations.

5. Prioritized Action Plan:

A strategic sequence for action implementation, prioritized based on urgency and potential impact, ensures efficient hazard mitigation.

6. Plan Integration:

Identifying the items above and integrating them into Homer's relevant plans, policies, and programs is an integral part of decision-making and resource allocation.



Find the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan on the City's website: [City of Homer Local Hazard Mitigation Plan](#)



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.

Winter Driving Tips

1

WARM UP

Warm up your car at least 1 minute before driving to warm up the oil. This will keep your engine running smoothly.

2



Clear snow and ice off windows, mirrors, and lights.

3



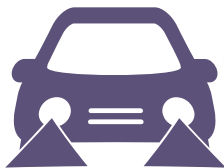
Have an emergency kit for the unexpected.

4



Fuel up! Keep gas tank at least half full. If you get stuck, you will want to keep the car running to stay warm.

5



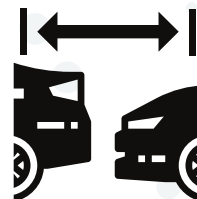
Use headlights to see and be seen! Make sure your bulbs are working.

6



Wear your seatbelt and make sure kids are buckled in too!

7



Keep a safe distance from the car in front of you. At least 3 car lengths.

8



Avoid using cruise control in icy and snowy conditions.

9



Service your car regularly to check oil and fluids.

10

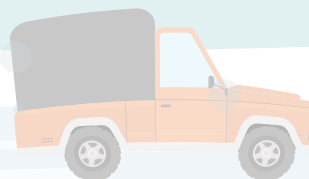


Keep speed slow and steady in snow and icy conditions.

11



Check your tire pressure and tread regularly.



Work Anniversaries

Thanks to the following staff members for your dedication, commitment and service to the City and to the taxpayers of Homer!

January

Names	Dept.	Years
Teresa Sundmark	Library	17 Years
Tomasz Sulczynski	IT	16 Years
Andrea Browning	Admin	12 Years
Brody Jones	Public Works	10 Years
Jona Focht	Dispatch	9 Years
Lynda Gilliland	Finance	6 Years
Amy Woodruff	Port	3 Years
Rose Riordan	Port	2 Years

Welcome

January New Hires

The City is delighted to extend a warm welcome to Kaleb and Ed. We are thrilled to have them join the team!



Kaleb Harvey will be attending the Police Academy in Sitka for 17 weeks before starting his position with the Homer Police Department.



Ed Gross, Associate Planner

The Planning Division welcomes **Ed Gross** as full-time Associate Planner. Ed relocated to Homer from Anchorage and has a background in construction and a degree in Landscape Architecture. Most recently he worked as a cost estimator for asphalt and concrete paving companies. Ed will be busy in the coming weeks and months learning the policies and procedures of the Planning Division, with a focus on processing development applications. This comes just in time for the upcoming construction season, the peak time of year for processing zoning permits. Please join us in welcoming Ed to the City of Homer!

DEL WAS ON THE TODAY SHOW!



Barbara and Del Masterhan

In a delightful surprise, our own Del Masterhan, Port Maintenance Supervisor, made a special appearance on the Today Show with his wife, Heather, celebrating her 50th birthday! They even had a snazzy sign representing the 49th state. What a memorable day!

EMPLOYEE HIGH FIVES

Way to go guys! Working hard through the cold weather to keep things safe and everything running smoothly.



How many Harbor Officers does it take to change a light bulb? Harbormaster Matt Clarke was recently called upon to assist a vessel when one of the bulbs heating their engine room burned out. The usual caretakers were out of town, so he stepped in to help keep this vessel warm.

Ian Overson (HPD Jailer) Clearing Snow

CITY OF HOMER ROSTER

Mayor - Ken Castner (2024)

City Council

Donna Aderhold (2024)

Jason Davis (2025)

Shelley Erickson (2024)

Storm P. Hansen (2025)

Rachel Lord (2026)

Caroline Venuti (2026)

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

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

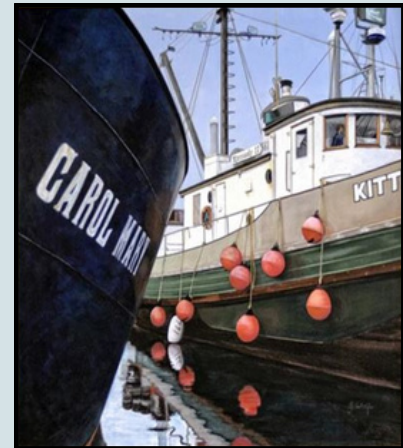
Planning Commission

Port and Harbor Advisory Commission

MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION



Homer Harbor, by Ed Tussey- City Hall



Kittiwake II, by Gaye Wolfe - City Hall

Learn more about the municipal art collection at:

[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/
prac/city-homer-municipal-art-collection](http://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.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

February

5	3:30 pm	Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
8	4:00 pm	ADA Advisory Board
13	4:30 pm	Economic Development Advisory Worksession
13	6:00 pm	Economic Development Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
15	4:30 pm	Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Worksession
15	5:30 pm	Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
20	4:30 pm	Library Advisory Board Worksession
20	5:30 pm	Library Advisory Board Regular Meeting
21	5:30 pm	Planning Commission Worksession
21	6:30 pm	Planning Commission Regular Meeting
28	5:30 pm	Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Regular Meeting

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Meeting



JOIN OUR TEAM

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

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

491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska 99603

907-235-8121

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION 2024 Calendar

	AGENDA DEADLINE	MEETING	CITY COUNCIL MEETING FOR REPORT*	ANNUAL TOPICS/EVENTS
JANUARY	Wednesday 1/3 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 1/9 6:00 p.m.	Monday 1/22 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Budget Review/Develop Requests *may be n/a during non-budget years • Land Allocation Plan Review • KPEDD Industry Outlook Forum
FEBRUARY	Wednesday 2/7 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 2/13 6:00 p.m.	Monday 2/26 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPC Job Fair
MARCH	Wednesday 3/6 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 3/12 6:00 p.m.	Tuesday 3/25 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk Reappointment Notices Sent Out • Update from Public Works Director • KPEDD CEDS Review
APRIL	Wednesday 4/3 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 4/9 6:00 p.m.	Monday 4/22 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms Expire April 1st • Advisory Body Training Worksession
MAY	Wednesday 5/8 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 5/14 6:00 p.m.	Tuesday 5/28 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Review of Commission's Bylaws • Election of EDC Officers
JUNE	Wednesday 6/5 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 6/11 6:00 p.m.	Monday 6/24 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Plan Review
JULY	No Regular Meeting			
AUGUST	Wednesday 8/7 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 8/13 6:00 p.m.	Monday 8/26 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvement Plan Review • Update from Public Works Director
SEPTEMBER	Wednesday 9/4 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 9/10 6:00 p.m.	Monday 9/23 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Development Speaker
OCTOBER	Wednesday 10/2 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 10/8 6:00 p.m.	Monday 10/14 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Review of EDC's Strategic Plan/Goals & BR&E
NOVEMBER	Wednesday 11/6 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 11/12 6:00 p.m.	Monday 11/25 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber's Annual Presentation to EDC • Approve Meeting Schedule for Upcoming Year
DECEMBER	No Regular Meeting			

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