



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

City of Homer Agenda

Economic Development Advisory Commission Regular Meeting

Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 6:00 PM

City Hall Cowles Council Chambers via Zoom Webinar

Webinar ID: 990 0366 1092 Password: 725933

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 UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA (3 Minute Time Limit)

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 12, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

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VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS (20 Minute Time Limit)

A. Tim Dillon, KPEDD Executive Director – 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS (5 Minute Time Limit)

A. EDC Staff Report for February 2021

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B. Chamber Director Report

C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

Page 12

i. HMTA Regular Meeting Minutes January 6, 2021

D. Pioneer Avenue Task Force Report

E. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. COVID Business Survey

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i. Forbes Article “Nine Ways Local Governments Can Support Small Business Success During A Pandemic”

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B. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update	Page 21
C. Community Design Manual Update	Page 22
i. Memo PL 21-01 to Planning Commission Re: Draft Community Design Manual	
ii. DRAFT Chapter 2 Site Design	Page 23
iii. DRAFT Chapter 3 Outdoor Lighting	Page 31

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

A. City Manager’s Report for January 25, 2021	Page 33
B. City Manager’s Report for February 8, 2021	Page 37
C. Memo from City Clerk to City Advisory Bodies Re: Reports to Council	Page 42
D. EDC 2021 Calendar	Page 43

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE (3 Minute Time Limit)

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

COMMENTS OF THE CITY COUNCILMEMBER (if present)

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

ADJOURNMENT

Next Regular Meeting is **TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.** All meetings scheduled to be held via Zoom Webinar in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

Session 21-01 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:00 p.m. on January 12, 2021 at the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska via Zoom webinar, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS MARKS, BROWN, RICHARDSON, AREVALO, JOHNSON, CHEROK

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER SPEAKMAN

STAFF: DEPUTY CITY PLANNER ENGBRETSSEN
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR KEISER

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Marks called for a motion to approve the agenda.

AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 8, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Marks called for a motion to approve the last meeting minutes.

JOHNSON/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

A. Jan Kaiser, Public Works Director – Main Street Sidewalk Project

Chair Marks introduced Jan Keiser, Public Works Director.

Ms. Keiser provided an update on the Main Street Sidewalk Project. The project was approved for design last year by City Council and are gathering feedback on the designs to make it as “shovel-ready” as possible with the intent that as soon as they get a funding opportunity that they can act on it, hopefully this year. She referred to the map and design materials in the packet to describe what staff has proposed to the Planning Commission, City Council, and now to the EDC. She asked the commission to share their thoughts on the designs at this meeting.

At the request of Commissioner Richardson, it was clarified which part of Main Street is being proposed for improvements, which is the west side of the upper-hill portion. No land acquisition was required for construction; it is all being done within the easement.

In response to Chair Mark’s questions, Ms. Keiser clarified that asphalt will be used to top the sidewalk and what additional details still need to be worked out for the Pioneer Avenue intersection. She also confirmed the peony bed adjacent to the Homer Theatre will be protected during construction.

Commissioner Cherok inquired on what the thickness of asphalt will be. Ms. Keiser responded that the Sprucewood Trail was installed 10+ years ago and is still holding up with Public Work’s regular maintenance. It was also clarified that there will be a curb and gutter, which will mitigate vehicles driving and parking on the sidewalk/Right-of-Way.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. EDC Staff Report

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen spoke to her written report, noting the following topics:

- Attendance at Chamber of Commerce board meetings
- Plan to include notes in staff memos as to how the respective topic ties into their EDC goals
- Working on COVID vaccine POD (point of dispensing) planning for a South Peninsula Hospital event happening this week

Chair Marks thanked Ms. Engebretsen for her work and tying the BR&E (Business Retention and Economic Study) into their meetings.

B. Chamber Director Report

Chamber Director Brad Anderson commented that he is happy to see the vaccine progress in our community. He reported on Chamber updates, which include:

- Working with Simple View to do a huge revamp of their website and other advertising grids.
- Bringing back the fishing tournaments; was hard to cancel those last year due to COVID but are planning to have tournaments at later dates to give more time for the vaccine to get through the community and make things as safe as possible for more participation.

- Winter King Salmon Tournament – April 17th
- Halibut Tournament – June 4th and 5th
- New event: Peony Celebration – July 9 thru 24th
- Looking to hold some type of food truck event either in June or September
- Working on digital signage at the Homer Airport
- Legislative committee is going to be taking a much more aggressive approach with economic development projects and looking to find ways to promote

C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

Chair Marks requested that commissioners and staff reach out to HMTA representatives to ensure they're aware they have a seat at the EDC.

D. Pioneer Avenue Task Force Report

Chair Marks noted there is nothing to report until February 2021.

E. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report

Chair Marks commented that KPEDD updates would be discussed under Pending Business, Item B.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PENDING BUSINESS

A. COVID Business Survey

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading the title. She provided a briefing of last meeting's discussion on their plan to reach out to various businesses regarding the impact of COVID-19, and then deferred to the commissioners to give their individual reports.

Commissioner Richardson spoke to four to five businesses including a barber, an attorney, a bank, and a restaurant. All had been affected but none had to close or was severely suffering due to COVID. Feedback included getting their City communications from various resources; positive support for continued clear communication; problems with having employees out due to kids being home from school; not having enough substitute teachers to cover gaps due to in-person/remote learning or staffing issues; getting more mask use in the community and business owners wishing for more action from Council as they feel they can't enforce mask policies on their own.

Commissioner Cherok spoke to four businesses including an excavation company, a charter, a restaurant, and sales/service business. One was closed for a few months but more as a precaution, while for another it was operational due to it being slow; others said business was still really good and in fact one of their busiest years. Feedback received included two used PPE loans; staffing remained relatively the same with the exception of the excavation business that increased employees; one

business interested in funding assistance while the others preferred the City to not implement any restrictions and to just allow them to operate as usual.

Commissioner Arevalo spoke to two non-profits and two restaurants. Feedback from the non-profits included significant funding loss due to not being able to hold their usual fundraising events or programs, which is about 50% of their budgets; communication channels were impacted as many businesses that show their flyers were closed or not open to public traffic; staffing remained about the same but volunteer efforts were down; did receive some PPE funds; were already in-tuned to City channels for information but recommend keeping many different channels; appreciated the grant funding but would also like to see covered shelters. Feedback received from one restaurant was they were hard-hit financially and felt there was nothing the City or EDC could do. The other restaurant, while also impacted greatly, was already better known for take-out services and even after they initially had to lessen their hours and staffing they were still able to make up their losses after a 6-month period; they appreciated the City grants and community efforts to keep them afloat; suggested that the EDC could forward their feedback to Council or provide feedback from Council to the businesses.

Commissioner Johnson spoke to one non-profit as his other contact did not get back to him. Most of what he's heard from other commissioners is similar to what he heard; COVID has had an impact on their business and personal lives; staffing was significantly cut back; City could help with ensuring strong federal resources remain available.

Commissioner Brown spoke to three long-standing charter businesses. Feedback received included that travel bans and restrictions had a huge negative impact; overall out-of-state business was completely wiped out but in-state travel was up; PPE and grant money was very helpful and kept payments to captains and crewmembers about what they would be during a normal year; one company was able to roll over customers to 2021; one business had been purchased January 2020 so was severely hurt by COVID; PPE requirements made them keep employee levels the same; online and radio channels were great and there was a large amount of positive feedback for local and regional assistance; many requested action to do everything possible to encourage visitors and not restrict businesses.

Chair Marks spoke with five businesses: a brick and mortar retail, a virtual retail, a service provider, a recreational business on the Spit, and a restaurant. Feedback collected included that many received financial assistance (both State and local), with one doing so well financially that they didn't qualify for funding; one business noted that they noticed an uptick in sales as a reflection of customers choosing to spend their money where they normally would have spent elsewhere; issues of having to shorten employee hours and take on more as the owner; used many different communication channels to get information, although there was two that hadn't even thought to use the City's website; differences with grant funding regulations and issues with new businesses not qualifying for assistance; no reports of any businesses that were completely down-and-out or had to close.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen commented that it was helpful to hear all the verbal reports and written feedback the commissioners sent to her. She recommends the EDC's report to Council should reflect businesses' overall positive response to the City's support. Many of the issues they highlighted were also a struggle for City staff as they had to deal with many problems on a case-by-case basis. She

reiterated the two primary messages identified were 1) problems if you were a new business owner, and 2) local and State assistance programs worked so by-and-large many businesses did ok and didn't fail. She was not sure what additional assistance will be forthcoming.

There was discussion on next steps the commission would like to take. There was unanimous agreement that a formal survey was not necessary, and to have Ms. Engebretsen compile all of their collected information for the February meeting for them to make final recommendations to City Council.

Mr. Richardson voiced his concern that the substitute teacher shortage is a time-sensitive issue and if there was a way the City could help. There was discussion on what the EDC could do, such as including the issue in their Council report or reaching out to Community Coordinator Mike Illg.

B. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading the title. She commented on how pleasing it was to see the large number of local businesses, commissioners, and City staff that participated in the KPEDD's (Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District) annual public business forum held via Zoom with the University of Alaska.

Ms. Marks further explained the two areas that were discussed at the forum. Goals listed were 1) technology and telecommunication, 2) workforce and human capital, 3) infrastructure and land use, 4) business climate and entrepreneurship, and 5) regional partnerships. The other area of discussion was regarding SWOTS: "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats" for the borough. The SWOT is to be posted to KPEDD's website for review, and is to help everyone see themselves in the CEDS, but might not all agree on them. What the EDC may end up doing is taking the SWOT and see what is applicable to our community and what isn't. Tim Dillon will be presenting at the February meeting on this matter.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen shared her positive experience with the forum and looks forward to learning more about KPEDD's outreach plans and how EDC fits into that. She highlighted how, compared to other regions, the Kenai Peninsula Borough has the strength of having multiple industries; no one or two industries are dominant. She noted that not much was discussed about geographic discrepancies, such as higher costs of living in Homer compared to worker wages, but they can look to the SWOT for better info.

Commissioner Arevalo commented on how the forum did not fully address Homer's housing situation in reference to increasing numbers of retirees. She opined that those who live here know that's a big deal, and should be incorporated into their Homer info.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Wayfinding & Streetscape Plan Request for Proposals
 - i. DRAFT Development of Homer Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan RFP

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading the title and deferred to Deputy City Planner Engebretsen.

Ms. Engebretsen requested feedback from the commission regarding the Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan RFP (Request for Proposals) and whether this project includes signage for vehicles, such as gateways to the community.

Commissioner Arevalo responded, noting that for cars it's more for directional assistance along the Homer Bypass. There was discussion on which specific locations to make sure are included in the RFP.

Chair Marks inquired on the number of public meetings and how many staff thinks may be needed. Ms. Engebretsen explained that about three meetings is reasonable with additional outreach. Ms. Marks noted a few areas in the RFP that may need to be revised, including the reference to Pioneers on Pioneer Workgroup instead of Pioneer Avenue Task Force/Peony Celebration, and the unfamiliar term "parkways landscape improvements".

Commissioner Johnson inquired on how much would the document have to change to include the vehicle signage information. Ms. Engebretsen responded that there would only be about a couple sentences to include, and not add too much more to the scope of work.

JOHNSON/AREVALO MOVED TO MAKE THE DISCUSSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RFP DRAFT AND SUPPORT THE WAYFINDING AND STREETSCAPE PLAN REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND RECOMMEND CITY COUNCIL APPROVE THE RFP FOR ADVERTISING.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: YES: MARKS, CHEROK, AREVALO, BROWN, JOHNSON, RICHARDSON

Motion carried.

- B. Main Street Sidewalk Project
 - i. Homer Main Street Sidewalk Improvements Design

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading the title and deferred to Deputy City Planner Engebretsen.

Ms. Engebretsen commented that this is the commission's opportunity to make additional comments on the subject, and to make a motion if the EDC is in support of the Main Street Sidewalk Improvement project moving forward.

MARKS/RICHARDSON MOVED THE EDC GO ON RECORD TO SUPPORT THE HOMER MAIN STREET SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS DESIGN.

Chair Marks commented that the EDC supports having the sidewalk go up Main Street on the West and East side to give what is required to make it safe and that they look forward to having that completed.

VOTE: YES: CHEROK, RICHARDSON, BROWN, JOHNSON, AREVALO, MARKS

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. City Manager's Report for December 14, 2020
- B. City Manager's Report for January 11, 2021
- C. CARES Act Economic Relief Grant Programs Update dated January 5, 2021
- D. EDC 2021 Meeting Calendar
- E. Commissioner Attendance at 2021 City Council Meetings

Chair Marks agreed to attend the City Council's January meeting and encouraged the other commissioners to volunteer to provide the Council report.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Tussey thanked the commission for a good meeting.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen voiced her appreciation for the commission's discussion on the Main Street and Wayfinding/Streetscape projects and to see progress being made. She thanked the commissioners for visiting businesses to conduct the COVID survey and how now more than ever it's important to facilitate relations with businesses and community members.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Marks thanked everyone for their participation and aiding in projects moving forward. She reminded the commission that terms will be expiring April 1st for Commissioners Johnson and Arevalo and hope they plan to reapply. At the Chair's request, Deputy City Clerk Tussey explained the reappointment process and what communications they can expect from the Clerk's Office.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Johnson commented that he will be absent for the EDC's February meeting.

Commissioner Arevalo thanked Deputy City Planner Engebretsen for all her work with keeping the EDC on track with accomplishing their goals. She thanked Commissioner Richardson for coming up with the idea to reach out to businesses and his work in developing the COVID Survey questions. She briefed the commission on her last report to City Council and how those efforts garnered interest from councilmembers and the mayor; she opined that Council may follow up with the EDC on that survey as it provides valuable information. Ms. Arevalo also thanked the City at large for the Christmas light program.

Commissioners Brown, Cherok, and Richardson had no additional comments.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held via Zoom webinar in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

RACHEL TUSSEY, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I

Approved: _____



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Planning

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

Planning@ci.homer.ak.us

(p) 907-235-3106

(f) 907-235-3118

TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Deputy City Planner
DATE: February 9, 2021
SUBJECT: February Staff Report

Activities

- Attended January chamber meeting. Provided a letter of support from the City to the Chamber for moving the Winter King Tournament
- I continue to be involved in planning the mass COVID-19 vaccine events. One event is scheduled for February 5th and 6th (appointments required). Second dose for the first round of people 65 and older is scheduled for February 12 and 13th. March events are in the early planning stages.
- I have been elected to the Alaska Chapter of the American Planning Association and will serve as treasurer this year. Their virtual conference is planned for February and I encouraged the inclusion of KPEDD and the CEDS project. Planning and Economic Development are closely related but don't always get attention from the other at conferences.
- I have been appointed to the Public Works Campus Task Force. I'm usually sitting on the planning and zoning side of a development project. I'm looking forward to participating on the site selection and business side of the conversation.
- I have been working with the Friends of the Homer Library, on a project to apply for a technical assistance grant. The project would be to better utilize the library grounds to expand low-key no-cost recreational opportunities to all users, provide a location for library sponsored events, provide wetland education in an urban setting, and increase cultural appreciation by incorporating land acknowledgement. This project ties in with the BR&E desire for a walkable, attractive downtown core, and signage can be designed to follow the future wayfinding plan.

**Homer Marine Trades Association
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 6, 2021
NOMAR**

The meeting was called to order by President Mark Zieset at 6:10 p.m.

Directors Present: Mark Zieset, Kate Mitchell, Jen Hakala, Cinda Martin, Eric Engebretsen, Bruce Friend, Joshua Hankin-Foley, Matt Alward and Aaron Fleenor. A quorum was established.

Guests Present: none

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Matt Alward to approve the agenda with the addition of Anchorage Boat Show under Old Business, 2nd and carried.

Approval of December 6th 2020 meeting minutes: Motion by Aaron Fleenor to approve the minutes of the last meeting as written, 2nd and carried.

Treasurer's Report: Jen Hakala presented a current Balance Sheet and Aging Report; Morris has paid his account in full. A copy is attached for the record. AP balance of \$4,946 that includes Fish Expo for the 2nd installment of the 2021 booth and Pacific Fishing Magazine Jan 2021 ad. The remainder of the CARES grant will be written to KPC for spring course assistance. The Finance Committee will meet this month to draft the budget.

Committee Reports:

- Advertising/Web/Social Media –
 - Tide Books – Kate reported that the Tide Books are in and there are boxes for each advertiser that need to be delivered/picked up.
 - Pacific Fishing – Kate reported that this is the only print advertising being done this year with the City of Homer covering 50% of the ad invoice.
 - Website – Mark reported that several board members met with Grady Avant regarding re-vamping our website and social media presence and found him to be a good fit for the organization. His proposal seemed very reasonable.
 - Brochures – Kate reported that we have not yet revised the brochures since there we did not attend the Fish Expo however we should get them printed prior to the Anchorage Boat Show; suggestion to reduce the quantity to 1,000 from 1,500.
- Workforce Development – no report
- Scholarship – Cinda reported that she is working with Marissa Albaugh to help her with her final course to get her Mariner Credentials. She intends to enroll in the PSC course at AVTEC however their campus is closed for room and board. She is investigating housing cost and will let me know if she intends to enroll. The cost of the course is \$950. If we cover this cost, the remaining funds from the CARES grant of \$1,333 will go to KPC toward spring Marine Technology courses.

Old Business:

- January meeting with Grady Avant – Mark will set up an Advertising Committee meeting that all board members would be invited to in order to meet with Grady to discuss his ideas. Tentative date/time Tuesday, January 26th at 5pm at NOMAR.

- Anchorage Boat Show – Eric reported that Bay Welding is planning to participate at this point but can be flexible if the show is cancelled. HMTA is not participating this year due to the outdoor venue. Eric suggested that any member wanting to participate be directed to him for assistance with booth registration. He also reported that he has been invited to a Mat-Su Outdoorsmen Show in April that he is considering.

New Business:

- Round Haul – Eric would like to get Bay Welding on the schedule for a future Round Haul; COVID restrictions dependent.

Comments:

- Aaron Fleenor reported that the Boat Yard is scheduled to get the 200 ton lift mid May!! The next task is to get the transporter.
- Jen Hakala reported that they are doing a Filson Live Instagram meeting. Between Salmon Sisters and Filson, they've been keeping quite busy. The expansion project has started and is estimated at taking a full year to complete.
- NPFA is meeting at NOMAR on the 19th with Zoom capability.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 10th at 6pm at NOMAR.

Adjourn: There being no further business to come before the membership, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cinda Martin, Secretary



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491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

Planning@ci.homer.ak.us

(p) 907-235-3106

(f) 907-235-3118

TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Deputy City Planner
DATE: February 1, 2021
SUBJECT: COVID Business Survey 1/2021

EDC Strategic Plan Goal: Reach out to local businesses to see what immediate needs are (6+ months into COVID). Implementation: develop questions and ask local businesses.

Requested Action:

- 1.** Identify if there are common problems the City or EDC can help with? What opportunities are there to help businesses?
- 2.** Make a recommendation on actions the City Council can take to address these business challenges. (Possible February 22nd CC report or presentation?)

Recap: At the last meeting, Commissioners reported the responses they received from businesses that were surveyed.

Questions:

1. Has the COVID pandemic effected your business? (Questions 1& 2 combined: What are the main ways your business has been affected by COVID-19?)
2. What is the main way that your business was effected?
3. Do you have as many staff members or more in 2020 than in 2019
4. How have you researched aid for your business during the epidemic? Internet, Talk to Friends, Went to Chamber of Commerce, Visited SBA website? This winter, what's the best way for the city to share information with you on economic aid? (city website, chamber newsletter, radio/print/social media?)
5. How can the City of Homer assist you in this economic down turn?
6. How can City of Homer Economic Development Commission help you?

Outcomes:

COVID has had a range of effects on local business.

- The EDC did not hear of any businesses in Homer that went out of business, and some even had an increase in sales, such as excavation and outdoor recreation sales.

- Other businesses such as charter companies were hit with many cancellations, restaurants were negatively affected, and some non-profits have been greatly impacted.
- New business owners were not always eligible for federal programs which was also a hurdle.
- For businesses that have continued overhead and increased costs associated with curbside service (like a restaurant), the city funds helped bridge the gap between reduced sales and higher costs.
- The businesses survey were generally very appreciative of the city efforts to get relief funds out as fast and efficiently as possible, and also the positive COVID messaging the city has provided.
- Keeping businesses open while helping people feel safe is one of the primary ways the city can continue to support the businesses community through the pandemic.

Requested Action:

- 1.** Identify if there are common problems the City or EDC can help with? What opportunities are there to help businesses?
- 2.** Make a recommendation on actions the City Council can take to address these business challenges. (Possible February 22nd CC report or presentation?)

Attachment

1. Article, Nine Ways Local Governments Can Support Small Business Success During A Pandemic (Forbes 1/27/21)

Jan 27, 2021, 08:00am EST | 137 views

Nine Ways Local Governments Can Support Small Business Success During A Pandemic



Christian Muntean Forbes Councils Member
Forbes Coaches Council COUNCIL POST | Membership (fee-based)
Leadership

Working with leaders of fast-growth companies & owners preparing for profitable & meaningful exits. Vantage Consulting. Follow on LinkedIn.



GETTY

My crystal ball broke sometime in early 2020. But as we launch into 2021, the remaining shards suggest that we might only be about halfway through this Covid-19 experience.

Yes, the vaccine is out. We've witnessed historically rapid development and deployment. Nevertheless, forecasts from firms like McKinsey & Company suggest that we are unlikely to see economic "normalization" until Q3 of 2021.

President Biden has famously stated that our darkest days are ahead of us.

We may have as much rough road in front of us as we have behind us. That is a big deal. Especially for small businesses.

There is a reoccurring hope that the federal fairy godmother will make this all go away. But so far, this has proven to be untrue. And, in actuality, local governments are closer to local businesses and can have a greater impact.

There have been three categories of local government responses:

1. Hunker down and hope to survive. Their efforts focus on short-term survival.

~~MORE FOR YOU~~

~~**5 Timely And Actionable Tips To Help Sustain Your Small Business**~~

~~**Nasdaq Plans To Require Listed Companies To Follow Board Diversity Requirements**~~

~~**How To Start A VC: Interview With Maya Horgan Famodu, Founder, Ingressive Capital**~~

2. A laissez-faire approach and hope to survive. Each business is free to find its own way.

3. Active support for long-term small business survival with an eye toward future growth

This last approach has been the least trumpeted in the news. But some local governments have developed ingenious interventions for small businesses, some of which go beyond just helping businesses survive. They are actually positioning businesses in their communities for a stronger market position even in a post-Covid-19 world.

Nine Ways Local Governments Are Helping — Besides Just Giving

Money

Joseph Parilla, a fellow with the Brookings Institute, is referring to these kinds of local government actions when he says, "They realize that it's much easier to retain businesses and jobs than to let them fail and presume the economy will stitch itself back together. ... What we learned from the great recession is that it is not easy for the economy to heal itself."

Local governments that prioritize supporting small businesses and moving CARES Act and other funds toward them are doing some of the most good. This involves a little "enlightened self-interest."

Promote Business-Valuing Priorities

1. Get federal aid money out. OK, this is about giving money — but it's about actually getting it out there. Tim Dillon, Executive Director of the Kenai Peninsula Development Corporation in Alaska, told me that communities that have prioritized getting federal assistance to local businesses — as opposed to sitting on it or repurposing it for government expenses — are seeing better results.

2. Encourage "Shop local." Akron, Ohio, is actively encouraging shopping online with local businesses by building the Akronite app. Akronite connects shoppers to local businesses and offers points that lead to discounts.

3. Help local businesses shift to online sales. For example, some local governments are supporting their businesses to convert to an online presence through tech grants on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula.

Invest In Business Development

Some governments are actively utilizing the Covid-19 disruption to invest in shaping the future workforce and the opportunities for small businesses. For example:

4. Invest in workforce training programs aimed toward future economic activity. Charlotte, North Carolina, has invested in a workforce

training and placement program that targets fields the city would like to grow in — specifically, advanced tech and renewable energy.

5. Make consulting/good advice available. Local small business development centers are often hubs for business resources and free consultation. Communities such as San Antonio, Texas; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and St. Mary, Georgia, offer many success stories of growth.

6. Encourage businesses and startups to create online solutions to global needs. Abu Dhabi, as an example, is actively investing in online businesses that can provide global medical and educational solutions.

Focus Government Operations

Sometimes the government itself can just work in a way that makes it friendlier to local business. For example:

7. Streamline internal operations. Governments can improve internal operations, especially through automation. This can allow easier and more timely access to services by the public while cutting the cost of government.

8. Create centralized, user-friendly websites for businesses. Birmingham, Alabama; Oakland, California; and Boston, Massachusetts, are all examples of cities that have created websites to give businesses better access to information, as well as resources on transitioning to an online/delivery-based economy.

9. Make it easier for small businesses to contract with the government. Local governments contract for all kinds of services. They can make it easier for local businesses to discover these opportunities and contract with their local governments.

Governments Can Be Creative

Last March, few people expected that we'd be where we are today. Too many governments have responded with very short-term solutions. They may contribute to public health, but they are damaging people's livelihoods and the

economy — without which public health is difficult to sustain.

Most of these ideas, or solutions similar to them, are not Covid-19-specific. They are really just good ideas, using the energy around the pandemic to generate something new.

Instead of merely asking your local businesses for sacrifice, are there ways your local government could bring light to darker days? What simple innovations could your government enact that both address today's needs as well as tomorrow's success?

Forbes Coaches Council is an invitation-only community for leading business and career coaches. *Do I qualify?*

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Christian Muntean

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Planning

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

Planning@ci.homer.ak.us

(p) 907-235-3106

(f) 907-235-3118

TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Deputy City Planner
DATE: February 1, 2021
SUBJECT: CEDS Update

EDC Strategic Plan Goal: Assist KPEDD in development of the Kenai Peninsula regional (CEDS) – public outreach, information gathering, collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce, include public meetings

Tim Dillion, KPEDD Executive Director is scheduled to make a presentation at the meeting.

Next Steps:

1. Identify ways the EDC can assist KPEDD over the next 30 and 60 days
2. Assign/volunteer for EDC tasks and report back for March meeting



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Memorandum PL 21-01

TO: Homer Planning Commission
THROUGH: Rick Abboud, City Planner
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Deputy City Planner
DATE: February 3, 2021
SUBJECT: Draft Community Design Manual

We are half way done! Staff has made the edits approved by the Commission to the Community Design Manual (CDM).

Staff divided the original Site Design section into two chapters because the document had different applicability to some zones and uses. Confusing! Now it will be clearer to users what rules apply where. Staff is still working on details like margins and text alignment.

Staff will present the rest of the CDM (introduction and architecture) at a future meeting. Eventually we will look at the whole document and make a recommendation for adoption by resolution to the City Council.

Attachments

Chapter 2 Site Design

Chapter 3 Outdoor Lighting

Chapter 2. SITE DESIGN

Applicability: This Chapter applies to all non-residential uses and uses with more than 12 residential units in the Central Business and Gateway Business Districts and to all uses except single family dwellings and duplexes in the Scenic Gateway Corridor Overlay District.

The sections in this chapter include:

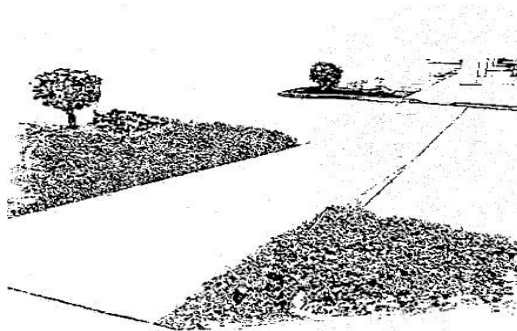
- A. On-site Walkways**
- B. Outdoor Common Areas**
- C. Commercial Streetscape**
- D. Landscaping and Screening**
- E. Fences**

A. ON-SITE WALKWAYS

Primary walkways are intended to link a building's main entrance to the public right-of-way and to facilitate and enhance the pedestrian environment.

1. Link commercial buildings and the public right-of-way with primary walkways.

Commercial buildings must be served by primary walkways which directly link the building's main entrance to the public right-of-way.



2. Assure that primary walkway width is proportionate to scale of project.

Primary walkways must be a minimum of 5 feet on small-scale projects; wider walkways may be required for larger scaled projects.

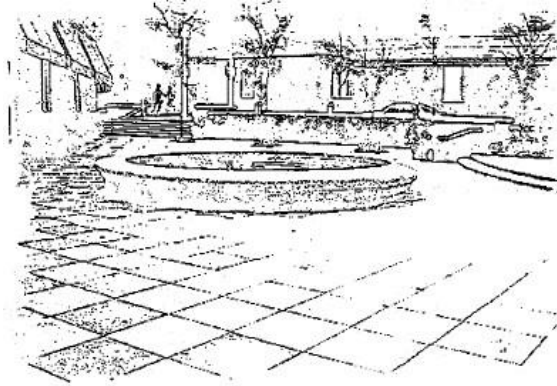
3. Differentiate walkway surface.

Walkways must be visually distinct from parking lot and driveway surfaces and may include textured or colored materials. Paint or striping will not suffice to meet this requirement. Walkways must be functionally separate from parking lots and driveways except where they cross driveways.

4. **Accent walkway with significant landscaping.** One side of the primary walkway must be landscaped except where it crosses a driveway. The width of the landscaping shall be sufficient to maintain a proper planting environment. Planting strips must have an average width of 3 feet. Wider planting strips may be required for larger scaled projects.
5. Accent walkway with lighting and seating areas.

B. OUTDOOR COMMON AREAS

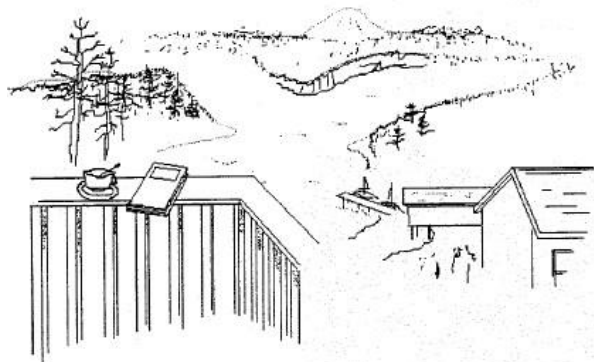
A common area is a designed outdoor space which encourages outdoor activities and leisure in outdoor spaces associated with commercial development. Required common areas must be provided on-site, but may be enlarged and extended into city rights-of-way to connect with the sidewalk, subject to City of Homer approval.



1. **Provide common area of a size proportionate to development.** Commercial development greater than 5000 square feet in floor area shall include common areas equal to 5% of the gross floor area of the building to which they apply, excluding garages, warehouses, and similar support structures.
2. **Choose type of common area best suited to development.** Common areas must include trash receptacles and casual seating and/or tables. Common areas must be one of (or a combination of) the following:
 - a. **Balcony, terrace or covered colonnade** - providing a minimum walking width of 8 feet and which also incorporates seating areas.



- b. Plaza - with colored or textured pavement surface, e.g., brick, stone, exposed aggregate concrete or colored and textured concrete. To provide pattern and enhance the texture of the pavement, concrete surfaces shall be scored or otherwise divided into smaller sections.
- c. Pocket park - developed between or in front of buildings which include landscaped areas of grass, trees, shrubbery and flowers, combined with limited paths and pavement areas for casual tables and/or seats.
- d. Scenic View Area - consistent with these design standards. Viewing platforms intended for public access shall be identified with signage located at the edge of the public right-of-way.
- e. Off site common areas - For structures with less than 10,000 square feet of floor area, any of the above common areas which are within 250 feet of the subject site and are at least as large as the required common area for the subject site meet common area requirements and do not have to be repeated. This does not imply that the off site common area must be accessible for the subject site's use. It merely develops an appropriate density for outdoor common areas in a given district.



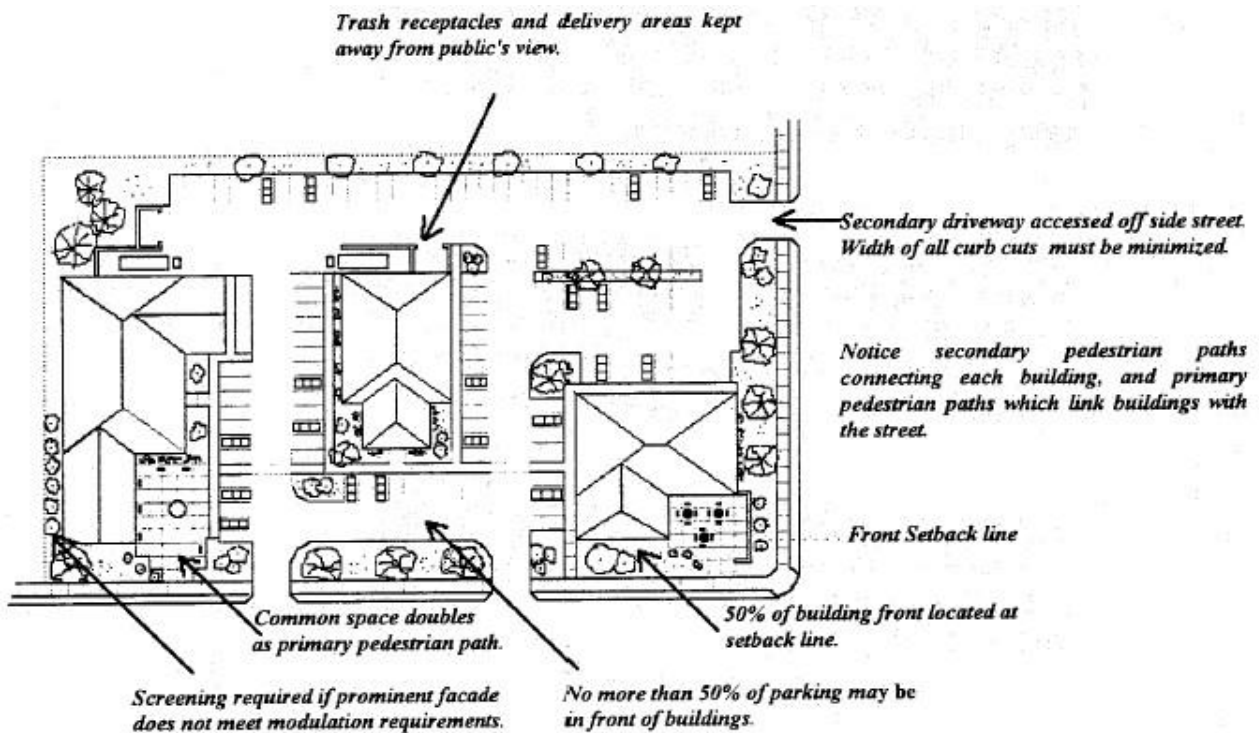
- 3. **Locate common areas in view corridors.** Where view corridors occur on a site, common areas shall be located within the view corridor. Use care in the selection of landscape plantings so as to preserve views.

4. **Provide direct access to common areas with pedestrian walkways.** Common areas (or outdoor stairs leading to common areas) shall be easily accessible to customers from the public right-of-way by either primary or secondary walkways.

C. COMMERCIAL STREETSCAPE

To enhance the visual quality and the pedestrian environment of commercial streets and activity centers, an increased emphasis should be placed on landscaping, pedestrian walkways and architecture. Parking lots and service areas should be visually diminished by keeping them to the side or rear of the buildings.

1. **Locate structure near front setback line.** At least 50 percent of the primary structure's front facade shall be placed near the front setback line. The remaining portion of the building may be stepped back to accommodate common areas or parking.
2. **Orient service and delivery areas away from the street.** Where possible, service and delivery bays, including warehouses and mini-storage units, may not be oriented to the street. These areas should be separated from public access routes and parking areas whenever practical.



3. **Use landscaping to screen parking lots and service areas.** Parking lots and other expansive pavement areas shall include a wall, solid hedge or landscape berm at least

3 feet high (conforming to clear vision requirements at driveway entrance) parallel to the right-of-way to soften the visual impact of the lot from the street.

4. **Link dissimilar buildings with common site amenities.** Visual continuity can be achieved between dissimilar buildings by emphasizing common elements of site design. (e.g., landscaping, screening, furnishings, light standards, decorative paving materials). Similar colors of structures can also provide visual continuity to the streetscape.
5. **Provide covering over walkways where appropriate.** Encourage pedestrian use of walkways by providing canopies, marquees and awnings on building fronts which abut a sidewalk.
6. **Place no more than 50% of required parking in front of buildings.** Where practical, no more than 50% of required parking may be located in front of the building. In this context, the front shall be the building side facing the street providing primary access to a site.
7. **Avoid parking in front of building entrance.** Parking spaces in front of the main building entrance interfere with entrance visibility and access. These shall be avoided.

D. LANDSCAPING & SCREENING

Formal landscaping provides a pleasing transition between the natural setting and the built environment and between adjacent built environments. Landscaping may not be considered adequate compensation for poor site or building design; it shall be used to enhance new development (regardless of how attractive the buildings on a site may be) and to soften the visual impacts of such urban necessities as parking lots and mechanical equipment. In addition to aesthetics, landscaping provides green infrastructure services such as water retention and filtration, particularly on sites with larger areas of impervious surfaces. Natural vegetation, together with existing views of the water and land views is an integral part of the Homer setting and should be preserved on both developed and vacant parcels. Views through or framed by natural vegetation may be achieved while retaining the existing vegetation which characterizes Kachemak Bay.

1. Utilize non-invasive attractive plants to achieve landscaping and screening, preserve or create tree canopy, and provide ecosystem services such as water retention and filtration. Concepts such as rain gardens and other Low Impact Development concepts are encouraged.
2. **Choose plantings which are compatible with existing vegetation.** Plantings must be of a type which will thrive amid existing vegetation without killing or overtaking it. Avoid mixing incompatible plants which require different planting environments or micro-

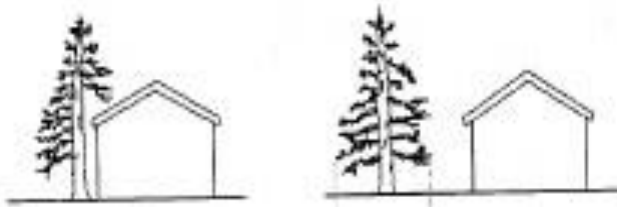
climates. Avoid haphazard mixture of textures, colors and plant types.

3. Locate vegetation to preserve significant views. Views and vistas from public rights-of-way shall be considered when determining placement of vegetation or retention of existing vegetation. While it is not the intent to avoid all trees in the foreground of a view, consideration should be given to the expected height of trees and how they might be located to "frame" the view. The following standards promote retention of existing views and apply to both commercial and residential properties:

- a. Selective thinning - Larger tree stands which, over time, have closed off significant views may be selectively thinned. Limit thinning to maintain a balance of timber and continuous canopy.
- b. Trees within view - Allow trees to be a part of the view. Limited numbers of trees should not be considered an obstruction to a view.

4. Provide adequate room for retained vegetation. Identify how retained trees will be protected both during and after construction.

- a. Location of structures. Buildings, retaining walls, utilities and paved surfaces must be far enough away from retained trees to allow room for construction activities (including grading and excavation) and to assure a proper growth environment after construction.



Neither the building footprint or the area of construction should encroach into the drip line of trees to be protected

- b. Area of construction. In no case shall construction activities take place within the drip line of the tree (root zone) without extra precautions.
- c. Tree well. Provide a tree well or other form of protection where the surrounding grade must be raised.
- d. Significant vegetation to be retained must be protected during construction by installation of an effective system. The system must be approved by the Public Works Department, and must be in place during construction.

5. Replace lost trees which were intended to be retained. Any tree proposed or

required to be retained and which is subsequently lost or destroyed must be replaced with at least three 6-foot trees of an appropriate species.

6. **Retain the natural symmetry of trees.** Trimming of trees shall be done in a manner that preserves the tree's natural symmetry. Topping shall be avoided unless required for health/safety reasons. Limbing-up may be appropriate if sufficient crown is retained to preserve the tree's health.
7. **Use shrubs or vines on blank walls.** Landscape along blank walls. Shrubs, vines or other plantings can be used to provide either coverage or grouped plantings along otherwise plain walls.
8. **Outside storage of materials and equipment and trash, if otherwise allowed, should be screened from view from adjacent streets and residential areas.** Such screens should be opaque and may consist of walls, fences, landscaped berms, evergreen plantings, or any combination thereof.
9. **Enclosed storage of materials, equipment and trash is encouraged.** The enclosure will be built to be complementary to the primary structure or landscaped or located so as to not be visible from the street.
10. **Elements such as, but not limited to; HVAC units, telephone boxes, fuel tanks and electrical transformers, shall be integrated into the site design through the use of landscaping, berms or fences and should be as unobtrusive as possible.**

E. FENCES

Fences are useful for defining space, providing security, and visually enhancing outdoor settings. The degree that these qualities are considered depends on the intended purpose of the fence and where it will be located. The design of the fence may not be important if the fence is strictly for security reasons, (e.g., a mini-storage yard), but if the fence is visible to the public right-of-way, design takes on added significance.

1. **Choose fence materials carefully.** Fences shall be constructed of wood, wrought iron, brick, stone or cinder block. Smooth-faced cinder block must have a veneer finish on the side visible to the public's view. Coated chain link attached to wood posts and rails is permitted. Chain link with slats that color coordinate with the main building color scheme are also permitted. Other materials which have the general appearance and visual quality of approved fence materials may be approved by the Planning Director,
2. **Limit chain link along prominent facades and arterials.**

3. **Limit height of fences.** Unless otherwise required by Homer City Code, fences are limited to a height of 4 feet from the natural grade along arterial frontages and in the front yard.

Chapter 3. Outdoor Lighting

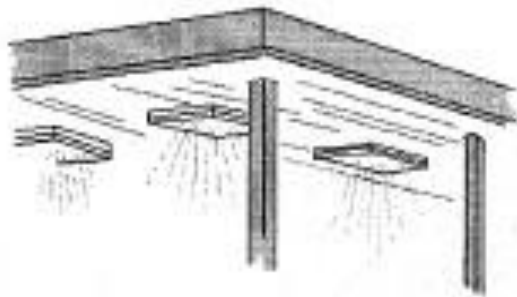
Applicability: The outdoor lighting section applies to all uses in areas zoned CBD, RR, UR, RO, GBD, SGCOL and the portion of GC1 lying south of Beluga Lake.

Purpose

The primary purpose of outdoor lighting is to improve visibility and safety within outdoor spaces. However, light can also enhance a setting if the intensity and source of the light corresponds to the visual character of the surroundings.

- 1. Avoid lighting large areas with a single source.** Large areas may be lit with a number of low intensity sources close to the area requiring illumination; illumination of a large area with a remote single source of light shall be avoided.
- 2. Avoid excessive light throw.** Lighting shall not be cast beyond the premises and shall be limited to illumination of surfaces intended for pedestrians or vehicles. Illumination of landscaped areas shall be avoided unless lighting is part of the landscape design or the area is intended for recreational use.
- 3. Keep light source hidden from public view.** Except for streetlights installed in rights-of-way, all light sources, whether on public or private property, shall be hidden or conform to light standards specified herein. Light sources (e.g., light bulbs) shall not be visible except on approved decorator lights. Sources of high intensity light, whether behind a lens or not, shall not be visible to the public.

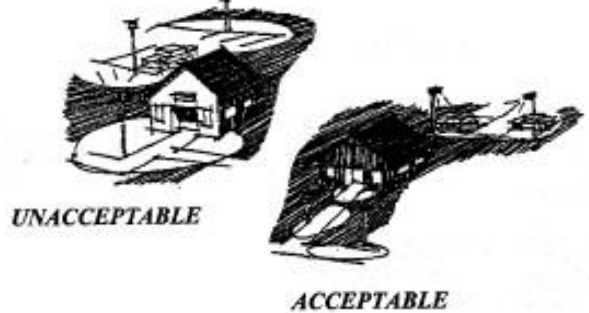
High intensity light sources may not be visible to the public. Fixture designs of an industrial or utility appearance shall be avoided.



Indirect lighting keeps light source hidden from the public's view. Recessed spot lighting may supplement indirect lighting where more direct lighting is desired.



4. **Use downward directional lighting.** All lights more than 7 feet above the ground shall be downward directional lighting.



5. **Choose approved outdoor light designs.** The following lighting types are approved:
- a. "Shoe box" style pole lamps to be approved as appropriate for district (downward directional).
 - b. Ornamental pole lamps - to be approved as appropriate in color and style for district.
 - c. Bollard lights - to be approved as appropriate in color and style for district.
6. **Avoid light fixture designs which have an industrial appearance.** Designs of an industrial or utility appearance shall be avoided on all fixtures visible to the public, e.g., mercury vapor lights, cobra lights, etc.



Except for the "shoe-box" style light on the right (which is downward directional), these other lights are too industrial in their appearance and are designed for illuminating large areas with a single light source.



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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: January 20, 2021
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for January 25, 2021 Council Meeting

FY22/23 Budget

I am in the process of meeting with each member of the leadership team to discuss the FY22/23 budget. These kick-off meetings are focused on department/division missions, objectives, and goals as well as identifying challenges and opportunities for the future. A budget development schedule document will be brought to Council at the first meeting in February, and I anticipate a discussion on Council's FY 22/23 budget priorities at the second meeting in February.

Climate Action Plan

A draft whitepaper which examines changes in the City's greenhouse gas emissions in the years since the adoption of the 2007 Climate Action Plan has been completed and is being circulated for review. This paper is largely based on significant contributions by Public Works Engineering Technician Aaron Yeaton and will serve as the jumping off point for further sustainability planning for the City. When the review is complete, I will distribute the final draft via a future report.

Sports Gear Library Update

In an effort to support additional outdoor recreational opportunities, Community Recreation is pleased to have launched the Sport Gear Lending Program that is now available online at: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/recreation/sports-gear-lending-program>. This free program provides an initial limited amount of outdoor recreational gear ranging from sleds, to various sporting balls to a pickleball set up. We hope to expand and provide additional items as the program evolves and we envision to network with other local entities to direct community members to locate gear that we may not be able to provide. Participants submit their requests online and make arrangements for curbside pickup and drop off with Community Recreation staff. The program is also open to donated gear, please contact Mike Illg at millg@ci.homer.ak.us or 907-399-6090 if you have recreational equipment in good condition which you are interested in donating to the program.

Personal Watercraft in Kachemak Bay - Update

After a brief discussion with Council at the January 11th Council meeting, I have asked staff to get feedback from the Port & Harbor Commission as well as PARCAC on this topic. In the meantime, staff continues to investigate potential impacts and potential actions that could be associated with this issue in the future.

PFD and Tax Forms Available at the Library

The Library has forms available for distribution, including both the PFD application and the IRS 1040 tax form. Patrons can pick up forms through curbside pickup or at the plastic tub outside the front door of the building. PFD forms are also available at the Legislative Information Office at 270 W. Pioneer Avenue, and the PFD application can be completed online at my.alaska.gov. The only tax form the library has is the 1040, although we will soon have reproducible tax forms that can be photocopied and taken home.

Quarterly Financial Reports

Included with the CM Report are financial reports for the 2nd and 3rd quarters of fiscal year 2020. One item that remains outstanding is the utilization of CARES funding to reimburse the General Fund for Public Safety payroll expenses. The Finance Department and CARES team are still crunching those numbers and will come to Council with an update shortly. Keep in mind while reviewing these reports that the values presented are preliminary and are subject to change during the fiscal year-end closeout process. Finance is optimistic to provide Council with a 4th Quarter report by the first meeting in April 2021.

Water and Sewer CARMA Updates

Updated reports from the Finance Department regarding the Water and Sewer CARMA funds are attached to this report.

Bishops Beach Update

The sinkhole at the transition from the paved parking lot at Bishops Beach onto the beach itself has been addressed by the Public Works Department. A contractor was brought in to provide fill, shave down ice ridges, and relocated driftwood for parking delineation. The area will be reevaluated by Parks staff when the ground is thawed in the summer.



Police Station

Staff is preparing to make one final purchase before closing out the Police Station project. See attached for a memo about plans to purchase a shelving system for the evidence room.

Recruitment for Assistant to the City Manager

In January the City began its recruitment for a new assistant to the City Manager. This position has been open since November and the Administration Department is excited to find a welcome a new member to the team.

Interested parties are encouraged to visit <https://cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs/1642188.html> and apply online.

Welcome to New Port Team Member – Amy Woodruff

Amy joined the Port & Harbor team as the Administrative Supervisor earlier this month. Amy has served as a campaign manager for both Paul Seaton, and more recently, Kelly Cooper. She was the Marketing Director for the Homer Chamber of Commerce, and has also worked for the Haven House. Amy has a Master of Arts in Public Policy.

Retirements

In January, we said goodbye to Investigations Sergeant Larry “Beans” Baxter. Sgt. Baxter joined our team in 2009. Originally from Kentucky, he spent four years in the Army which brought him to Alaska. Sgt. Baxter worked for the Unalaska Police Department from 2006 to 2009 before coming to Homer. He was promoted to Sergeant in 2017.

“Beans served the police department very well. His quick wit, knowledge and hard work will be missed. Happy hunting Beans, may you find your prey!” – Chief Robl

In February, Port Administrative Supervisor Lisa Ellington will be retiring as well. Lisa joined our team in 2006 and served the City for over 14 years.

“Although the Port and Harbor team will miss working with Lisa, we’re excited to see how retirement looks on her! Thanks Lisa for all your hard work and leadership over the years, happy trails!” – Harbormaster Hawkins

COVID-Related Updates

COVID Risk Status

I continue to meet with staff to review our risk level regarding the COVID threat in our community. On November 23rd I moved the City to “Red” status and we remain there today. After the schools reopened, I have been receiving increased communications from Library patrons and individuals who use the HERC for recreation asking that those facilities be reopened. While we’re not currently seeing much COVID activity within our organization, we are continuing to take a conservative approach to COVID-safety due to stresses on the healthcare system at a statewide level. Local COVID numbers are low right now, but we are closely watching the impact of the return to in-person schooling on the Kenai Peninsula before considering a move back to “Orange” or below. If we maintain current local trends, there is a chance we could see limited re-openings of the HERC and the Library in February.

COVID Vaccine POD

The City of Homer and South Peninsula Hospital partnered to provide a very successful event at the Christian Community Church, providing the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to more than 700 people over 65 years of age. Doses were administered on Friday and Saturday, January 15th and 16th. Teamwork between City departments and the hospital really show that Homer is “The City That Works.”



At this time, we are expecting five more vaccination events between the date of this report and the end of March. I am directing staff to continue to participate in the management and implementation of these events. South Peninsula Hospital is picking up many of the expenses, but there is still a cost to the City in staff time and materials for these events. Incident Command Team staff are determining the costs of the original vaccine POD to forecast the expense for the next five. I anticipate that there will be vaccine distribution funding made available from the Federal Government but the timing, amount, and deployment of that mechanism is unknown at this time. For now, departments will track vaccine POD related time and use their existing budgets to fund the program. I expect to bring a different funding program to Council for review once there is more known about any federal programs.



Enclosures:

1. January Employee Anniversaries
2. Quarterly Financial Reports
3. Water and Sewer CARMA Reports
4. HPD Evidence Shelving Memo



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Memorandum

TO: MAYOR CASTNER AND HOMER CITY COUNCIL

FROM: ROB DUMOUCHEL, CITY MANAGER

DATE: FEBRUARY 3, 2021

SUBJECT: CITY MANAGER'S REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 8, 2021 COUNCIL MEETING

FY22/23 Budget

In the last two weeks of January I hosted eight budget kick off meetings with members of the leadership team to discuss the FY22/23 budget. These initial meetings were very informative for myself and the department and division leaders seemed to get a lot of value out of the exercise as well. In February, the Finance Director and I are focusing on deconstructing and reconsidering various "overhead" calculations. At the second meeting in February, we will have a discussion with Council regarding budget priorities for the upcoming two-year cycle.

Land Clearing and Air Quality

In recent weeks there has been a significant amount of land clearing in Homer and Kachemak City which has caused unfavorable smoky conditions. This has been noticed by HVFD staff and they have conducted outreach to those with burn permits within city limits to discuss cold weather burning best practices. See attached for a memo from Fire Chief Kirko regarding the current situation and some changes he is proposing to our existing burn permit requirements. Changes to the conditions imposed on those seeking burning permits are within the powers of the Fire Chief per HCC 5.20.020 (d).

Future Firework Locations

Inspired by comments from Councilmember Evensen, I initiated a conversation with Police, Fire, Harbor, and Public Works staff about potentially directing future fireworks displays to a location towards the end of the Spit. The popularity of the current New Year's Eve program appears to be outgrowing Mariner Park, and there are some additional benefits possible in moving the show further from town. Staff has been directed to conduct outreach to the event organizer and will continue to fine tune the concept of a new preferred fireworks location.

Water Main Break at Lucky Shot

Recently the Public Works Department responded to a water main break on Lucky Shot Street. The narrative and photos below are provided by Director Keiser.

When Superintendent Todd Cook got to the Water Treatment Plant in the morning, he noticed water volumes, as shown on one of the meters, were abnormally high – a clear sign of a water main break somewhere. He traced the data back and found the spike started about 10:00PM last night. He immediately started driving around looking for clean, chlorine-smelling water where it shouldn't be and found it in a ditch on Lucky Shot Street. He was able to bracket the location of the break and direct the road crew's operators where to start digging.

Once the backhoe operator opened the street, you could see clean water bubbling out of the ground, like a spring. He kept digging and eventually got to the pipe, which was cast iron and leaking from obvious cracks in the pipe. As he was exposing the pipe, other crew members were keeping the hole dewatered with pumps and mobilizing parts for the repair. The water/sewer crew turned the water pressure down and notified the neighbors they would have little to no water for a while.

Once the pipe was fully exposed, the water/sewer crew cut out the section of pipe that was cracked, cleaned it and installed a new section of pipe, connected to the existing pipe with special couplings. Everything was cleaned and disinfected with our home-made chlorine solution. The water was gradually turned back on, to reduce excess pressures in the line. Plus, our inspector came out and measured the location of the water break, so it could be as-built on our system maps.

When it was clear no further leaking was occurring, the water/sewer guys packed up their gear and left. The road crew stepped back in to do the backfill and restore the road and a private driveway we had to take out in the repair process. Lucky Shot Street is a paved road, but the paving patch will need to wait for warmer weather.

What was a pleasure to watch was how well the crew worked together, even the folks who were relatively new to their roles. It was a dirt-moving ballet!

The photos below show Todd Cook and Paul Raymond digging out the cracked water main, and Ralph Skorski beside the successful repair.



Meeting with AKDOT&PF Commissioner McKinnon

On January 28th, our lobbyists were able to arrange for a meeting with Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Commissioner John McKinnon and Deputy Commissioner Rob Carpenter. Myself, Harbormaster Hawkins, and Special Project Coordinator Jenny Carroll were in attendance. We discussed the regional importance and funding needs for the port expansion project and Spit erosion management general investigations. We also discussed potential Federal COVID relief funds for transportation and the Governor’s GO Bond package plans.

Remote Sales Tax

In 2020 the City of Homer began receiving sales tax income via the Alaska Remote Seller Sales Tax Commission (ARSSTC). This program has the benefit of collecting sales tax fees the City was not previously able to collect. In 2020, the City received \$183,955 from ARSSTC. The City paid \$39,947 in fees to the Commission in 2020. Starting with the FY22/23 budget, this revenue source will have its own line.

Much like our regular sales tax collected by the Borough, there is a lag between when a taxable sale occurs and when the City receives income. The table below show the funds received in 2020 and breaks them into the City’s different sales tax streams. It is difficult to forecast the long-term impact of this revenue because 1) it is a new revenue source; 2) COVID has greatly disrupted spending habits and patterns. I believe, based on the limited amount of data we have so far, we would be conservative in saying that funds from ARSSTC could easily exceed \$300,000 on an annual basis.

	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
General Fund	\$99	\$7,897	\$11,545	\$14,532	\$15,325	\$15,551	\$15,559	\$35,175	\$115,683
HAWSP	\$24	\$1,942	\$2,839	\$3,573	\$3,768	\$3,824	\$3,826	\$8,650	\$28,447
HART-Roads	\$22	\$1,748	\$2,555	\$3,216	\$3,392	\$3,442	\$3,443	\$7,785	\$25,602
HART-Trails	\$2	\$194	\$284	\$357	\$377	\$382	\$383	\$865	\$2,845
Police Station	\$10	\$777	\$1,136	\$1,429	\$1,507	\$1,530	\$1,530	\$3,460	\$11,379
TOTAL	\$157	\$12,558	\$18,359	\$23,108	\$24,369	\$24,729	\$24,741	\$55,934	\$183,955

FY21 State Homeland Security Grant Requests Submitted

The application period for FY21 State Homeland Security Program grants just closed. Over the years, SHSP grant support has been instrumental in incrementally and systematically keeping our public safety communications system up to date. This round, the City applied for two critical pieces of equipment: (1) a bi-directional amplifier system to improve radio communication coverage for ALMR system channels inside the new Homer Police building. An unanticipated high noise floor level in the new building interferes with ALMR radio signals making it necessary to amplify ALMR radio signals; and (2) microwave links that carry radio control, data, video and voice traffic from dispatch to Homer Police Department, and during emergencies, to the City’s response personnel in the Fire, Port & Harbor and Public Works departments. The microwave link the City relies on is aging out of manufacturer support and is not capable of fully meeting current system needs. Should the City be successful in these requests, we will bring an ordinance to Council for grant acceptance and request sole source procurement of funded items to insure they are compatible with and successfully integrated into our communications system.

New Certified Municipal Clerk – Rachel Tussey

I would like to congratulate Deputy City Clerk Rachel Tussey who has earned the designation of Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC). According to IIMC, the CMC is a “declaration that you are proficient in your important position and that you have demonstrated mastery of administrative skills critical to good government.”

“I’m super excited for Rachel and very proud of her accomplishment! When we planned for 2020 training she was slated to attend two weeks at the Northwest Clerk’s Institute (NCI) in Tacoma to complete her education requirements for this certification. Then COVID hit, travel and in person trainings were canceled, and she stepped up to assist in PIO duties. NCI and IIMC worked to get virtual trainings together to ensure Clerks could continue to receive continuing education, and despite all the other duties Rachel has taken on this year she buckled down, signed up for the virtual sessions, and fulfilled her requirements to earn the prestigious designation of Certified Municipal Clerk. COVID high 5 to Rachel!” – City Clerk Jacobsen

Retirements

Jim Knott; HPD/ Investigator III

Jim was hired October 30th, 2006. He stayed until June 26th 2009, and then decided to see how the dark side was, working for Kenai PD. Jim came back to us February 2010 because let’s face it- Homer rocks. He was promoted to PO III October 31st, 2016, attended a prestigious polygraphing school in 2017 and was again promoted to Investigator III March 25th, 2018. Over his almost 14-year career with us, Jim has been instrumental in training, teaching and mentoring many officers, and many of you. He has been dedicated and an integral part of Project Drive and its success. Jim has been one of the hardest working law enforcement officers I’ve had the privilege to work with over the years. His experience and knowledge will be hugely missed here. Jim, we wish you well and success in all future endeavors and I know you’ll succeed in all. Thank you for being part of our team and giving us your best for almost 14 years. – Lieutenant Browning

Manfred Kirchner; PW/Treatment Plant Operator III

Manfred started with the City of Homer in June 2012 working in the Utility section of PW. He soon moved to the Treatment Facilities. Manfred is very knowledgeable in Water/Wastewater operations. He has been a valuable part of the Water/Sewer team and will be missed. We wish him the best in his retirement. – Superintendent Cook

COVID-Related Updates

COVID Risk Status

On February 1st I moved the City from the “Red” to “Orange” level on our COVID risk framework. The move to orange allowed for a limited reopening of the HERC and the Library by appointment-only. The change in risk level also allows staff to hold more in-person meetings as long as masking and social distancing guidelines are followed. As an organization we continue to do quite well with very minimal positive COVID cases or close contact related absences across the last couple months.

COVID Vaccine Clinic Support

On February 2nd, City staff and volunteers assisted SPH with phone-in appointment setting for the February 5th & 6th mass vaccine clinic. A phone-in option is key to providing vaccine access and assistance to those in our

community without computer or internet. The scheduling was very smooth and more satisfying to callers this time around thanks to a call queue system developed by IT Manager Nick Poolos for the vaccine call line. Thanks go out to community volunteers for their time assisting!

Council Chambers Update

Work continues on the Council Chamber update. The furniture pieces are largely complete but we're continuing to have some supply chain issues for a handful of electronic components. I'm hoping to have a solution to that shortly. At the last meeting a question was asked about the space each Councilmember would have, the photo below shows the space available with the maximum number of individuals seated at the dais (ten). Once the dais is fully wired for electricity, microphones, etc. that unfinished space will be covered up.



Enclosures:

1. Memo from Fire Chief Kirko w/ Attachments



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Clerk

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

clerk@cityofhomer-ak.gov

(p) 907-235-3130

(f) 907-235-3143

Memorandum

TO: CITY ADVISORY BODIES
FROM: MELISSA JACOBSEN, MMC, CITY CLERK
DATE: JANUARY 26, 2020
SUBJECT: REPORTS TO COUNCIL

Mayor Castner has requested that the scheduled reports from Boards, Commissions, and Committees at the Council meetings be revised so that each group reports at the Council meeting following their regularly scheduled meeting.

A revised Council meeting attendance schedule has been prepared and will be included in your meeting packets.

RECOMMENDATION

Informational Only

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION 2021 Calendar

	MEETING	AGENDA DEADLINE	CITY COUNCIL MEETING FOR REPORT*	ANNUAL TOPICS/EVENTS
JANUARY	Tuesday, January 12 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, January 5 5:00 p.m.	Monday, January 25 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Budget Review/Develop Requests
FEBRUARY	Tuesday, February 9 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, February 2 5:00 p.m.	Monday, February 22 6:00 p.m.	
MARCH	Tuesday, March 9 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, March 2 5:00 p.m.	Monday, March 22 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment/Reappointment Applications Due
APRIL	Tuesday, April 13 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, April 6 5:00 p.m.	Monday, April 26 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms Expire April 1st • Election of Chair & Vice Chair • Review of Strategic Plan/Goals
MAY	Tuesday, May 11 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, May 4 5:00 p.m.	Monday, May 24 6:00 p.m.	
JUNE	Tuesday, June 8 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, June 1 5:00 p.m.	Monday, June 28 6:00 p.m.	
JULY	Tuesday, July 13 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, July 6 5:00 p.m.	Monday, July 26 6:00 p.m.	
AUGUST	Tuesday, August 10 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, August 3 5:00 p.m.	Monday, August 23 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvement Plan Review
SEPTEMBER	Tuesday, September 7 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, August 31 5:00 p.m.	Monday, September 27 6:00 p.m.	
OCTOBER	Tuesday, October 13 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, October 6 5:00 p.m.	Monday, October 25 6:00 p.m.	
NOVEMBER	Tuesday, November 9 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, November 2 5:00 p.m.	Monday, November 22 6:00 p.m.	
DECEMBER	Tuesday, December 14 6:00 p.m.	Wednesday, December 7 5:00 p.m.	Monday, January 10, 2022 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming Year Schedule Review • Land Allocation Plan Review

*The Commission's opportunity to give their report to City Council is scheduled for the Council's regular meeting preceding the Commission's regular meeting, under Agenda Item 8 – Announcements/ Presentations/ Borough Report/Commission Reports. Reports are the Commission's opportunity to give Council a brief update on their work.