



Agenda

Economic Development Advisory Commission Regular Meeting

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Cowles Council Chambers In-Person & Via Zoom Webinar

Homer City Hall

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

Zoom Webinar ID: 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 of October 10, 2023

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS (10 minute time limit)

- A. Nine Star Education & Employment Services, Rhapsody Soderberg
- B. Homer Chamber of Commerce, Brad Anderson, Executive Director

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. November Staff Report - Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager
- B. Chamber Director Report
- C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report
- D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report
- E. Port Expansion Report
- F. Guiding Homer's Growth Group Report

G. HERC Update Report

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

[A.](#) Housing Update

[B.](#) Looking Ahead to the 2024 Strategic Plan

Memorandum from Economic Development Manager as backup

NEW BUSINESS

[A.](#) Winter Survey

Memorandum from Commissioner Kim as backup

[B.](#) End of Year Report to City Council

[C.](#) Amending Homer City Code to Address Short Term Rentals

Memorandum from Economic Development Manager as backup.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

[A.](#) City Manager's Report for October 23, 2023

[B.](#) City of Homer Newsletter for November 2023

[C.](#) AKSBDC Homer 3rd Quarter Report

[D.](#) EDC 2023 Strategic Plan

[E.](#) EDC 2023 Meeting Calendar & Commissioner Attendance at Council Meetings

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, January 9, 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 23-08 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:12 p.m. on October 10, 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.

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

ABSENT: STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PEARSON

STAFF: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER ENGBRETSSEN & DEPUTY CITY CLERK PETTIT

AGENDA APPROVAL

BROWN/PITZMAN 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

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Unapproved Regular Meeting Minutes of September 27, 2023

BROWN/PITZMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES ON THE CONSENT AGENDA.

There was brief discussion about some clarifications on the minutes. Deputy City Clerk Pettit explained the correction that he made to the minutes after noticing a typo in the third sentence under “Guiding Homer’s Growth.” Specifically, “from” was meant to be read as “for.” He noted that he went ahead and made the change while reading through the minutes prior to tonight’s meeting.

Chair Marks noted that Cassidie Cameron is a female and her first name was spelled wrong under the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report, in addition to the wrong pronouns being used throughout the paragraph. Deputy City Clerk Pettit explained that this information wasn’t provided to him, but that it wasn’t a problem for him to go back in the minutes and make the appropriate changes without a motion to do so being necessary.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

A. HART Policy Manual Review

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen first provided some insight on how roads improvements in Homer are paid for. She stated that back in the 80’s City voters approved a 20-year plan to tax three-quarters of one percent of the sales tax that that is generated in Homer to help pay for road

improvements. The City responded by acquiring a bond and that's why there are any paved roads in Homer today. The City paid off the bond and kept collecting the tax money which built up significantly before the voters reauthorized the program around 2007. That's when the City decided to use some of the money to fund trails. Within the money that's generated from the voter approved tax, 90% is earmarked for roads and 10% of it goes to fund trails. Furthermore, she added that 2015 saw State budget cuts and layoffs at the City. The money was building up from the road tax, but there was no money to pay the workers running the machinery. In 2017, voters said that some of the road/trails money can be used for operations and maintenance.

Ms. Engebretsen added that there is a cost-sharing program for people that live on a road that meets certain conditions. This cost-sharing program is what the City refers to as "Special Assessment Districts" (or SADs). This is where both the City and the residents that inhabit the area that's being improved each pay a portion of the improvements. The City then carries the debt and the residents make payments for 10-20 year periods depending on the cost. She used Grubstake Avenue as an example, claiming that the SAD is what allowed the City to extend Grubstake Avenue and build the new police station.

When asked by Chair Marks to elaborate on the work that was being done to trails and sidewalks in the community, Ms. Engebretsen assured the Commission that there is a significant amount of money for trails. She added that work has already commenced on the Library Trail and that there was funding this year to do some work on Fairview as well as some other trails. She noted that they have been unable to spend money on the trails in years past due to lack of staffing.

Commissioner Pitzman asked whether the trails money can be used for signage on the trails, and further if the money could be used for parks that are both inside and outside of City limits. Ms. Engebretsen confirmed that new signage could come out of this fund, but they haven't budgeted for signs as part of the project. She continued answering Mr. Pitzman's question, stating that if part of a trail or park is on City property, then yes the money can be used for those trails and parks. However, it's unlikely that the money would be used on someone's private property or on something that's not a City trail or park.

Commissioner Kim voiced his concern about whether staffing was still an issue for the City. Ms. Engebretsen said that she viewed the problem as partially resolved. She backed her point by adding that the City has more staff now in addition to more staff that know about trails.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. EDC Staff Report for August

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen delivered a verbal report to the Commission, first noting that Nine Star Youth Employment Services will be here next month. She added that permitting is slowing down, which is nice because the applicant pool for the Planning Technician position wasn't very strong. She informed the Commission that the new Director of Public Works is slated to start work the week of November 13th. Ms. Engebretsen explained to the Commission that the Director of Public Works and the Public Works Engineer will each become their own respective positions once Public Works Director and Engineer Keiser retires.

B. Chamber Director Report

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen stated that the Chamber Agreement is in the process of being renewed for the next three years. She added that they have a lot of special events going on and they just hired some new staff. Chair Marks urged the Commissioners to go to the Chamber and meet the new employees.

C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

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

D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report

Chair Marks informed the Commission that the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District meeting isn't until next week, so she will deliver that report at the November EDC meeting.

E. Port Expansion Project

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen delivered an update regarding the Port Expansion Project. She first provided the Commission with some background information, stating that there was a Homer Harbor Expansion public meeting held on Saturday, September 23. There were representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as representatives for the City from HDR. Much of the discussion was focused on resiliency, and this was the second meeting of a three meeting process. There were also talks about funding hiccups that are still in place. As of right now, the Corps has enough funding to continue through January.

Commissioner Arevalo raised some questions about whether or not these meetings are well-advertised, and further how someone who isn't privy to the City's website or social media could find out about the meetings. Ms. Engebretsen explained that one can sign up for updates through the harbor expansion website, and that the meetings are also advertised in the paper, on the radio, via flyers, Facebook, and even potentially Instagram. She also referenced the public outreach plan that the Port & Harbor Advisory Commission has been drafting up for the past few months.

Chair Marks added that she attended the last public meeting on the 23rd, and that she was pleasantly surprised to see how many people were at the meeting that weren't boat owners.

F. Guiding Homer's Growth Group

Commissioner Kim inserted that there wasn't really any new information to provide the Commission with due to the fact that the last meeting was prior to the last EDC meeting. He suggested the commissioners should attend the next meeting this upcoming Thursday at the library. Chair Marks added that she thinks the meeting will be informative and also urged commissioners to attend. She noted that this group is a growth out of the task force that hosted the housing conversation.

G. HERC Update

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen informed the Commission that Mike Illg, Community Recreation Manager, delivered a presentation at the City Council Work Session on Monday night. She went on to explain that the idea for a recreation facility is at a crossroad. Given that there is a lot of

hazardous material related things to work through at the HERC, it's going to be a long time before it's ready to redevelop. For recreation to continue on that site, the old building would need to be completely taken care of. She continued her update, claiming that another path forward for a recreation center would be to look at acquiring a new piece of property. She noted that City Council was receptive to this idea, and that they assigned Councilmembers Aderhold and Erickson as champions for the idea. Ms. Engebretsen suspects there will likely be a resolution out of the City Council in support of this. She concluded her update by stating that this project is just flat out going to take a while no matter which path the Commission takes, but that it would be a good idea to get something done sooner rather than later.

Commissioner Kim inquired if there were any specific properties that rise to the top. Ms. Engebretsen answered Mr. Kim's question by explaining that they have provided eight options to City Council as places that have been on the market and have basic amenities like sewer and water. The new public works site out on East End Road was also included, but Ms. Engebretsen added that she didn't know how conducive that would be to having a walkable, central community given that it's about four miles out East End Road. She asserted that one of the areas she believed best fit for a new recreation center is the Homer Electric Association site above the Gold Mine Gifts and next to the police station. She noted that it has a sidewalk and there is a lot of potential right there. Town Center was another piece of property that Ms. Engebretsen highlighted. She considered the fact that there will be higher costs associated with that property given the infrastructure already in place there. Lastly, she said there was another piece of property between West Homer Elementary School and the highway that isn't super central, but one pro would be the potential to share parking with the school.

Chair Marks added some final thoughts to the discussion, stating that she felt the task force involved in this project should include someone with an economic development viewpoint. She furthered her statement, saying that business and economic development has a different perspective than just recreating, and without including someone with an economic development background, she fears a lot of things will get lost in the shuffle.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Housing Update
Memorandum from Economic Development Manager

Chair Marks began the discussion with a brief background that she provided regarding the MAPP organization. MAPP, abbreviated for Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships, has come out with their needs assessment, and housing was their number one concern listed in conjunction with mental health. She informed the commissioners that MAPP was going to be hosting another meeting at the college this upcoming Friday. There will be one meeting from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., followed by another meeting from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. Both meetings will cover the same materials, where MAPP will aim to discuss the top four or five problems that they have observed throughout the community in order to see what can be done once they delve into the statistics.

- B. Looking Ahead to the 2024 Strategic Plan
Memorandum from Economic Development Manager

Chair Marks began the discussion by asking Economic Development Manager Engebretsen if the Commission should be careful to recognize that it may have to come up with some other ways of doing things in 2024 in regards to the contract that will be awarded to whichever consultant City Council chooses to work on the comprehensive plan. Ms. Engebretsen affirmed that Council is scheduled to award a contract at the next Council meeting. She added that it would help her to know what things the Commission is interested in outside of the comprehensive plan.

The Commission went through the document in the packet, outlining the following goals and making changes where necessary:

- Goal #1 (near-term): Familiarize with smart growth principles and best practices and also green infrastructure concepts. Have these in our toolbox when development decisions come out way for consideration. Task: staff to provide smart growth resources.

Ms. Engebretsen stated that public works has already done a lot of work as far as green infrastructure is concerned. She backed her claim, using the multi-hundred thousand dollar green infrastructure storm water tank basin down in Old Town and the \$4 million project for the Kachemak Sponge out East End Road. She added that she doesn't foresee much work taking place in the over the next two years aside from these projects. She suggested that the group come up with a different goal for the next year. Commissioner Arevalo followed up with some questions regarding the storm water tank basin in Old Town, questioning if it was essentially just a leech field for storm water. Ms. Engebretsen clarified that there is a component of it that is constructed. She drew a comparison to the example at the bottom of Bartlett Street that has an oil/water separator. Together, the Commissioners reached a general consensus to move this goal into ongoing goals. Ms. Engebretsen agreed that this was a good idea and moved the goal into ongoing goals. She added that she would schedule a speaker, and also suggested deleting the task from the goal.

- Goal #2 (near-term): View economic development through the lens of balancing growth with quality of life. Task: define positive economic development, and what the role of the EDC is in balancing growth and quality of life.

Ms. Engebretsen noted that the Commission has created a mission statement, so that task can come off. She continued by suggesting the Commission pause on this one until Council makes their action at the next meeting. She added that if there's going to be a comprehensive plan, this will be a much more structured conversation through the comprehensive plan that just the Commission working on it alone. Commissioner Brown encouraged the Commission to keep working on this goal and she was emphatic that she didn't want to see this goal disappear. There was a general consensus among the commissioners to pause on this goal. Discussion ensued for a few minutes regarding what is defined as positive and negative economic development, and what that meant for the community.

- Goal #3 (near-term): Affordable short and long-term housing. Seasonal workers, general work force, seniors, etc. affordable year-round housing. Task: stay engaged with the City for all housing conversations.

Ms. Engebretsen said that she felt this goal could stay as is, but welcomed feedback from the commissioners. Commissioner Brown inquired whether or not the goal should integrate the input that the Commission has received from the Guiding Homer's Growth Group. Commissioner Kim stated that when he attends, he doesn't do so as a Commissioner, but added that he is essentially the conduit

between the two bodies. Commissioner Arevalo added that the group isn't a formal entity, but rather an informal group of whoever wants to show up. Mr. Kim continued by asking if a task to come up with solutions would be too bold, is that something that the City could try to alleviate. Ms. Engebretsen suggested creating a task to have a conversation where the Commission talks about the ground that's been covered over time as a City. She added that there are really positive things happening, it's just not on a scale that's going to move the needle for the cost of rent for the workers that we need to have move here.

- Goal #4 (near-term): Present an annual report of EDC accomplishments to City Council

Ms. Engebretsen informed the Commission that this is going to become a part of their calendar. She added that they can strike out this goal and insert a new one.

- Goal #5 (near-term): Have a conversation with the Chamber of Commerce about other economic development beyond tourism. How can the City and the Chamber work together to promote quality of life, and economic development for industries other than tourism, including messaging?

Ms. Engebretsen was in favor of also adding this to the calendar as an annual thing that the Commission does with the Chamber in the winter. Discussion can involve any issue that is rising to the surface to open the path of communication. Ms. Arevalo added that the Commission did this in the current year, which is where the idea to have an annual discussion with the Chamber came from. Chair Marks shared her thoughts, stating that it helped to clear the air on some misconceptions between the EDC and the Chamber. The Commission has accomplished this goal, so they agreed to remove it from the list.

- Goal #1 (mid-term): Review the business retention and expansion plan annually and plan for a new report.

Ms. Engebretsen stated that she did a funding request for the FY24/25 budget and didn't get funded. The Commission was in agreeance to move this goal to their long-terms goals since it will take longer than five years to address given that there will be a comprehensive plan to work on at the same time.

- Goal #2 (mid-term): Downtown vitalization momentum and wayfinding/streetscape plan.

Ms. Engebretsen noted that there's an adopted plan, and further that implementation activities will continue in 2024 and 2025. She elaborated on the definition of wayfinding at the request of Commissioner Pitzman, and explained that she is planning on buying new trees to replace the dying trees on Pioneer Avenue. More discussion continued in regards to wayfinding and the transportation plan. The Commission reached a general consensus to keep this as a concept.

- Goal #3 (mid-term): Economic Resiliency Planning

Ms. Engebretsen began the conversation by asking the question of what the group's interaction with the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) is. Chair Marks stated that KPEDD has discovered that they need to be totally integrated. She added that KPEDD has numerous websites – a website for themselves with pertinent information for all kinds of businesses, a workforce development website, and a resiliency website. KPEDD is coming to the realization that one centralized location where one can find the information they're looking for is preferred versus having an individual website for each. Chair Marks added that she isn't sure the EDC has the capacity of the ability to do too much

about creating and finishing up a resiliency plan. Ms. Engebretsen added that KPEDD's information is out of date. She pointed out that the Borough's office of emergency management has done a lot of work in terms of preparedness in the last couple years. She also added that it would be good for the Borough and the EDC to work together in order to avoid duplicating efforts. She tasked the Commission with determining how best to interface with KPEDD in addition to thinking of some useful tasks to talk about over the next year as KPEDD evolves.

- Goal #4: (mid-term): Assess job training needs, workforce development, availability of workers and workforce supports including child care and housing. Opportunity: Invite KBC Director Reid Brewer as speaker.

Ms. Engebretsen said that Nine Star Employment Services have already been invited to make a presentation. She added that the City has pretty low regulations on child care, the hurdles are that property is really expensive here and the construction can be costly as well. There was also an idea of a brief survey to businesses and employees on their needs. She stated that there is a calendar item for a workforce speaker, which has been surprisingly hard to coordinate. In terms of child care, Ms. Engebretsen noted that there's been a lot of community discussion regarding the topic. She is unsure of whether or not there are avenues for the City to comment or the EDC to participate. It's been more of the state acquiring grants to have these conversations. The hospital also received a grant to renovate and have a child care facility.

NEW BUSINESS

A. 2024 Meeting Schedule

AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO STRIKE BOTH THE JULY AND DECEMBER MEETINGS FROM THE 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE AND RECOMMEND ADOPTION FOR THE AMENDED SCHEDULE TO CITY COUNCIL.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. City Manager's Report for September
- B. City of Homer October Newsletter
- C. EDC Strategic Plan
- D. EDC 2023 Meeting Calendar
- E. Commissioner Attendance at 2023 City Council Meetings

Chair Marks noted the informational materials and Commissioner Pitzman volunteered himself to deliver the EDC report to City Council on October 23rd.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

There were no comments of the audience.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

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

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen thanked everyone for a good meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Arevalo noted that it sounds like the Commission will be in deep with some comprehensive plan issues next year.

Commissioner Pitzman said that he was excited for the Trick or Treat event on Pioneer Avenue this upcoming Halloween. He said he was happy about an activity to steer his grandchildren towards.

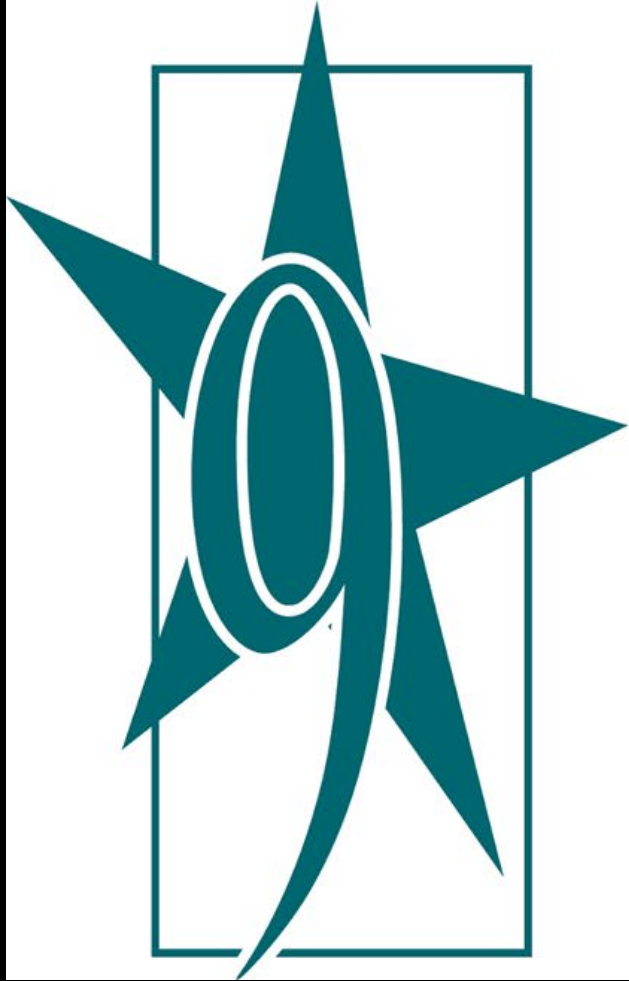
Chair Marks noted the Fall Festival that the Chamber of Commerce will be putting on.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 6:00 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: _____



NINE STAR

Education & Employment Services

OUR MISSION

Through education and employment services help Alaskans

Get a Job! Keep a Job! & Advance on the Job!

OUR VISION

Deliver services that prevent homelessness and improve the quality of life for all Alaskans.

COMPASSION

We respect and care for individuals and have a passionate desire to help them succeed.

EXCELLENCE

We recognize the potential of our clients and provide positive supports to encourage and motivate them to attain their goals.

COLLABORATION

We assess client needs to devise a plan that integrates ¹² internal and external services leading to educational and employment success.

WHO CAN WE ENROLL?

- ▶ Exclusive to OUT OF SCHOOL Youth- youth that have dropped out or have graduated but face barriers to employment or educational advancement
- ▶ Are aged 16-24
- ▶ Are in possession of a Photo I.D. and a SS Card or other recognized I-9 validating documents
- ▶ Drop outs automatically qualify. High School graduates must also meet one or more of the following:
 1. Homeless
 2. Low Income
 3. Criminal History
 4. Experience a Disability *
 5. Pregnant or Parenting
 6. Current or Former Foster Care

* Disability includes Drug/Alcohol abuse

WIOA Youth Program

14 Basic Elements

1. Tutoring, Study Skills Training and Instruction
2. Alternative High School Services
3. Summer Youth Employment
4. Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences
5. Occupational Skills Training
6. Leadership Development Opportunities
7. Adult Mentoring
8. Supportive Services
9. Follow-up Services
10. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling
11. Financial Literacy Education
12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training
13. Career Awareness, Career Counseling, and Career Exploration
14. Preparation to Transition into Post-Secondary Education and Training

CyberLYNX

correspondence program



2 On-Site Programs

- 1) Traditional High School Diploma through CyberLynx
- 2) General Education Diploma (GED)- For GED you need to have formally withdrawn from your former High School, must be at least 16, if under 18 will need legal guardian to authorize entry into GED.



INTERNSHIP

An internship is a paid work experience that provides an individual the opportunity to learn job skills and build a positive work ethic. It is also used to assist an individual in determining a career pathway.

Interns are paid at least the State minimum wage per hour during the length of the internship. The length is dependent upon the type of job, but usually is between 4 to 12 weeks.

Internships are often offered to individuals who have never worked before, have significant barriers to becoming employed, or are exploring a particular career pathway.

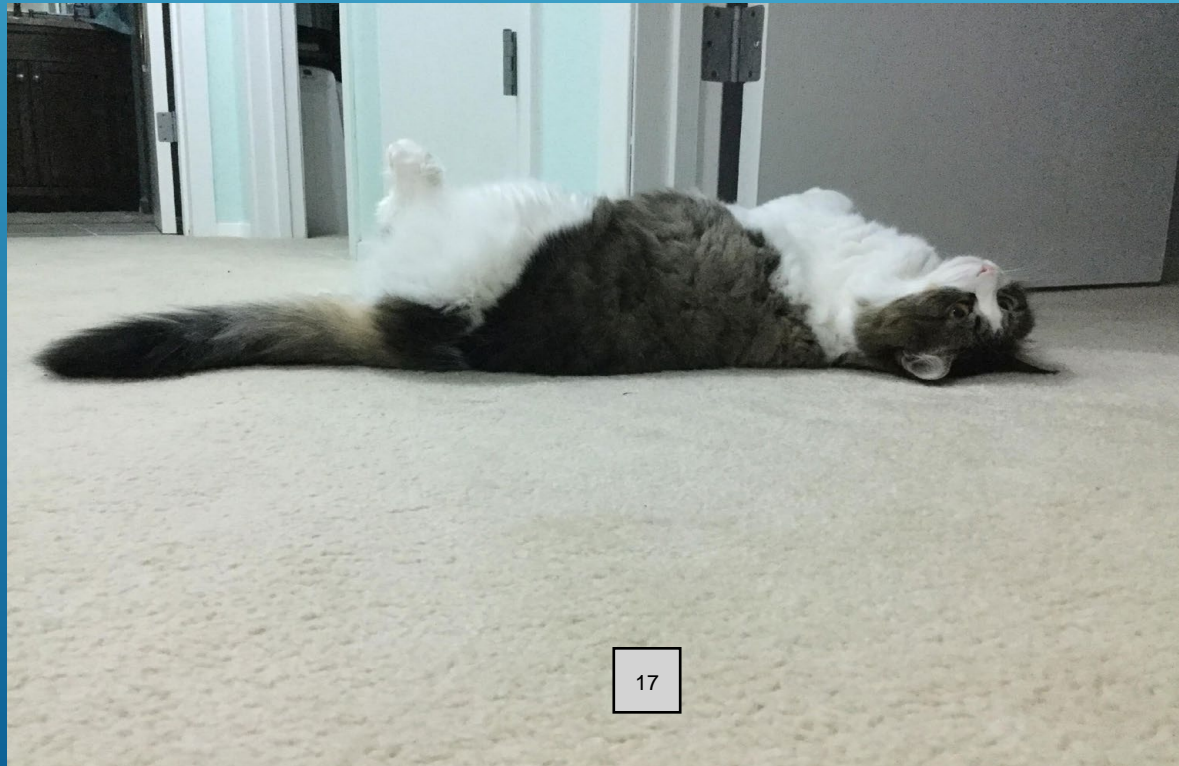
Many of the intern placements result in an offer of permanent employment if successful.



CAREERS

The program offers the service of career exploration to assist an individual in identifying and understanding what steps to take in order to enter the chosen career.

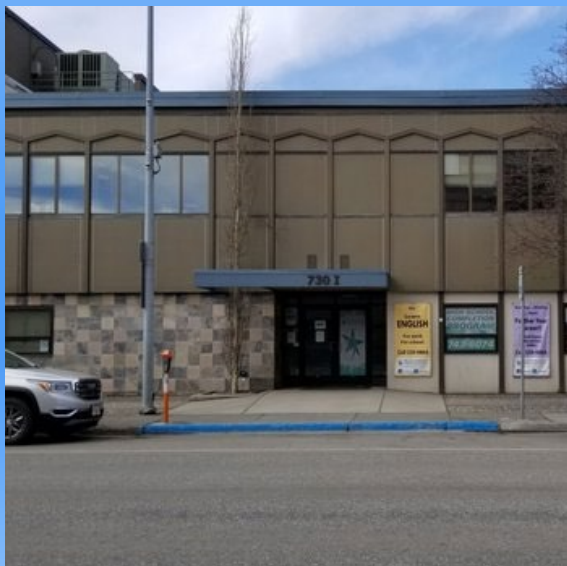
Tuition funding may be available to remove the cost barrier in enrolling into training programs.





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QUESTIONS?



City of Homer

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Planning

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TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager
DATE: November 8, 2023
SUBJECT: November Staff Report

Work session with City Council: The EDC had a great work session with Council on Monday the 6th. A big take away for the EDC is that Council is interested in the discussion of the Commission. As we look ahead to agenda items such as regulating short term rentals, its really helpful to know that Council likes to hear your range of viewpoints, rather than just the motion that passes. As the EDC enters into harder conversations, keep in mind you don't have to all agree, or even reach consensus. Homer does a lot of "fighting to reach consensus" and if we can collectively learn to take the intensity down a notch, I think more people would be willing to engage with government... and have more productive pleasant meetings.

Brownfield Grant

Myself and Jenny Carroll are working on an EPA Brownfield Grant for the HERC site. I'm learning a lot about how to write a federal grant application! There will only be twenty projects funded nationwide, so it's a longshot. The upshot is I've made contact with EPA Region 10 staff that work with brownfield projects, as well as State of Alaska DEC brownfield staff and this Homer project is now on their radar.



City of Homer

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TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager
DATE: November 14, 2023
SUBJECT: Housing

Recommendation Action: No action at this time. This is a standing agenda item.

At a recent community meeting, MAPP chose housing as one of two areas of upcoming concentrated work. I will be participating in these efforts. This ties right in with upcoming city regulation as well as the Comprehensive Plan and zoning code rewrite.

Chair Marks will provide an update on any activity on the housing topic.



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TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager
DATE: October 10, 2023
SUBJECT: Strategic Plan

Requested Action: Review the 2022/2023 EDC Strategic 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. The 2023/24 EDC strategic plan is provided for your review and any edits. We typically review the plan and make comments in October and approve the final version in November.

- Please see staff comments on the draft Strategic Plan. Be ready to remove items that are either resolved or that you don't think the Commission will make progress on. Bring your ideas of what you would like to work on over the next year!
- Staff comment: My work over the next year will continue to focus on the Transportation Plan, continued HERC building discussion, implementing the Wayfinding plan, in addition to having a role with city land management and partnering with the Chamber of Commerce. And more grant writing for federal grants. The City will also be starting on the Comprehensive Plan, which is an ideal way for the EDC to provide input on long term city policies and regulations. If the EDC would like to work in this realm, we can accomplish a lot. If the EDC wants to go a different direction, EDC Commissioners will need to champion a topic.

Attachments

Draft 2023-2024 Strategic Plan

Excerpt of the Business Retention and Expansion Plan (BR&E)

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
2024 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> <u>Pause until comp plan decision (November EDC meeting)</u></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>5. ? Respond promptly to Council ordinances and requests for input</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Review and respond to new Short Term Rental regulations</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Review and respond to Council requests for input in a two meeting timeframe</p>
<p>Mid Term Goals 1 - 3 Years (2024 – 2027)</p>	<p>1. NEW idea: Refine how the EDC can work with KPEDD; Economic resiliency planning and other topics as they arise.</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> ?</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>4. Assess jobs training needs, workforce development, availability of workers and workforce supports including child care, housing.</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Invite KBC Director Reid Brewer as speaker, how does the college make course offering decisions? How is work force development part of the planning? What does the KBC Advisory Board do?</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Brief survey to businesses and employees on their needs. (2024?) or in comp plan surveys, include a more business centric set of questions. (divide into economic sectors, combo of on-line and in person conversation. What level of data and what are the outcomes of the survey outcomes?)</p> <p>5.?</p>
<p>Long Term Goals 5 Years or More (2025+)</p>	<p>1. Multipurpose community center (HERC) <u>Pioneer redevelopment vs new facility in a new location</u></p> <p><i>Status:</i> Scoping study has been funded. Demolition of the smaller building has been funded; <u>Task? Opportunity? Staff comment: Status is evolving. Lets talk at the meeting.</u></p> <p>2. Plan for a new Business Retention and Expansion Plan BR&E (5-year mark was 2022-2023) (JE note- put the annual review of this doc on the calendar)</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).



MEMORANDUM

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

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

(p) 907-235-8121

(f) 907-235-3140

Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Economic Development Advisory Commission
DATE: November XX, 2023
SUBJECT: EDC Annual Report

2023 Economic Development Advisory Commission Year in Review

Completed Goals:

- Adopted Vision and Mission Statements
- Participated in public events such as the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Industry Outlook Forum, Homer Housing Forum, Transportation Plan and Guiding Growth community conversation
- Worked with the Chamber of Commerce to broaden economic development in Homer beyond the tourism industry, and will continue this conversation on an annual basis
- Supported funding for the Homer Small Business Advisory SBDC position

2024 Goals:

- Remain active in the housing/short-term and year round rental conversation
- Promote implementation of the Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan
- Actively participate in the upcoming Comprehensive Plan and pursue business community engagement



MEMORANDUM

**Ordinance 23-61, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska
Amending Homer City Code Title 5 To Add Chapter 5.48 Short Term Rentals.**

Item Type: Action Memorandum
Prepared For: EDC
Date: November 7, 2023
From: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

The City Council is scheduled to introduce an ordinance on Monday November 13th regarding the regulation of Short Term Rentals (STR's). The intent is to send this ordinance to the EDC for review and comment, with a return date to City Council. Assuming Council takes these actions on the 13th, this item is on the EDC's agenda for a first view of the ordinance. The EDC can then take up further discussion in January. I will have more information at the meeting after Council's meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

Informational only at this time

Attachment

Ordinance 23-61

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

Aderhold/Davis

3
4 **ORDINANCE 23-XX**

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

CITY OF HOMER

221

222

223

KEN CASTNER, MAYOR

224

225

226

227

228 ATTEST:

229

230

MELISSA JACOBSEN, MMC, CITY CLERK

231

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 23-60, 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

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Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
DATE: October 18, 2023
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for October 23, 2023 Council Meeting

Sister City 40th Anniversary with Teshio, Japan is Next Year!

For 39 years, Homer has enjoyed a close sister-city relationship with Teshio, in Hokkaido, Japan. Numerous delegations have made the trip across the Pacific, students have participated in exchanges, and both communities have shared cultural connections and traded works of art created by local residents. Next year, in honor of the 40th anniversary, Teshio will again send a delegation to visit Homer. City staff and interested citizens have formed a stakeholder group to plan for their arrival and to come up with other ways of marking the occasion. The group has a wide range of ideas, from a temporary exhibit at the Pratt Museum to refurbishing a "pillar of friendship" to a performance of Japanese drumming. At a future meeting, I will have Library Director Dave Berry give a more detailed update on the 40th anniversary and seek Council feedback on how to proceed.

Sand Island Research Vessel Fire Response

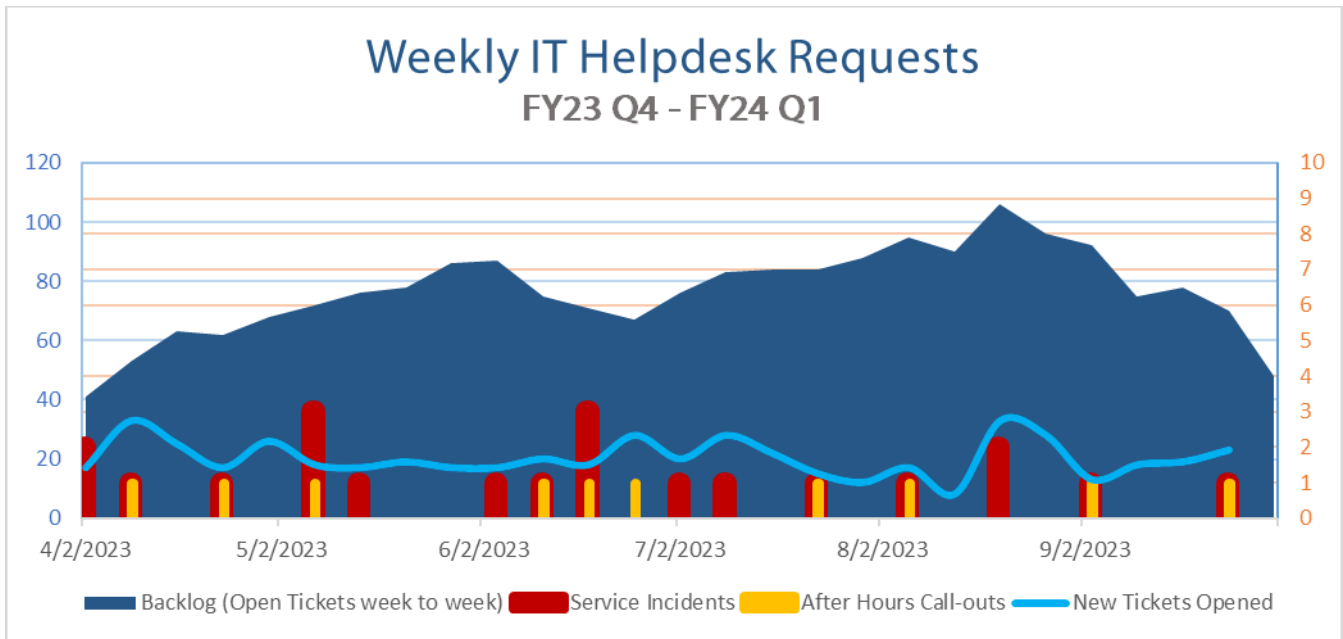
The Homer Volunteer Fire Department responded to a boat fire located at Ramp 8 in the harbor. Thanks to the vigilance of the Harbor's 24/7 operations crew, and the quick response by our firefighters, we were able to put out the fire before it was able to spread and create more significant damage. Attached to this report is an incident brief which gives an overview of the response and a window into what a boat fire response looks like from an operational perspective.

End of Season Trail Work Update

Public Works administration and the Parks Maintenance Division has been working very hard on trail improvements this year and is working with contractors to get as much work completed before the ground freezes. Attached to this report is a series of maps showing recent projects on the City's trail system.

IT Update

The Information Technology division has been putting a lot of effort into reformulating its mission, strategic priorities, processes, etc. to better meet the ever evolving needs of the organization and the threats to our systems. IT is shifting to a mission that is focused on: 1. Using data and technology to enhance the way City employees accomplish their work, and 2. Finding innovative ways of connecting the public to City government. To achieve that mission, IT has set cybersecurity, service management, and infrastructure reliability as their strategic priorities.



One massive step forward made by the IT team in the last year is the implementation of a help desk system which provides significantly better tracking of IT issues and service outcomes. The figure above shows an overview of help desk requests from April to the end of September. We’re also tracking and documenting incidents in a more comprehensive way. In the last six months, 50% of service outages and/or other incidents were associated with the phone system. IT was able to replace the aging system thanks to Council’s approval of Ordinance 23-38 and we are expecting the number of phone system related incidents to experience a sizable decrease.

Guiding Growth

Economic Development Manager Julie Engebretsen participated in a panel discussion presented by local group Guiding Growth. The panel focused on what is driving change in Homer. It included panelists from the Chamber of Commerce, South Peninsula Hospital, Story Real Estate, and the Center for Alaska Coastal Studies. The panel was held at the Homer Library and well attended by approximately 60 people. Common discussion themes were the aging demographics of Homer, the need to recruit and retain early- to mid-career workers, high housing costs for younger workers, and the allure of Homer for people relocating from the lower 48.

Parks & Recreation Department Update

Staff has been working hard on the tasks outlined in Resolution 23-047(S) which includes creating a 10-year plan for a department. A draft memo is scheduled to go before the Parks, Art, Recreation, and Culture Advisory Commission on October 19th. Staff is on track for a presentation to Council at the November 27th Council meeting.

Park Planning Updates

Economic Development staff participated in a community meeting hosted by Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships of the Southern Kenai Peninsula (MAPP-SKP) to discuss the results of the 2023 Community Health Needs Assessment which were presented to Council at their last meeting. There was a productive discussion and we see opportunities to use information from the MAPP-SKP plan in future City endeavors (i.e., Comprehensive Plan).

Corvus Design is scheduled to present at the October 19th Parks, Arts, Recreation, and Culture Advisory Commission with progress on the public meetings it hosted in Homer in September that were held to gather input on the futures of Bayview and Karen Hornaday Parks.

Homer Represented at 2023 Alaska Recreation and Parks Association Conference

Parks Maintenance Coordinator Chad Felice, Recreation Manager Mike Illg, and Parks & Trail Planner Matt Steffy represented Homer at this year's ARPA Conference in Wrangell. Mike presented educational sessions on Organizing Sports Leagues and Recreation Libraries, and Matt presented on Invisible Disabilities in Recreation Programming and Landscape Architecture as well as Conflict Resolution & Management. As an added bonus, I received numerous photos from the delegation via email of public restrooms. Wrangell uses a portable restroom system that can be tied into water and sewer which is significantly less expensive than a concrete structure, however, it is not at the same level of durability. There is a high probability that these units will be a future topic of discussion as we approach the mid-biennium budget adjust next year.

FY24/25 Budget Documents

The draft FY24/25 Budget PDF is being replaced on the City's website within the next week with an updated final version that contains additional materials required for Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) budget award consideration. This is the first budget cycle in which we've been subject to overhauled award standards and Finance Director Walton has put a lot of effort into getting our document in the right format and expanded with the right content to satisfy the new requirements.

Short Term Rental Update

I met with Planning and Economic Development staff to review a draft ordinance concept, it created some public safety questions that were addressed with Chief Kirko and Chief Robl. After submittal of this report, I will be meeting with Councilmembers Aderhold and Davis for inputs on the draft and guidance on various policy crossroads contained within this topic.

Kenai Peninsula City Manager Meet Up

City Managers on the Kenai Peninsula meet monthly online, but do our best to get together in person twice a year in spring and fall. This year's fall meeting was in Soldotna on October 13th. We largely discussed issues related to recruiting and retention with a focus on wage scales, non-wage compensation, retirement programs, etc. We also had an extended discussion on land use and bridging the gap between the development patterns many in the public desire and the ability (or inability) to create them within existing zoning codes.

Girl Scouts Democracy Event

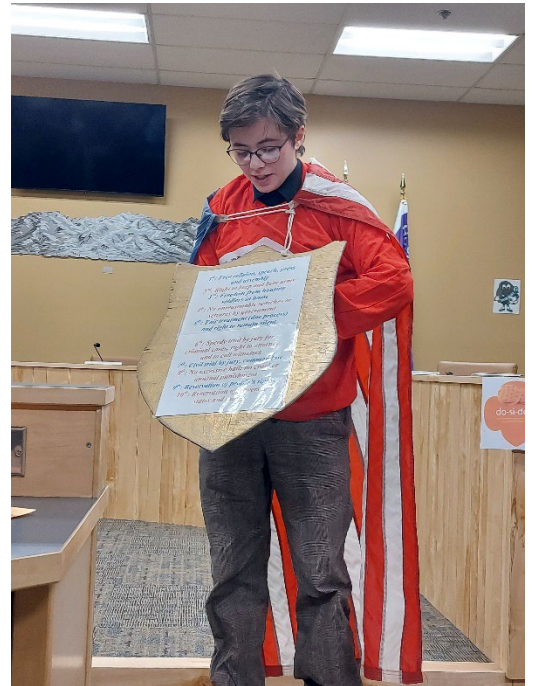
On October 13th the Girl Scouts held a Democracy Event in the Cowles Council Chambers. Ginny Espenshade lead the group through a Bill of Rights activity where they learned about the three branches of government. Guest speakers included Council Member Venuti and Jenny Martin, Staff to Senator Stevens who discussed the legislative branch, Mayor Castner and City Clerk Jacobsen who discussed the executive branch, and Judge Seifert and Ginny Espenshade who discussed the judicial branch. The Scouts held an election on the best Girl Scout cookie, and conducted a mock City Council meeting where they heard audience comments, staff reports, and voted on ranking for three capital improvement projects. It was a fun and educational afternoon for all



Mock Council Meeting



The Girl Scouts



The Bill of Rights

Photo credits Tina Seaton & Megumi Beams

Incident Brief:

Date: October 16, 2023

Dispatch as: Smoke investigation:

Location: ramp-8 in the Harbor

Vessel name: Sand Island

Vessel Type and use: a steel hull research/dive vessel

At 12:39 on Monday, 10/16/23 Homer Fire was toned out to respond to a smoke investigation on a boat in the Homer boat harbor. HVFD responded with Engine-2 and crew of 2, Tanker-1 with a crew of 2, medic-3 with crew of 2 and Chief Kirko and Deputy Chief Kahles.

While in route we were receiving condition reports from Harbor-2 (Glidden) stating that he could see light to moderate black smoke coming from vents on the upper deck. Glidden also stated that the hull was getting hot to the touch below deck indicating potential fire in the engine room or support space below the main deck.

By radio, I asked Glidden to confirm if all crew members were off the boat. He quickly confirmed that they were. I then asked him the size of the boat and if it was tied to the dock or outside of another boat. He confirmed it was tied directly to the dock.

At this time I requested mutual-aid from WES and KESA to respond with an engine and personnel for assistance.

At this time the Harbor crew was setting up the fire cart near the boat, running and water available on the arrival of E-2 crew.

Engine-2 arrived at approximately 12:49 and went to the boat to assess and report conditions to the incoming crews. Chief Kahles and Kirko arrived at approximately 12:51. Chief Kirko assumed incident command and assigned DC Kahles as operations chief at the boat. As incident command I remained at the top of the ramp coordinating incoming resources and assuring crew accountability and safety.

While DC Kahles was preparing the attack team for entry, 3 Coastguardsman approached him offering assistance. One of the crew was a command officer and the other two were geared up in fire PPE and available to assist in firefighting efforts. The initial attack team, HVFD staff, firefighters Knowles and Lowe made entry with a hand-line below deck to aggressively attack the fire. Heat and thick black smoke were present in the engine room greatly reducing visibility. Using a thermal imaging device they were able to see that there was no fire in the engine room and continued to move aft to locate the fire. They opened a hatch which lead to a diver support area which contained a hyperbaric chamber and dive equipment and supplies. Once they opened the hatch the heat and smoke became more intense and fire was visible below the chamber. They quickly brought the fire under control and reported conditions to Command personnel.

Tanker-1 crew arrived at approximately 12:55 and they were initially assigned to water supply operations and then to report to DC Kahles to assist the initial attack team.

The Tanker crew was assigned to assist with ventilation efforts to relieve smoke and heat from the boat so overhaul operations could resume.

When DC Kahles announced the fire under control, I canceled any additional responding units.

When overhaul was complete all fire suppression crews were released to put their equipment back in service.

Chief Kirko, DC Kahles and firefighter Knowles (fire investigation student) again went aboard to investigate the fire. The point of origin was determined and the cause is believed to be electrical in nature.

All HVFD units cleared the scene and returned all equipment and apparatus back in to a service ready status.



Beluga Slough Trail-ADA approaches were installed at each entry point



Charles Way-Installed with water/sewer by contractor



Day view Trail-brush hogged sides, done in house



Spruceview Trail-brush hogged both sides, done in house



East Fairview & West Fairview-redone with new fabric and material by contractor



Lee Drive Trail-installed with new fabric and material by contractor



Karen Hornaday Park-fabric and material on numerous walkways leading to the playground, done in house w/some volunteers

Aaron Yeaton and Chad Felice did some on-site work and recon, looking into the possibility of adding a hiking trail North of the campground

WORK SESSION

AGENDA CALENDAR 2023

Council Meeting Dates	4:00 p.m. Worksession Topic
<i>Monday, May 8</i>	
<i>Tuesday, May 22</i>	<i>Coast Guard ws 2 5 COW @ 4</i>
<i>Monday, June 12</i>	<i>2023 City of Homer Salary and Benefits Survey</i>
<i>Monday, June 26</i>	<i>FY24/25 Capital Budget</i>
<i>Monday, July 24</i>	<i>HDR-Homer Harbor Expansion Alternatives Screening and Next Steps</i>
<i>Monday, August 14</i>	<i>HERC & Hazardous Materials Update – Economic Development Manager & Recreation Manager</i>
<i>Monday, August 28</i>	<i>2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan & FY25 Legislative Priorities - Special Projects & Communications Coordinator</i>
<i>Monday, September 11</i>	<i>HHE study funding and timeline status by the USACE Project Development Team</i>
<i>Monday, September 25</i>	<i>Ord 23-49 Amend Title 2 & Re-Organization</i>
<i>Monday, October 9</i>	<i>HERC – Economic Development Manager & Recreation Manager</i>
<i>Monday, October 18 (off cycle)</i>	<i>Joint Work Session with Planning Commission</i>
<i>Monday, October 23</i>	<i>Finance</i>
<i>Monday, November 13</i>	<i>Exempt Employee Wage Scale</i>
<i>Monday, November 27</i>	<i>Reso 23-027 Follow-Up Re: Recreation Funding Priority</i>

CITY OF HOMER NEWSLETTER



VOL. III - ISSUE III | NOVEMBER 2023

WHAT'S INSIDE?

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

COUNCIL MEMBERS LORD AND VENUTI RE-ELECTED

Homer City Council certified the results of the October 3 Regular Municipal Election during their October 9 regular meeting. Council members Rachel Lord and Caroline Venuti were re-elected to Homer City Council after respectively earning 37% and 35% of the votes cast. They each began their third three-year terms after being officially sworn in to office at the meeting.



City Clerk Melissa Jacobsen administers the Oath of Office to the City's newly re-elected Council Members, Rachel Lord (top left) and Caroline Venuti (bottom right).

- Community Corner
- Public Works
- Parks
- Homer Public Library
- Homer Volunteer Fire Department
 - Statewide Emergency Response Exercise
 - Fire at Homer Landfill
 - Contained Spaces Safety Training
- Public Safety Corner
 - Fire Prevention Week
- City Clerks - Girl Scout Democracy Event
- Harbor Expansion Study Update
- Homer Police - November Charity Events
- Community Recreation - MountainFilm
- Meet City Contractor - AK Mindful Paws
- Municipal Art Collection
- Stay Connected with City Council

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

Follow us on Social Media

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

Subscribe to the Monthly Newsletter

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



Call for Art!

The Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage recently announced a call for art for the "Japan-Alaska Sister Cities Town Pride Festa." The Town Pride Festa will feature a wide range of original "town pride" art pieces representing sister cities.

The art theme is "Works by citizens and organizations of the Japan-Alaska, that emphasize 'town pride' and introduce shopping streets, tourist attractions, traditional arts, culture, etc. of the town they live in," and there are no restrictions on the medium of the work.

The goal of the Festa is to cheer up the citizens and organizations of the Japan-Alaska sister cities and support the activities of local citizens and cultural groups.

Images of artwork, or videos of performance art can be submitted digitally now through Friday, January 19, 2024. [Click here](#) to read more and submit artwork.

A "judging event" will select the best works from among those submitted and award them luxurious prizes.

Last year, a video titled "[Sisters and Sea Messages](#)" locally produced by Homer's Park Planner, Matt Steffy and friend Stevie Drescher won second place honors from among the eleven videos submitted to the campaign.

A graphic for the Rotary Health Fair. It features a yellow sun with rays, a red stethoscope, and a red heart shape. The text reads: "IT'S YOUR LIFE TAKE A DAY TO BE WELL", "ROTARY HEALTH FAIR", and "Nov 5 9am-1pm | Homer High School".

IT'S YOUR LIFE TAKE A DAY TO BE WELL

ROTARY HEALTH FAIR

Nov 5 9am-1pm | Homer High School

PEOPLE AND PEAT EVENT SERIES

YOUTH PEATLAND EXPEDITION

Hands-on learning for the whole family with the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies.
Friday, October 27 10:00 - 12:00 at the Winn Nature Center.

"THE PEATLANDS" ART INSTALLATION RECEPTION

Featuring talk by artist Kim McNett and refreshments, hosted by Bunnell Street Art Center and the City of Homer.
Wednesday, November 8th 5:00 - 7:00 at the Homer Airport Terminal.

PEOPLE AND PEAT: NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Bring the whole family to learn about Homer's major new Green Infrastructure projects with partners Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, the City of Homer, and the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.
Thursday, December 7 at 5:00 pm at Island and Oceans.

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Join a hands-on field walk of the City's Green Infrastructure Project on Kachemak Drive with the City of Homer and Kachemak Bay Conservation Society.
Friday, December 8 at 4:00 pm; details TBD.

A row of logos for the event series partners: Bunnell Street Arts Center, KBCS, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and Alaskan Coastal Studies.A graphic for Shop Local Weekend. It features a blurred background of a person's hands holding a sign that says "Come in we're OPEN". The text reads: "SHOP LOCAL WEEKEND", "Nov 24 - 26", and "www.homeralaska.org/".

SHOP LOCAL WEEKEND

Nov 24 - 26
www.homeralaska.org/

PUBLIC WORKS

TRANSPORTATION PLAN PUBLIC INPUT

Thanks to the over 40 who people turned out to comment on the Public Review Draft of the Transportation Plan at an Open House on held at the Kachemak Bay Campus of the Kenai Peninsula College on September 26.



Your participation and comments were greatly appreciated! The next step is for Kinney Engineering to work with and incorporate the public comments received into a revised draft of the Transportation Plan so it is ready for presentation to the Planning Commission. Stay tuned for the next draft near the end of the year or early 2024.

PARKS

END OF SEASON TRAIL WORK

Thanks to the dedicated work of the Public Works Administration and the City's Parks Maintenance Division, ten Homer trails and trail connections saw great improvements this summer, including brushing and resurfacing.

With winter about to set in, the City has been working with contractors to get as much work completed before the ground freezes. If you are out and about, you'll notice great new surfaces on the East and West Fairview Trail sections and the Lee Drive Trail as well!



Improved East and West sections of the Fairview trail on a sunny, but brisk fall day.

LIBRARY

STORY WALK TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

The Friends of the Library have been working on various upgrades to the library lot, which will eventually include public benches, a play space, and informational signage in the woods to the west of the library. The first part of the project involves resurfacing the existing trail to make it more accessible to patrons with disabilities. The section of trail between the library and the Lucky Shot Trail was completed in October, and the portion between Lucky Shot and the Poopdeck Trail will be completed in 2024.



Contractors improved the surface of the Story Trail at Homer Public Library with new fabric and surface material.

The Western Lot Improvement Project was initiated in partnership with the National Park Service with the goal of creating a new community space in the 2.24 acre land parcel between the Library and Poopdeck Trail. The space will extend the library's mission beyond the limits of the physical building while maintaining the character of the landscape. To learn more about the improvements go to <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library/western-lot-project>.

Homer Public Library

500 Hazel Street

907-235-3180

circ@ci.homer.ak.us

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library



LIBRARY EVENTS

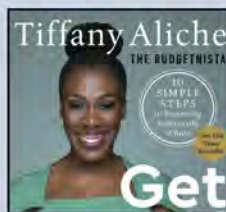
VIRTUAL AUTHOR TALKS

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.



November 1 at 4 pm

Hollywood, Home, Heart and Healing:
a conversation with actor John Stamos



November 9 at 10 am

Get Good with Money & Reach Your
Financial Goals:
with Tiffany "The Budgetnist" Aliche



November 16 at noon

An Afternoon Chat with Joy Harjo,
Internationally Renowned Performer,
Writer and Poet of the Muscogee (Creek)
Nation.



November 30 at 11 am

Power of Women in Science Fiction:
Naomi Alderman on Writing Dystopian
Worlds.



November 14

Noon - 1 pm
with Caroline Venuti

CHECK OUT MORE LIBRARY
PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

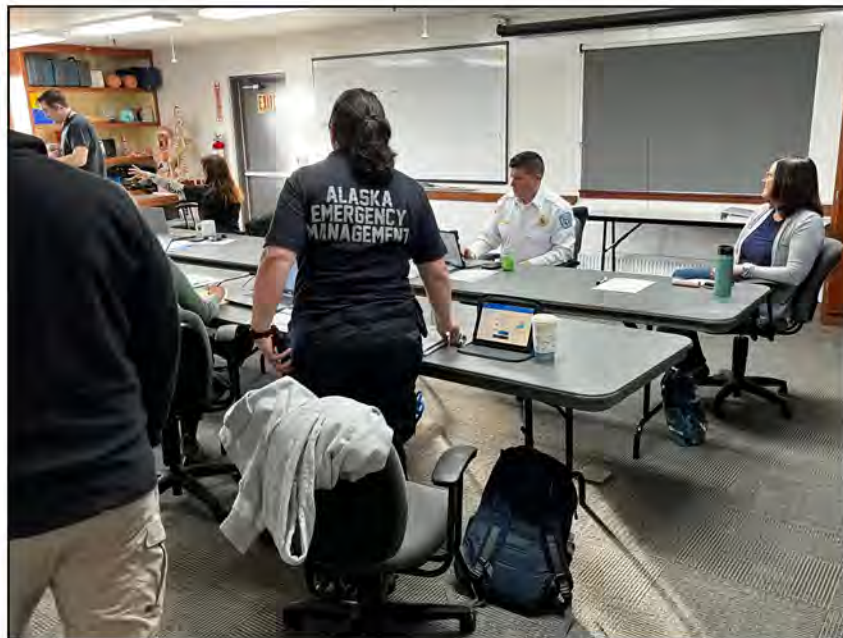


FIRE DEPARTMENT

STATEWIDE EMERGENCY RESPONSE EXERCISE

The Homer Volunteer Fire Department (HVFD) hosted members from the State Health Care Coalition who were conducting a large-scale, statewide emergency response exercise that kicked off in Homer on October 4. The exercise was centered around a mock incident at the Homer High School and was designed to test the organization and capabilities of local, state, and federal agencies in the event a mass casualty incident created a hospital surge and required movement of patients in overwhelming numbers.

As hosts, HVFD set up an Emergency Operations Center for the visiting team to work from throughout the exercise, and provided a staging location for volunteer “patients” who were called into action throughout the day to help make the exercise more realistic.



Deputy Fire Chief Kahles assists State Health Care Coalition members in the EOC.

City staff in attendance (Deputy Fire Chief Joe Khales and City Clerk Melissa Jacobsen) got the opportunity to learn more about the critical role first responder’s play in our community and the roles Homer’s EOC, as a partner, would be called upon to perform.

The State Health Care Coalition is comprised of groups of local health care and responder organizations that work together on challenges and find solutions that improve emergency preparedness and the health and safety of Alaskan communities. The work of Health Care Coalitions reflect the unique

needs and features of their local areas and assist health care facilities to plan, organize, equip, train, exercise, and evaluate regional health care system preparedness. Overall, the exercise was a success. Participants were impressed by the communication and collaboration among the members of the Coalition and our team in Homer.



Moulage kits were put to good use to make up student volunteers to simulate different wounds and trauma in order to prepare responders for what they could experience in the field, practice triage skills and lessen psychological trauma.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

BUSY FALL FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

On Friday, October 20, Homer Fire responded as mutual aid to Kachemak Emergency Services (KESA) to assist in suppression operations at a fire at the construction and demolition cell at Homer Landfill. Homer responded to the scene with seven personnel that manned an engine, two tankers and provided two chief officers. Western Emergency Services (WES) was also dispatched and responded with a tanker to support operations. An estimated 60,000 gallons of water (collected from a hydrant located at West Hill and Robert Avenue) was used in the response.

Personnel were on scene for seven hours managing the fire. Many thanks to personnel from KESA, WES and the Homer Fire Department for controlling and extinguishing the fire. This could have gone very differently if it was not for their hard work.

October 28 was National Responder Appreciation Day. Time to show a lot

of appreciation for the dedication of all career and volunteer fire response personnel who respond when needed. It is no small task. For example, during the 24-hour period around the time of the landfill fire response, HVFD responders were dispatched to emergency calls during the landfill response and during the two-hour equipment clean up and restoration process required afterward, followed by responding to a house fire at 1:30 am, during which personnel were called to another medical emergency. ❤️ Thank you for taking time away from your job and family, and for getting up in the middle of the night (and in the early morning hours) to help your community in this very important way. ❤️



CONFINED SPACE SAFETY TRAINING



MHVFD's confined space class provided important safety training to City staff and other emergency responders who work in and responding to incidents in confined spaces such as tanks, manholes, ship compartments, etc.

The week of October 25, HVFD hosted a hands-on confined space rescue class for personnel in three departments within the City of Homer as well as emergency responders from around the area.

During the week, HVFD visited different areas in the city to train personnel who must access and work in confined spaces and those who supervise these activities. Confined spaces include tanks, storage vessels, bins, furnaces, sumps, manholes, trenches, and compartments in ships and barges.

The emphasis of the training was safe entry to confined spaces and techniques for safe removal of workers from a controlled space clear of air, gas or fire hazards.



PUBLIC SAFETY CORNER



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.

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK, OCT 8-14

Homer Volunteer Fire Department was out and about last month during Fire Prevention Week engaging the community about fire prevention.

With chilly weather setting in and lots of holiday cooking on tap, this is the perfect time for some fire safety reminders.

Did you know? According to the National Fire Protection Association, cooking was the leading cause of reported home fires and home fire injuries in 2017-2021; home heating was the second leading cause. Winter months are also the peak time for fire-related deaths; more than half of reported home structure fires occur November through March.

Cook with Caution Tips

- Avoid unattended cooking. Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, boiling, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

Home Heating Safety Tips

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment like space heaters, fireplaces, wood-burning stoves and furnaces.
- Turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Plug space heaters directly into an outlet, not a power strip or multi-plug.
- Inspect heating equipment and clean chimneys every year. HVFD loans chimney brushes!
- Do not overload extension cords or outlets and do not place an electrical cord under a rug. Dispose of older, fraying extension cords.



For Fire Prevention Week, HVFD hosted Connections Home School students from pre-K to 3rd grade for a tour of the station, and joined Kachemak Emergency Services at Spenard Builders Supply. Big shouts out and thanks to Connections families and the community for spending time with HVFD and learning more about Fire Safety!

Facts About Smoke Alarms



In the U.S., **62%** of home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with inoperable smoke alarms or no smoke alarms.

In the reported home fires in which the smoke alarms were present but did not operate:



50% of the smoke alarms had missing or disconnected batteries. Nuisance alarms were the leading reason for disconnected smoke alarms.



23% of the smoke alarm failures was due to dead batteries.



Daylight Savings Time ends November 5th.



When you change your clocks back, change the batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, and remind your friends and family to do the same!

CITY CLERKS

GIRL SCOUT DEMOCRACY EVENT

On October 13th the City hosted the Girl Scouts for a Democracy Event in the Cowles Council Chambers. The event gave the scouts an in-depth, hands on understanding of how local government works, with the goal of preparing them to become civically engaged citizens who create lasting impact and make the world a more equitable and inclusive place.

Ginny Espenshade of Homer Youth Court led the group through a Bill of Rights activity where they learned about the three branches of government. Then a series of guest speakers discussed the duties of each branch with the group.

Presenters included City Council Member Caroline Venuti and Jenny Martin, Staff to Senator Gary Stevens who discussed duties of the legislative branch of Government, Mayor Ken Castner and City Clerk Melissa Jacobsen who discussed the executive branch; and Homer Superior Court Judge Bride Seifert and Ginny Espenshade who discussed the judicial branch.

The Scouts held an election on the best Girl Scout cookie using the Rank Choice voting system. Thin Mint was selected, but not by a thin margin!

They also conducted a mock City Council meeting where the agenda was to prioritize three capital improvement projects. After taking public comment and hearing staff reports on the three projects, the Girl Scout Councilmembers voted and ranked the City Hall Accessibility project as their top choice, followed by Pioneer Avenue sidewalks and Karen Hornaday Park Improvements. The afternoon was fun and educational for all.



Homer Girl Scouts participating in the Democracy Event pose for a photo with City Clerk Jacobsen.



Ginny Espenshade introduces the Bill of Rights.



Scouts held a mock City Council meeting, complete with public testimony, staff reports and a Council vote.

PORT & HARBOR



HOMER HARBOR EXPANSION STUDY UPDATE

At the **Monday, October 23 Committee of the Whole meeting**, City Council discussed the current status of the Homer Harbor Expansion General Investigation (the “study”) and began considering next steps. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Project Development Team (PDT), upon reaching the Alternatives & Measures Milestone, recalculated the tasks to be completed in the study and added geotechnical analysis and ship simulation. These tasks were added so that the PDT would have sufficient data to produce a more accurate design and more reliable cost estimate on which to base decisions regarding advancement of the Homer Harbor Expansion. These new elements increase the study’s cost to \$4.15M. The PDT is seeking concurrence on the revised plan from their headquarters, and from the City of Homer.

Concurrently, the study is facing a Federal funding gap and, consequently, a work slow down and potential pause. Due to misunderstandings on the Federal level about the source of Federal continuation funding for the study, it was not included in the USACE FY24 Workplan or President’s FY24 Budget. The USACE is pursuing funding in the President’s FY25 Budget, which, if successful would allow the study to resume in October 2024.

During the Committee of the Whole conversation, City Council discussed these matters, potential sources of additional match funds (should Council decide to continue with the study), and they assigned two City Council Champions, Rachel Lord and Storm Hanson. The Council Champions are working with Mayor Castner and administrative staff on a Resolution outlining next steps to be considered at an upcoming Council meeting.

The USACE PDT indicated that if concurrence with the amended plan is approved, they would continue to advance study efforts at a much reduced pace during a study reduction of work period at the beginning of the next calendar year. They would continue their work related to economic, environmental and geotechnical data collection, including approval of an economic survey, preparations and permits necessary for environmental field work and development of a Geotechnical Drilling Plan.

POLICE

NOVEMBER CHARITABLE EVENTS

To help make the holiday season a bit brighter for families in need of a little extra support, the Police Department is participating in two charitable events: No-Shave November and a Toy Drive.

No-Shave November is a fundraiser that encourages participants to donate the money they’d normally spend on grooming supplies, such as razor blades and shaving cream, to a local charity. Participating HPD personnel will each pay \$25 per week in November. The final proceeds will be donated, while the winner with the most hair growth will get bragging rights for the year!

HPD is also partnering with the Homer Chamber of Commerce for a toy drive. Community members can drop off new, unwrapped gifts of toys for families in need at the Homer Chamber or Police Department to be given to area families in need. The event kicks off on Shop Local Weekend and will run through December 15. Call the Cham



907-235-7890 or [visit their website](http://www.homer.alaska.org) for more information.

COMMUNITY RECREATION

CROSS OVER EVENT KICKS OFF UPCOMING WINTER RECREATION SEASON

Join Homer Community Recreation on Wednesday November 8th at Homer High School for a fun night of community connection, bargain shopping, film, food and good times. The event starts at 5:30 pm and concludes with the Mountainfilm Fest at 7 pm!

SKI & WINTER GEAR SWAP



Bring your winter gear to barter, sell or give away! Find the equipment and/or gear you need. Winter clothing, winter gear, skates, snowboards, and of course skis, are welcome. This is free event; no businesses please.

Bring all of your skis and snowboards to get them waxed by the Homer High Cross Country Ski Team for a small fee; this is one of their important fundraisers.

DINNER & DESSERT FUNDRAISERS



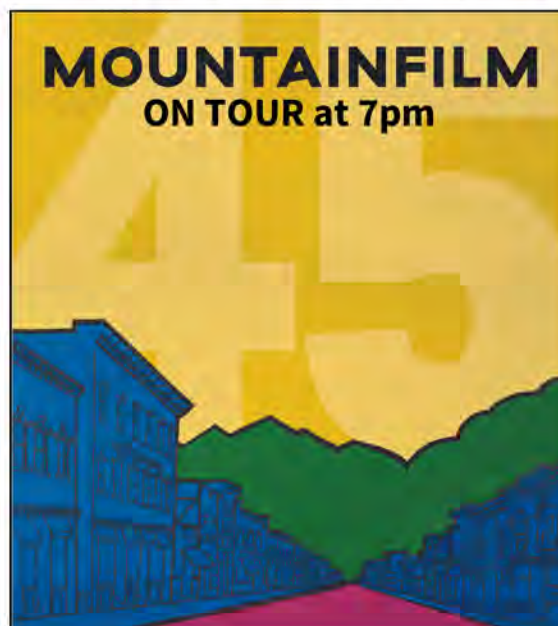
Plan to stay for dinner and support a great cause!

Homer Wilderness Leaders (HoWL) will be selling four different delicious soups and bread as a fundraiser to support outdoor adventure programs for youth.

Fantastic dessert selections provided by the Homer Middle School "AK to DC Annual Trip" fundraising group will also be available for purchase.

THEN KICK BACK AND RELAX IN THE MARINER THEATER TO WATCH AMAZING DOCUMENTARY FILMS.

Mountainfilm showcases nonfiction stories about environmental, cultural, climbing, political and social justice issues that matter. Mountainfilm goes beyond exceptional film medium by bringing together world-class athletes, change makers and visionary artists for a multi-dimensional celebration of indomitable spirit, aiming to inspire audiences to create a better world.



Mountainfilm is hosted by Homer Community Recreation.

Tickets are available for purchase at the Homer Mariner Theater door for \$10.

Click HERE to read descriptions of the nine short films being featured this year.

CITY STAFF OCTOBER ANNIVERSARY

Charles Lee completed his third year with the Homer Police Department last month. Thank you for the dedication, commitment, and service you've provided the City and taxpayers of Homer over the years. You all are an integral part of what makes the City of Homer a great place to work.

SHOUT OUT TO HOMER ANIMAL SHELTER

National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week is November 5-11, a time to recognize often unsung heroes in our communities--local animal shelters. Shelter organizations work tirelessly to provide care, love, and a second chance to countless animals in need. This newsletter issue shines a spotlight on Homer's very own Alaska Mindful Paws, honoring their incredible work at the Homer Animal Shelter, their contributions to the welfare of animals, and commitment to making our world a better place for all.

At the heart and soul of Alaska Mindful Paws is a team of dedicated staff and volunteers who devote time and resources and outstanding service to the public and to animals, providing shelter, medical care, and socialization.



Mindful Paws staff
from left,
Jillian Rogers,
Carly Ott and
Rebecca Bartee

Since January 2023, more than 70 animals (of all kinds!) found new adoptive homes and nearly 80 dogs and cats were returned to their owners. Staff have responded to a whopping 240 animal control calls to assist with public safety. And that's just through mid-October! They have also had to euthanize six animals, and while that decision is never taken lightly, helping animals cross over the Rainbow Bridge is sometimes a necessary last act of kindness. The shelter's save-rate remains high at just over 96 percent.

Mindful Paws' mission goes beyond providing a temporary home for animals. They work closely with City of Homer staff, City Council and the fine folks at the Homer Police Department to raise awareness and implement policies supporting responsible pet ownership. This summer, they worked with Councilmember Rachel Lord and City Clerk Melissa Jacobson to revise Title 20 in City Code. With guidance from the city's attorney and police chief, the City now has an updated, more effective animal control code.

Shelter staff also hosted national representatives from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals who were in Alaska visiting municipal shelters. Homer Animal Shelter received rave reviews for up-to-date policies and procedures, cleanliness, outreach programs and overall daily functions.



Staff have also resumed education and outreach – post covid – at various community events. Homer Animal Friends, the non-profit that helps support the shelter, is as involved as ever helping with spay and neuter costs and clinics.



SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION!

As National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week approaches, we encourage our community to show their support for Homer's Animal Shelter. Whether through donating, adopting, or simply stopping in to socialize with the animals during open business hours, every small effort makes a big difference!

Donate to the Shelter

Donations, whether monetary or in-kind, are always welcome. Items such as pet food, cat beds and litter, enrichment toys, and cleaning supplies like paper towels, bleach and disinfecting wipes are welcome. Monetary donations can help defray care costs or sponsor an animal's adoption fee. To donate go to <https://www.alaskamindfulpaws.org/>.

Adopt an Animal

If you're considering adding a furry member to your family, consider adoption. Adopting from the shelter gives an animal a second chance at a loving home.

CITY OF HOMER ROSTER

Mayor - Ken Castner (2024)

City Council

Donna Aderhold (2024)
 Jason Davis (2025)
 Shelley Erickson (2024)
 Storm P. Hansen-Cavasos (2025)
 Rachel Lord (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
 Jan Keiser, Public Works Director/City Engineer
 Ryan Foster, City Planner
 Mike Illg, Community Recreation Manager

Commissions and Boards

ADA Advisory Board
 Economic Development Advisory Commission
 Library Advisory Board
 Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission
 Planning Commission
 Port and Harbor Advisory Commission

MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION



Green Trees, a water color painted by Diana Tillion graces the wall of Cowles Chambers at City Hall.

Learn more about the municipal art collection at:
www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/prac/city-homer-municipal-art-collection

STAY CONNECTED TO CITY COUNCIL

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

November UPCOMING MEETINGS

1	5:30 pm	Planning Commission Worksession
1	6:30 pm	Planning Commission Regular Meeting
8	5:30 pm	Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
9	5 pm	ADA Advisory Board Regular Meeting
10	6 pm	Economic Dev. Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
13	5:00 pm	City Council Committee of the Whole
13	6:00 pm	City Council Regular Meeting
14	6:0 pm	Economic Dev. Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
16	4:30 pm	Parks, Art, Rec & Culture Commission Worksession
16	5:30 pm	Parks, Art, Rec & Culture Commission Regular Meeting
21	5:30 pm	Library Advisory Board Regular Meeting
27	4 pm	City Council Worksession - Recreation
27	5 pm	City Council Committee of the Whole
27	6 pm	City Council Regular 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

CURRENT JOB LISTINGS

- [Assistant or Associate Planner](#)
- [Building Custodian](#)
- [Harbor Officer I](#)



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
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October 24, 2023

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 for the period July 1 to September 30, 2023. During the quarter, the Alaska SBDC received the results from the national SBDC accreditation, with Robert Green and the Homer office receiving exemplary marks and noted as a model that should be replicated across the country. This past year, 81% 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. After the quarter, Robert remains on pace to log the most hours of advising by the SBDC to the Homer area in a year. Here is a summary of deliverables to the Homer community during the quarter (year):

Client Hours: 132.8 (498.3)	Jobs Supported: 56 (236)
Total Clients: 55 (108)	Capital Infusion: \$0 (\$293,000)
New Businesses Started or Bought: 2 (6)	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 work supporting existing businesses were the top topics this quarter. There was a relatively even split among industries, with retailers moving into the top spot this quarter, followed by food services.

Topics

1. Start-up Assistance: 51.5 hrs (39%)
2. General Management: 40.1 hrs (30%)
3. Financing/Capital: 15.0 hrs (11%)
4. Business Planning: 8.8 hrs (7%)
5. Buy/Sell Business: 8.0 hrs (6%)

Industries

1. Retailers: 25.8 (19%)
2. Food Services: 22.4 hrs (17%)
3. Administrative: 14.8 hrs (11%)
4. Healthcare: 14.6 hrs (11%)
5. Fishing: 13.8 hrs (10%)

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:

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Jon Bittner

Executive Director
Alaska SBDC

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
2022-2023 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>Near Term Goals < 6 Months</p>	<p>1. Familiarize 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><i>Task:</i> Staff to provide smart growth resources.</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Promote energy resiliency through diversity and efficiency. Invite a speaker to talk about energy as that impacts cost of doing business and cost of living. (Perez)</p>
	<p>2. View economic development through the lens of balancing growth with quality of life.</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Create an EDC Mission statement as a guiding principle for what the EDC does.</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>(Perez volunteered, first quarter 2023)</p>
	<p>3. Housing: affordable short and long term housing. Seasonal workers, general work force, seniors, etc. affordable year round housing. (Marks)</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Stay engaged with the City for all housing conversations</p>
	<p>4. Present an annual report of EDC accomplishments to the City Council</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Approve memo to Council, read accomplishments to Council</p>
	<p>5. Have a conversation with the Chamber of Commerce about other economic development beyond tourism. How can the City and the Chamber work together to promote quality of life, and economic development for industries other than tourism, including messaging?</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Have a work session with the Chamber</p>
<p>Mid Term Goals 1 - 3 Years (2022 – 2025)</p>	<p>1. BR&E – review annually and plan for a new report (5 year mark is 2022-2023) <i>Opportunity:</i> Consider a funding request for the FY 2024-2025 budget</p>
	<p>2. Downtown vitalization momentum and wayfinding/streetscape plan</p> <p><i>Status:</i> Wayfinding and Streetscape work ongoing through 21 and implementation activities in 2022-2024</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. Economic resiliency planning.</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> EDC provide suggestions to KPEDD on the business tool box. EDC promote tool box to community.</p> <hr/> <p>4. Assess jobs training needs, workforce development, availability of workers and workforce supports including child care, housing.</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Invite KBC Director Reid Brewer as speaker, how does the college make course offering decisions? How is work force development part of the planning? What does the KBC Advisory Board do?</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Invite 9-Star to make a presentation</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Brief survey to businesses and employees on their needs.</p>
<p>Long Term Goals 5 Years or More (2025+)</p>	<p>1. Multipurpose community center (HERC)</p> <p><i>Status:</i> Scoping study has been funded. Demolition of the smaller building has been funded; tear down planned in 2023.</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).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION 2023 Calendar

	AGENDA DEADLINE	MEETING	CITY COUNCIL MEETING FOR REPORT*	ANNUAL TOPICS/EVENTS
JANUARY	Wednesday 1/4 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 1/10 6:00 p.m.	Monday 1/23 6:00 p.m. [Arevalo]	<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 2/8 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 2/14 6:00 p.m.	Monday 2/27 6:00 p.m. [Gamble]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPC Job Fair
MARCH	Wednesday 3/8 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 3/14 6:00 p.m.	Tuesday 3/28 6:00 p.m. [Perez]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk Reappointment Notices Sent Out • Update from Public Works Director • KPEDD CEDS Review
APRIL	Wednesday 4/5 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 4/11 6:00 p.m.	Monday 4/24 6:00 p.m. [Perez]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms Expire April 1st • Advisory Body Training Worksession
MAY	Wednesday 5/3 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 5/9 6:00 p.m.	Monday 5/22 6:00 p.m. [Pitzman]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Review of Commission's Bylaws • Election of EDC Officers
JUNE	Wednesday 6/7 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 6/13 6:00 p.m.	Monday 6/26 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Plan Review
JULY	No Regular Meeting			
AUGUST	Wednesday 8/2 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 8/8 6:00 p.m.	Monday 8/14 6:00 p.m. [Pitzman]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvement Plan Review • Update from Public Works Director
SEPTEMBER	Wednesday 9/6 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 9/12 6:00 p.m.	Monday 9/25 6:00 p.m. [Pitzman]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Development Speaker
OCTOBER	Wednesday 10/4 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 10/10 6:00 p.m.	Monday 10/23 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Review of EDC's Strategic Plan/Goals & BR&E
NOVEMBER	Wednesday 11/8 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday 11/14 6:00 p.m.	Monday 11/27 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.