



Agenda

Planning Commission Regular Meeting

Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 6:30 PM

City Hall Cowles Council Chambers In-Person & Via Zoom Webinar

Homer City Hall

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

Zoom Webinar ID: 979 8816 0903 Password: 976062

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

CALL TO ORDER, 6:30 P.M.

AGENDA APPROVAL

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA The public may speak to the Commission regarding matters on the agenda that are not scheduled for public hearing or plat consideration. (3 minute time limit).

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA All items on the consent agenda are considered routine and non-controversial by the Planning Commission and are approved in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless requested by a Planning Commissioner, in which case the item will be moved to the regular agenda.

- [A.](#) Unapproved Special Meeting Minutes for January 31, 2024
- [B.](#) Decision & Findings for Conditional Use Permit 2023-08 Planned Unit Development at 1563 Homer Spit Road, 1663 Homer Spit Road and 1491 Bay Avenue

PRESENTATIONS / VISITORS

REPORTS

- [A.](#) City Planner's Report PC-24-003

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PLAT CONSIDERATION

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- [A.](#) To Plan for the Future, Imagine the Future - How Foresight and Futures Literacy Can Refocus Urban Planning

Memorandum PC-24-004 from Commissioner Highland as back up.

B. Ordinance 23-61(S) Short Term Rentals

Memorandum PC-24-005 from Economic Development Manager as backup.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

A. City Manager's Reports
CM Report to City Council January 22, 2024
CM Report to City Council February 12, 2024

B. City of Homer Monthly Newsletter
February 2024

C. Planning Commission Annual Calendar

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE Members of the audience may address the Commission on any subject. (3 min limit)

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBER (if present)

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

ADJOURNMENT

Next Regular Meeting is **Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.** A worksession will be conducted **at** 5:30 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar. Meetings will adjourn promptly at 9:30 p.m. An extension is allowed by a vote of the Commission.

CALL TO ORDER

Session 24-03, a Special Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Scott Smith at 5:37 p.m. on January 31, 2024 at the Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall, located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and via Zoom Webinar. The start of meeting was delayed to allow the arrival of Commissioner Conley.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS HIGHLAND, SMITH, SCHNEIDER, VENUTI, CONLEY, STARK, BARNWELL

STAFF: DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE, CITY PLANNER FOSTER

CONSULTING: KEN CASTNER, MAYOR

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Smith requested a motion and second to approve the agenda.

SCHNEIDER/BARNWELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Smith noted for the record that all items on the consent agenda are considered routine and non-controversial by the Planning 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. He then requested a motion and second to adopt.

- A. Unapproved Special Meeting Minutes for January 17, 2024

SCHNEIDER/VENUTI MOVED TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Unapproved Special Meeting Minutes for January 3, 2024

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and requested a motion and second.

HIGHLAND/BARNWELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING ON JANUARY 3, 2024.

Commissioner Highland requested clarification on a point under the City Planner's rebuttal, page 24 of the packet, "Zoning the property for a park, these lots are private property and zoned for rural residential and General Commercial 1, parks are not allowed" It should read "on this CUP." In order to be correct since parks are allowed in this zoning district.

HIGHLAND/BARNWELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Smith requested declarations of ex parte communication from the Commission. He then turned the gavel to Vice Chair Barnwell stating that he had ex parte communication with a member of the public.

Commissioner Smith declared that he received a phone call from a member of the public on other issues unrelated to this project but then the caller asked what the commission was talking about and started to ask questions about the CUP 23-08. Mr. Smith stated that he informed the caller that the issue is still pending and he was unable to speak about the project.

Vice Chair Barnwell requested a motion and second.

HIGHLAND MOVED THAT COMMISSIONER SMITH HAD A CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

Commissioner Venuti called a point of order noting that they needed a motion for ex parte communication not conflict of interest.

Deputy City Clerk Krause noted that there was a suggested language in the Commission's special agenda.

BARNWELL/SCHNEIDER MOVED TO RECUSE COMMISSIONER SMITH DUE TO EX PARTE COMMUNICATION.

There were no requests from the Commission for additional information.

Vice Chair Barnwell requested the Clerk to perform a roll call vote.

VOTE. NO. VENUTI, SCHNEIDER, HIGHLAND, CONLEY, STARK, BARNWELL.

Motion failed.

Vice Chair Barnwell turned the gavel back to Chair Smith.

Chair Smith requested additional declarations.

Commissioner Schneider declared that he also had received a phone call from a member of the public who had participated via Zoom but did not stay for the entire meeting due to the late hour and asked if the Commission made any decisions and if they did what the decision was. He told the caller that the Commission did not make a decision and that was the end of the discussion.

BARNWELL/HIGHLAND MOVED TO RECUSE COMMISSIONER SCHNEIDER DUE TO EX PARTE COMMUNICATION.

There was no further discussion.

Chair Smith requested the Clerk to perform a roll call vote.

VOTE. NO. SMITH, HIGHLAND, CONLEY, STARK, BARNWELL, VENUTI.

Motion failed.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Memorandum PC 24-002 from Deputy City Clerk re: Conditional Use Permit CUP 23-08 for a Planned Unit Development at 1563 Homer Spit Road, 1663 Homer Spit Road and 1491 Bay Avenue

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to City Planner Foster.

City Planner Foster did not have anything further to add and deferred to the Clerk.

Deputy City Clerk Krause stated that the memorandum was in the packet and if the Commission desires she can read the memo into the record.

Commissioner Highland stated her preference to have the memorandum read into the record.

Deputy City Clerk Krause read Memorandum PC-24-002 into the record in its entirety.

VENUTI/SCHNEIDER MOVE TO RECESS INTO DELIBERATIVE SESSION ON CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP) 23-08 FOR A PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT AT 1563 HOMER SPIT ROAD, 1663 HOMER SPIT ROAD AND 1491 BAY AVENUE.

Debate on the motion ensued with Commissioners discussing the pros and cons of deliberating in private or debating the motion in the public with clarification that they are within the 45 day deadline making a decision at the next meeting if they cannot conclude tonight; recording the deliberative process would defeat the purpose of the Commission recessing into a Deliberative Session; the process would be transparent since the Commission would return to the meeting and state their vote and findings on the record; a deliberative session was similar to City Council's Executive Session and would allow the Commission to compare apples to apples and the public would not have to listen to the haggling part.

Commissioner Highland called for the vote.

Chair Smith requested the Clerk to perform a roll call vote.

VOTE. YES. SCHNEIDER, CONLEY, STARK, VENUTI, SMITH

VOTE. NO. HIGHLAND, BARNWELL

Motion carried.

Chair Smith restated that the motion to recess into deliberative session on CUP 23-08 was adopted, confirmed with Commissioner Highland who was attending the meeting electronically, that she will be signing off of this meeting and signing in to the meeting established by the Clerk for the deliberative session. He then stated the process for the record on what will occur when the Commission concludes their deliberations for the benefit of the members of the public attending the meeting.

Chair Smith recessed the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

Deputy City Clerk Krause proceeded to escort the Commission to the Conference Room upstairs and assured that Commissioner Highland connected to the deliberative session. Due to minor technical issues the main meeting was disconnected at approximately 6:25 p.m. The public portion of the meeting was reconnected at 6:45 p.m. A message was entered on the city website meeting page to advise the public that the meeting was currently recessed into deliberative session, members of the public can wait on Zoom or email the Clerk to check on the status of the meeting. There were twelve members of the public attending via Zoom and six members present in Council Chambers. Ms. Krause amended the meeting webpage when the Commission returned to Council Chambers at 10:04 p.m.

Chair Smith requested a motion and second.

SCHNEIDER/BARNWELL MOVED TO EXTEND THE MEETING TO 11:00 P.M.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Smith called the meeting back to order in Council Chambers at 10:10 p.m. He noted that the Clerk has provided suggested language for a motion but the Commission has findings that differ from those. He then clarified with the Clerk that she will call the vote, each Commissioner can state their vote and independent findings.

Commissioner Highland questioned the Clerk, if the Commission has a statement for the record how should it be handled.

Deputy City Clerk Krause confirmed that the Commission will state the motion in the affirmative as suggested and can vote that motion down stating their findings on the record for doing so. In response to Commissioner Highland she was quite frankly unsure how to respond since that has never happened in her time as a Clerk.

She continued advising that the Commission address the motion that's recommended and once that action is done the Chair can put forth the Commission's statement.

Chair Smith requested a motion and second.

SCHNEIDER/HIGHLAND MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 23-060 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF CUP 23-08 PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT AT 1563 & 1663 HOMER SPIT ROAD AND 1491 BAY AVENUE WITH FINDINGS 1-15 AND CONDITIONS 1-10

Chair Smith stated for the record that the Commission has evaluated the application, Staff Report 23-060 from the City Planner and heard and read public testimony and based on the Commission's deliberations are ready to vote.

Chair Smith requested the Clerk to perform a roll call vote.

NO. HIGHLAND. Commissioner Highland stated she agreed with Chair Smith's findings as well as the following, finding that the proposal is not compatible with existing uses of surrounding land with rural residential, protected wetlands and conservation zone.

NO. CONLEY. Commissioner Conley stated the inconsistency with using the application of a Planned Unit Development for the Conditional Use Permit.

YES. STARK. Commissioner Stark stated he found that the Economic Development, Socio-economic jobs, housing, and Non-Motorized pathway benefits for the overall Homer well-being and quality of life for individual residents and visitors.

NO. BARNWELL. Commissioner Barnwell stated he agreed with Chair Smith's finding as well as these additional findings: Citing 21.24.010 traffic transportation, Airport proximity and safety, the Department of Transportation designated approach surface that is shown in the 2022 Homer Department of Transportation Airport Layout Plan clearly shows an approach surface that is directly over this proposed development and Commissioner Barnwell expressed concern on the environmental location of this development as there is a part of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan referring to the Green Infrastructure Map very clearly showing this hotel location in an area called critical green infrastructure.

NO. VENUTI. Commissioner Venuti stated that he based his decision, among other things, on the fact that this project does not comply with Homer City Code 21.44.030¹ (c) (1) (a) which requires no structure can be closer to the top of a ravine, steep slope or bluff than the lesser of forty feet. He then cited the definition of a "bluff" as stated in code, "is an abrupt change in elevation for at least 15 feet" and also finding that city code states the maximum building height for GC1 district "shall be 35 feet" and this project exceeds that 35 feet.

NO. SMITH. Chair Smith stated that the concerns expressed by the other Commissioners could be addressed by using additional conditions and did not agree with their assessments of the city code, however there was one finding that was presented in the deliberations that he felt responsible to the city for to prevent litigation and stated the following: The Commission appreciates Doyon's development proposal and believes that it would be a great benefit to the Homer community. After thorough evaluation of CUP Application 23-08, City

¹ 21.44.040 is the incorrect citation it has been amended to read 21.44.030 (c)(1)(a)

Planner Report 23-060, and weighing public comment, the Homer Planning Commission finds against the application with the following finding: Page 59 of the application (Drawing AS 0.01) which lists the total square footage of the hotel structure as 80,505 square feet. This exceeds allowances in Homer City Code 21.24.040 *Dimensional Requirements (e) Building Area & Dimensions – Retail and Wholesale (4) No conditional use permit, planned unit development, or variance may be granted that would allow a building to exceed the limits of subsections (e)(1), (2) and (3) of this section and no nonconforming use or structure may be expanded in any manner that would increase its nonconformance with the limits of subsections (e)(1), (2) and (3) of this section; and cited Homer City Code 21.24.040 (e)(1) In that area south of Beluga Lake, identified as the Ocean Drive GC1: the total square feet of floor area of retail and wholesale business uses within a single building shall not exceed 75,000 square feet.*² Chair Smith continued by summarizing, therefore, the footprint of the hotel is larger than what is allowed by code.

NO. SCHNEIDER. Commissioner Schneider stated that he is voting in this manner for the reasons articulated by Chair Smith.

Motion failed.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Bette Seaman, city resident, thanked the Commission for taking a very difficult job while everyone watched and doing it with integrity and honesty. She appreciated it.

Penelope Haas, non-resident, echoed the sentiments of Ms. Seaman and expressed her thanks to the Commission for who knew how many collective hours they contributed to this decision, but it was a lot and she understands that they each have other things to do but really appreciates their dedication to Homer and our collective wellbeing.

Richard Rosenbloom, Bay Avenue resident, concurred with his neighbor, noting the Commission had a very difficult task, but he could tell from their conduct here this evening that the Commission gave it a rigorous evaluation and deliberation and appreciated it very much.

Scott Adams, city resident, expressed his appreciation for the Commission looking at this as a major project that was coming into the City of Homer and I am hoping that they (Doyon) come back with something that will fit in with our codes. He really appreciates it.

Rika Mouw, city resident, she wanted to ditto what others have said and stated that it has been a tortured extended process and the integrity that each of the Commissioners have shown, I just want to express my appreciation and thank you. I know that this will eventually lead to a much better project, and my words fall short, as everyone else was more articulate, but thank you very, very much all of you.

Zach Dunlap, Applicant, expressed his appreciation for the city staff and echoed the sentiments expressed by the public here tonight on the work of the Commissioners with the deliberations and the work that has been done here in these chambers, they appreciate that and thank you.

² Amended to reflect correct language from HCC 21.24.040 (e) (1) (4)

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

City Planner Foster expressed his appreciation for the work and long hours everyone put into this and was glad to see that it was not 1:00 a.m. and everyone will be able to get to bed earlier.

Deputy City Clerk Krause had no additional comments.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCIL MEMBERS

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Highland commented expressed her appreciation for everyone's time and effort, especially the staff and wished them safe driving home.

Commissioner Venuti commented that early in the process he asked if they would come back with a better idea and so they are looking forward to seeing a better idea.

Commissioner Stark commented his appreciation for the guidance and input from the Clerk and the professional analysis from the City Planner, comment provided by the public on the project, the applicant for attending each meeting in person, the potential investment and consideration in Homer and the Chair for leading the Commission and conducting the meetings.

Commissioner Conley commented that the tone is that we are wrapping this up but he actually felt that it's the other way. He wanted to reflect what the Community echoed by welcoming Doyon in with their business and interest in Homer and he could actually see a lot of late nights but this is the start of the process of working with the applicant and figuring out a path forward. Commissioner Conley expressed his appreciation of the hard work everyone put in and is very interested to see where this goes.

Commissioner Schneider commented his appreciation for his fellow Commissioners hard work, and especially for their guidance during this process as he is still pretty new and "tossed to the wolves" was a term he heard more than once. He expressed his appreciation for the staff and the public for coming forward and expressing their feelings in a positive way throughout the process. Commissioner Schneider then stated his appreciation for the applicant and their interest in Homer and looks forward to working with them more in the future.

Commissioner Barnwell echoed the sentiments of Commissioner Schneider stating he appreciates the applicant for a spirited proposal, he would not quite agree that it was a "tortured" process as Ms. Mouw said but it has been a lot of hard work and he spent many, many hours analyzing all this stuff, noting it was a very hard decision but frankly as Commissioner Conley noted let's move on to something better, hopefully. Mr. Barnwell then expressed his thanks for the work that the staff has done on this project.

Chair Smith commented, "I'm announcing my resignation" He then laughingly stated he was just joking and did not think that would go over so well. Chair Smith then echoed the sentiments previously expressed by the other Commissioners, stating it has been a pleasure working with the applicant and meeting each member of the team, it was an exceptional presentation and believed that Doyon thoroughly sought to understand the community and expressed his hope to see them in the near future. He expressed his appreciation for the City Planner and the guidance from the Clerk and keeping them on track as always. He noted that their deliberations

did get a little heated tonight from time to time but that just means that people are passionate and they care, he appreciated everyone's efforts and work on this project.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 10:16 p.m. The regular meeting and worksession scheduled for Wednesday, February 7, 2024 has been canceled. The next regular meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 21, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.** A worksession will be held at 5:30 p.m. prior to the regular meeting. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar. Meetings will adjourn promptly at 9:30 p.m. An extension is allowed by a vote of the Commission.

RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: _____



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Planning

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

Planning@ci.homer.ak.us
(p) 907-235-3106
(f) 907-235-3118

HOMER PLANNING COMMISSION

Denied CUP 2023-08 at the Meeting of January 31, 2024

RE: Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 2023-08 Planned Unit Development
Address: 1563 Homer Spit Road, 1663 Homer Spit Road, and 1491 Bay Avenue

Legal Description: T 6S R 13W SEC 21 SEWARD MERIDIAN HM 0940051 BAYVIEW SUB NO 6 LOT 164-A
T 6S R 13W SEC 21 SEWARD MERIDIAN HM 0940051 BAYVIEW SUB NO 6 LOT 164-B
T 6S R 13W SEC 21 SEWARD MERIDIAN HM 0000839 BAY VIEW SUB LOT 163

DECISION

Introduction

Doyon, Limited (the “Applicant”) applied to the Homer Planning Commission (the “Commission”) for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) under Homer City Code HCC 21.24.030 (f), Planned Unit Developments. The applicant proposes a planned unit development consisting of a hotel, employee housing, and triplex residential units at 1563 Homer Spit Road, 1663 Homer Spit Road, and 1491 Bay Avenue.

A public hearing was held for the application before the Commission on December 6, 2023 and continued to January 3, 2024, as required by Homer City Code 21.94. The public hearing was closed after hearing additional public testimony on January 3, 2024. Notice of the public hearing was published in the local newspaper and sent to 28 property owners of 26 parcels as shown on the Kenai Peninsula Borough tax assessor rolls. Public notices contained information on how to submit written testimony, participate telephonically, or participate on the Zoom meeting platform.

At the December 6, 2023 meeting, Chair Smith requested declarations of ex parte communication or conflict of interest on any of the Public Hearing items. Commissioner Conley declared a potential conflict of interest regarding CUP 23-08 citing his association with firms and persons working with and for the applicant. He stated that he did not receive any financial gain but he has known about the project for a long time through the associations he has with the people that are working for companies being hired by the Applicant. The Commission unanimously voted 6-0 that Commissioner Conley did not have a conflict of interest.

At the January 3, 2024 meeting, Chair Smith requested declarations of ex parte communication for any of the items listed under Public Hearings since the December 6, 2023 regular meeting. Commissioner Conley declared an ex parte discussion on the Conditional Use Permit stating he was approached by Lane Chesley, the former Borough Assembly member and Planning Commissioner. It was under 10 minutes. The Commission unanimously voted 6-0 that Commissioner Conley did not have a conflict of interest.

At the January 31, 2024 special meeting Chair Smith requested declarations of ex parte communication from the Commission. He then turned the gavel to Vice Chair Barnwell stating that he had ex parte communication with a member of the public.

Commissioner Smith declared that he received a phone call from a member of the public on other issues unrelated to this project, but then the caller asked what the commission was talking about and started to ask questions about the CUP 23-08, Mr. Smith stated that he informed the caller that the issue is still pending and he was unable to speak about the project. The Commission unanimously voted 6-0 that Chair Smith did not have a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Schneider declared that he also had received a phone call from a member of the public who had participated via Zoom but did not stay for the entire meeting due to the late hour and asked if the Commission made any decisions and if they did what the decision was. He told the caller that the Commission did not make a decision and that was the end of the discussion. The Commission unanimously voted 6-0 that Commissioner Schneider did not have a conflict of interest.

At the January 31, 2023 special meeting of the Commission deliberations were held, seven Commissioners were present. The Commission voted 6-1 to deny CUP 2023-08 citing several criteria that were not met by the application.

Evidence Presented

City Planner, Ryan Foster, provided a detailed review of Staff Report PC 23-060 for the Commission at the December 6, 2023 meeting and provided responses to Commissioners questions at the January 3, 2024 meeting. The Applicant was available and presented and provided responses to Commissioners questions at the December 6, 2023 and January 3, 2024 meetings. Public testimony was provided at the December 6, 2023 meeting and continued to the January 3, 2024 meeting based on the significant amount of persons providing testimony. Written comments were also submitted for the December 6, 2023 meeting and January 3, 2024 meetings. The public testimony and written comments are provided in the record.

Conclusion: Based on the foregoing findings of fact and law, Conditional Use Permit 2023-08 is hereby denied, citing the application did not meet the following criteria:

1. Commissioner Highland stated she agreed with Chair Smith's findings as well as the following, finding that the proposal is not compatible with existing uses of surrounding land with rural residential, protected wetlands and conservation zone.

2. Commissioner Conley stated the inconsistency with using the application of a Planned Unit Development for the Conditional Use Permit.
3. Commissioner Barnwell stated he agreed with Chair Smith's finding as well as these additional findings: Citing 21.24.010 traffic transportation, Airport proximity and safety, the Department of Transportation designated approach surface that is shown in the 2022 Homer Department of Transportation Airport Layout Plan clearly shows an approach surface that is directly over this proposed development and Commissioner Barnwell expressed concern on the environmental location of this development as there is a part of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan referring to the Green Infrastructure Map very clearly showing this hotel location in an area called critical green infrastructure.
4. Commissioner Venuti stated that he based his decision, among other things, on the fact that this project does not comply with Homer City Code 21.44.030 (c) (1) (a) which requires no structure can be closer to the top of a ravine, steep slope or bluff than the lesser of forty feet. He then cited the definition of a "bluff" as stated in code, "is an abrupt change in elevation for at least 15 feet" and also finding that city code states the maximum building height for GC1 district "shall be 35 feet" and this project exceeds that 35 feet.
5. Chair Smith stated that the concerns expressed by the other Commissioners could be addressed by using additional conditions and did not agree with their assessments of the city code, however there was one finding that was presented in the deliberations that he felt responsible to the city for to prevent litigation and stated the following: The Commission appreciates Doyon's development proposal and believes that it would be a great benefit to the Homer community. After thorough evaluation of CUP Application 23-08, City Planner Report 23-060, and weighing public comment, the Homer Planning Commission finds against the application with the following finding: Page 59 of the application (Drawing AS 0.01) which lists the total square footage of the hotel structure as 80,505 square feet. This exceeds allowances in Homer City Code 21.24.040 Dimensional Requirements (e) Building Area & Dimensions – Retail and Wholesale (4) No conditional use permit, planned unit development, or variance may be granted that would allow a building to exceed the limits of subsections (e)(1), (2) and (3) of this section and no nonconforming use or structure may be expanded in any manner that would increase its nonconformance with the limits of subsections (e)(1), (2) and (3) of this section; and cited Homer City Code 21.24.040 (e)(1) In that area south of Beluga Lake, identified as the Ocean Drive GC1: the total square feet of floor area of retail and wholesale business uses within a single building shall not exceed 75,000 square feet.

Chair Smith continued by summarizing, therefore, the footprint of the hotel is larger than what is allowed by code.

Date	Chair, Scott Smith
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Date	City Planner, Ryan Foster
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NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHTS

Pursuant to Homer City Code 21.93.020 any person with standing in this decision may appeal this decision to a hearing officer within fifteen (15) days of the date of distribution indicated below. A hearing officer will be appointed in accordance with Homer City Code 21.91.100. Any decision not appealed within that time shall be final. A notice of appeal shall be in writing and contain all the information required by Homer City Code Section 21.93.080 and shall be filed with the Homer City Clerk, 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska 99603.

CERTIFICATION OF DISTRIBUTION

I certify that a copy of this Decision was mailed to the below listed recipients on _____2024.
A copy was also delivered to the City of Homer Planning Department and Homer City Clerk on the same date.

Date

Ed Gross, Associate Planner

Doyon, Limited
1 Doyon Place
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Michael Gatti
JDO Law
3000 A Street, Suite 300
Anchorage, AK 99503

Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
City of Homer
491 E Pioneer Avenue
Homer, AK 99603



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Planning
491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

Planning@ci.homer.ak.us
(p) 907-235-3106
(f) 907-235-3118

Staff Report Pl 24-003

TO: Homer Planning Commission
FROM: Ryan Foster, AICP, City Planner
DATE: February 21, 2024
SUBJECT: City Planner's Report

Transportation Plan

The draft Transportation Plan is available for review here: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/planning>

A work session is scheduled for the Planning Commission on March 6, 2024 from 5:30-6:30pm to begin discussion on Commission comments.

Free Event: Building a Strong Town

Join the City of Homer and community partners on February 20th for a special guest presentation, "Building a Strong Town" by Strong Towns founder Chuck Marohn. Chuck advocates for a new way of thinking about the way we build our world, and supports thousands of people across the United States and Canada who are working to make their cities safe, livable, and financially resilient.

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

Tuesday, February 20th, from 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Attend in person:

Kachemak Bay Campus, Room 202 (533 E. Pioneer Avenue)
Doors open at 5:30 pm; presentation begins at 6 pm followed by Q&A

Free Movie Screening: "Cruise Boom: A Community on the Cusp of Change"

Join us at the Homer Movie Theatre for a free screening of "Cruise Boom: A Community on the Cusp of Change." This 60-minute documentary film explores the complexities of growth and

change in Sitka, provoking questions about how a community guides its future while trying to balance tourism with the desire to sustain healthy communities and the environment.

This event helps build up to the launch of the City's comprehensive plan process.

Tuesday, February 27th, at 6:00 pm
Homer Movie Theatre, 106 Pioneer Avenue

For more information about the film go to <https://artchangeinc.org/cruiseboom>

Meeting Schedule

The next regular meeting date is Wednesday, March 6, 2024.

A FILM BY ELLEN FRANKENSTEIN & ATMAN MEHTA

CRUISE BOOM

A community on the cusp of change

- FREE ADMISSION -

HOMER SCREENING

sponsored by the City of Homer

TUESDAY | FEB 27TH | 6 PM | HOMER THEATRE



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



Watch the Trailer

Building a Strong Town

FREE • OPEN TO EVERYONE

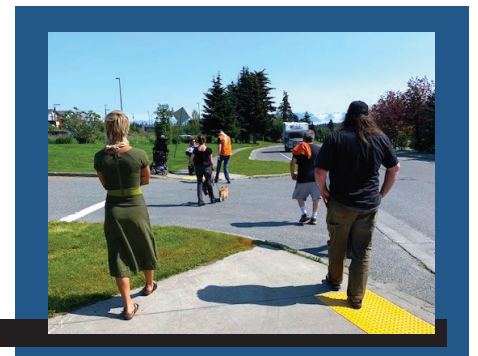
Homer community members, groups, and the City of Homer are actively seeking solutions to local challenges like sustainable growth, affordable housing, a walkable and bike-able community, and fiscally responsible local government.



A COMMUNITY PRESENTATION WITH CHUCK MAROHN STRONG TOWNS FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

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

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



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

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

In Person: Kachemak Bay Campus, Room 202

Online: Zoom



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

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

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

SPONSORED BY THE CITY OF HOMER

For more event info, contact:
planning@ci.homer.ak.us
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STRONG TOWNS



MEMORANDUM

To Plan for the Future, Imagine the Future How Foresight and Futures Literacy Can Refocus Urban Planning

Item Type: Information Memorandum
Prepared For: Homer Planning Commission
Date: February 14, 2024
From: Roberta Highland, Commissioner

Commissioner Highland submitted this article from the Fall 2023 issue of the American Planning Association, *Planning* and it was included in the December 6, 2023 packet as an informational item. She has requested this to be on the meeting agenda for discussion by the Commission.

Ms. Highland has specified sections in the article for emphasis. These sections have been emphasized in green for ease of the Commission's review only.

Recommendation:

For discussion only - no recommendation.

Attachments:

Pages 36-39 from Fall Issue APA Planning Magazine

FOR A POWERFUL EXAMPLE of how the future is often unexpected, consider the smartphone. When these devices first became popular in the mid-2000s, few planners (or others, for that matter) had the foresight and imagination to realize that within a decade, mobile computing would send our cities in a whole new direction.

Think about it: what was once a simple communication device has revolutionized urban transportation through ridesharing and micromobility (Uber, Via), housing (Airbnb), and gig work (Upwork, Fiverr). One technology unlocked a series of changes and consequences for cities.

Planners, traditionally focused on the changes their plans and policies guide, often don't fully anticipate how shifts happening in the world around them can significantly affect their communities.

BUT MAYBE THEY NEED TO START.

This smartphone example comes from Petra Hurtado, PHD, director of research and foresight at APA. It showcases the ways that what's inconceivable today could become commonplace—and perhaps highly disruptive—tomorrow. Hurtado's work seeks to bring what's called “futures literacy” to the planning profession.

Planners might argue that their work already focuses on the future. But traditional plans are based on existing data, the patterns of the past, and the assumptions of today. That means they are, by definition, reactive. Hurtado's key insight is that planners need to become comfortable with making plans that are less prescriptive. Planning work—and indeed the profession itself—needs to recalibrate its focus to agility and preparedness for multiple possible futures, as well as on developing the infrastructure needed to be resilient in the face of whatever comes.

“Even though we make plans for the future, we don't always consider the future—or better, multiple plausible futures—in our plans, which is a big issue,” Hurtado says.

Planners can acquire the skill of futures literacy and a mindset that, while no one can predict the future, we can prepare for it by combining hindsight, insight, and foresight.

WHAT IS FUTURES LITERACY?

IN AN ERA of rapid economic, technological, and demographic shifts, buffeted and catalyzed by climate change, planners need to adopt a more forward-thinking approach to their

work, one that can rapidly evolve and adapt.

Futures literacy is “the skill that allows people to better understand the role of the future in what they see and do,” according to UNESCO, which calls futures literacy a key 21st-century skill. “Being futures literate empowers the imagination, enhances our ability to prepare, recover, and invent as changes occur.” APA, through its Upskilling Initiative, has also identified futures literacy as an important skill for planners as they address the challenges and opportunities of a changing and uncertain world.

Developing futures literacy will help planners make sense of the future, understand drivers of change that are outside of one's control, and prepare for what may lead to success or failure, Hurtado says. It can also help planners be “comfortable with—and even confident about—uncertainty,” she adds.

The concept of futures thinking and related foresight practices initially emerged during the post-WWII period. The concept of strategic foresight was initially embraced by Cold War military planners seeking to game out potential conflicts and de-escalate during the era of superpower conflict.

Soon, the methodology would make its way to corporate America, where leaders sought to future-proof products, business strategies, and their companies and get a better sense of shifting consumer sentiment. It's since been adopted by myriad organizations, including UNESCO, which is working to integrate futures literacy into school curricula.

Traditional plans are based on existing data, the patterns of the past, and the assumptions of today. That means they are, by definition, reactive.

PLANNING WITH FORESIGHT

NOW FUTURES LITERACY has come to the planning profession, and Hurtado and other proponents suggest planners adopt a series of concepts and methodologies in their work. She calls this practicing foresight, which starts with the future and then reverse engineers what needs to happen today to get to the most desirable outcome. This is different from visioning, which starts with the present and creates goals for the future.

“Local governments are a perfect place for foresight,” agrees author and professional futurist Rebecca Ryan, who often consults with cities on long-range planning. “If you start your foresight project for a city based on historical numbers, at best, you’re going to get a rinse-and-repeat of your current outcomes. And [worst], you’re going to be completely flat-footed for any disruption. Just a 1 percent change, compounded over 20 years, can be huge.” There are multiple approaches and methodologies to practicing foresight. (*The Future: A Very Short Introduction* by Jennifer Gidley is a good resource on the history of foresight, futures studies, and futures literacy.)

The most important components when planning with foresight and the most relevant to planning are:



LISTEN TO LEARN MORE

Robert Goodspeed, AICP professor and author, shares how exploratory scenario planning can be used to prepare for possible alternative futures in an APA podcast episode. Scan the QR code below or go to planning.org/podcasts to listen.



TREND SCANNING: researching existing, emerging, and potential future trends (including societal, technological, environmental, economic, and political trends, or STEEP) and related drivers of change

SIGNAL SENSING: identifying developments in the far future and in adjacent fields outside the conventional planning space that might impact planning

FORECASTING: estimating future trends

SENSE MAKING: connecting trends and signals to planning to explore how they will impact cities, communities, and the way planners do their work

SCENARIO PLANNING: creating multiple plausible futures

BACKCASTING: understanding what needs to happen today to be prepared for multiple plausible futures

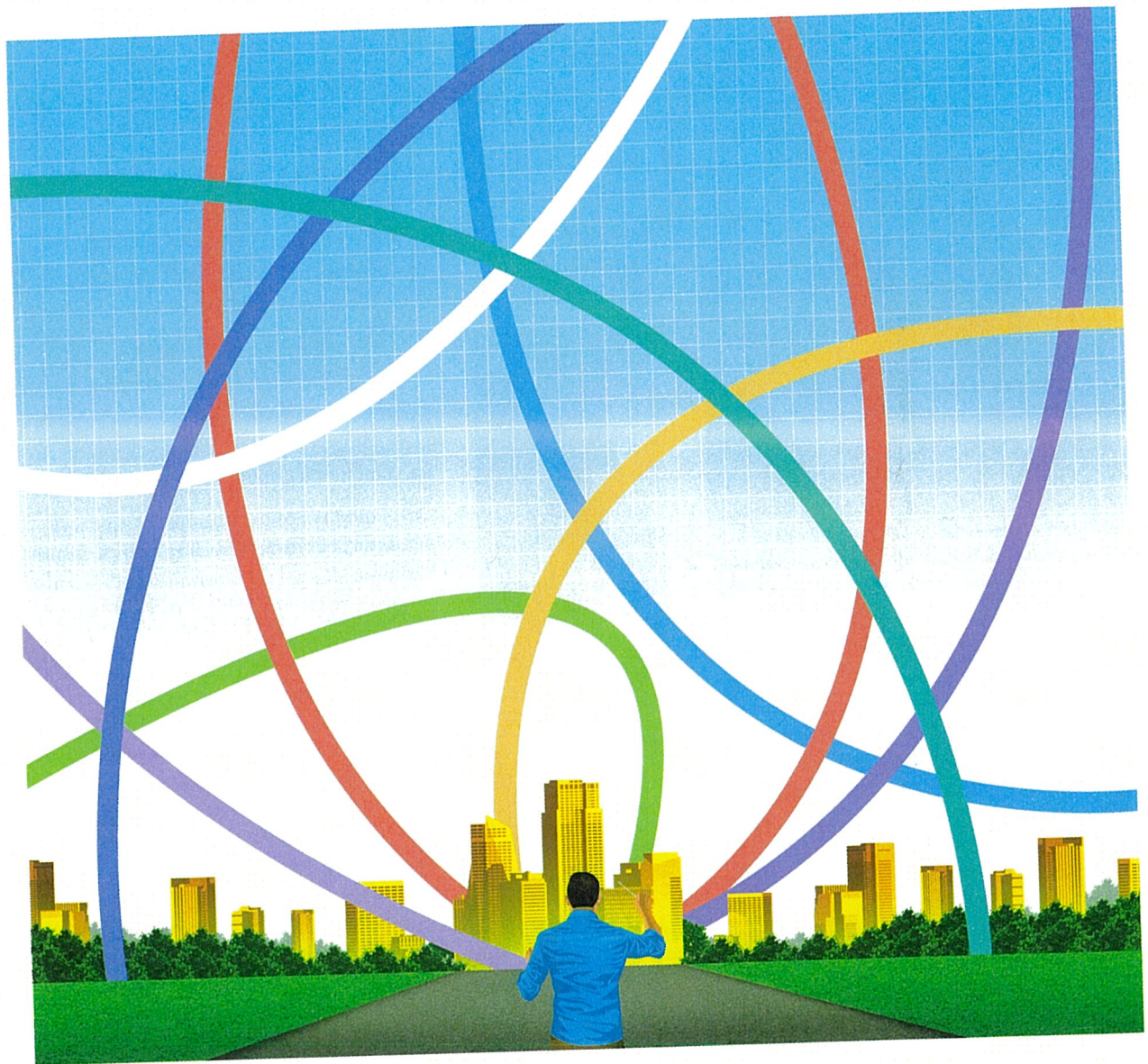
Adopting this kind of strategic foresight should encourage local planning agencies to move from innovating as a response to a crisis to innovating because it’s an ingrained part of organizational culture. That also implies that creativity and openness to new ideas are also key to success.

“I do believe that if we want to shape the future, we also need to be able to imagine it. This is about institutionalizing imagination as a very powerful planning tool,” Hurtado says.

Also critical is the incorporation of many diverse perspectives into the process. Engaging the community—and every facet of the community—strengthens the results.

“By inviting people into this conversation to look at the challenging things that could go wrong, they realize that inaction is not an option,” Ryan says. “That’s important in a political environment. Very often, with these really wicked problems, we just kick the can down the road.”

Exploratory scenario planning (XSP) can be a particularly useful tool in foresight work because it helps create possible alternative futures. “The methods are based on an open-ended, qualitative exercise of conducting research



and brainstorming about the forces that are going to shape the future of what we're planning," says Robert Goodspeed, AICP, an associate professor at the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.

The Twin Cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul, used scenario planning in the Metropolitan Council's 2050 regional planning process, which Hurtado commended for pushing through local policy changes. These exercises can create powerful civic visions that help coalesce political support and achieve clarity around policy.

TREND SCANNING

PART OF FORESIGHT practice is becoming knowledgeable about current and emerging drivers of change. Some of the trend scanning that planners may need is already being done. Hurtado and her team meet quarterly with the Trend Scouting Foresight Community, a group of experts and leading thinkers from numerous disciplines. Their work is compiled annually in the *Trend Report for Planners*, in partnership with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Planners need to evaluate trends based on their certainty and the effect they are likely to have, then prioritize which ones deserve more focus. That approach invites planners to focus on a range of outcomes, as opposed to only planning for one future and hoping everything works out.

Take the emerging trend of urban air mobility, which might get rated as high-certainty and high-impact in big cities, where this technology is already being tested. (The Federal Aviation Administration plans to allow flying taxis by 2028.) Planners in those cities may want to start preparing for how to equitably and sustainably integrate these emerging systems into the existing transportation network. However, for a rural community, this technology might get rated as low-certainty and medium-impact. In those areas, a topic like lab-made meat might get more attention.

FORESIGHT IN ACTION

IN CALGARY, ALBERTA, the city government has been using strategic foresight for nearly a decade, catalyzed by a catastrophic regional flood in 2013. This weather event made clear to the planning team that they

Planners can build more flexibility into their long-range planning, providing mechanisms and milestones within plans that allow for pivots and rapid shifts depending on the changing world.

needed to be nimbler and more resilient.

In Calgary's approach, the process starts with a core team that scans for trends and produces internal research. Those results get filtered through all city departments to assist with planning that is innovative and tech-focused, as well as "agile to emerging stresses, shocks, and opportunities," according to the future-focused Calgary website.

Strategic foresight has helped influence all aspects of city planning there—including economic development and post-COVID transportation plans—with a particular focus on adapting to shifts toward digitalization, preparing for climate change, and reinforcing trust in government. There's even a report assessing the top trends for 2035.

"For economic development, this allows us to make sure we have the people skills and educational attainment we need," says Heather Galbraith, Calgary's strategic foresight program lead. Whereas the team used to think, "we'll figure it out as long as we get the businesses to come here," she says, "this new process allows us to really interrogate our strategies and have mechanisms in place to make sure we have what's needed to be successful in the future."

Planning may be criticized for rigidity or trying to create a sense of certainty when cities require agility and dynamism. Planners can respond by building more flexibility into their long-range planning, Hurtado argues, providing mechanisms and milestones within plans that allow for pivots and rapid shifts depending on the changing world.

Planning departments may view this as a daunting task, but Hurtado recommends that departments of any size consult existing resources, including APA's work on foresight and the *Trend Reports for Planners*. These approaches aren't about bold predictions. They are a means to get comfortable with change and be prepared for uncertainty.

"There's no right or wrong," Hurtado says. "It's a very humble type of work, because next year, everything may change."



FORESIGHT PLANNING RESOURCES

Planners can tap into APA resources on foresight planning, including guides on the process, courses on using the future to create dynamic plans, reports on climate-focused uses of these methodologies, and an expanding library of additional resources. Scan the QR code below or go to planning.org/foresight.



Patrick Sisson is a Los Angeles-based writer and reporter focused on the tech, trends, and policies that shape cities.



AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Short Term Rental Ordinance

Item Type:	Action Memorandum
Prepared For:	Homer Planning Commission
Meeting Date:	21 Feb 2024
Staff Contact:	Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

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

Introduction

The City Council introduced Ordinance 23-61 in November to create a permit process for Short Term Rentals (STR). This regulation will be in Title 8, similar to mobile food permits. The ordinance was sent to the Economic Development Advisory Commission (EDC) and the Planning Commission for comment. At the regular meeting, staff will provide a short PowerPoint presentation on the ordinance, and walk the Commission through it. Council will have a public hearing on Monday February 26th, and will likely postpone second reading to March 11th.

The Planning Commission has had a busy winter so the EDC provided the bulk of public involvement to date. All the backup material is in this packet. The result of the public involvement is the substitute ordinance now before you. Please focus on the substitute, not the original ordinance. The EDC voted down a recommendation of approval of the ordinance at their February 13th meeting. Staff will provide meeting minutes when they are available; an excerpt is an attachment to this staff report.

Synopsis of the ordinance

- Requires registration with the City, including state business license and KPB sales tax compliance
- Requires self-certification of basic life safety (fire extinguishers, Co2 detectors)
- Requires emergency contact information for someone who can respond (not living in another state)
- There is no cap or limit on the number of STR's in the City as a whole, or in a particular neighborhood
- There is no life-safety inspection
- There is no change in the number of staff to provide enforcement

Summary Statement: Review the Substitute Short Term Rental Ordinance, and make comments and a recommendation to City Council.

Action Memorandum PC-24-005
February 21, 2024
Page 2 of 2
Ord. 23-61(S) Short Term Rentals

Attachments

EDC Minutes Excerpt
Substitute Ordinance
Prior EDC and public comment backup information

CALL TO ORDER

Session 24-02 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:01 p.m. on February 13, 2024 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

ABSENT: STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PEARSON

STAFF: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER ENGBRETSSEN & DEPUTY CITY CLERK PETTIT

AGENDA APPROVAL

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

PITZMAN/BRENNAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Dorothy Duncan commented via Zoom, stating that she didn't need for the proposed short term rental ordinance, especially since the Commission has determined that it's not related to housing.

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Unapproved Minutes for the Regular Meeting on May 9, 2023

B. Unapproved Minutes for the Regular Meeting on January 9, 2024

AREVALO/PITZMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.

Commissioner Arevalo suggested some changes for the meeting minutes of January 9, 2024. Her proposed changes were to re-word the paragraph of what the Mayor said under the EDC's Strategic Plan portion of the minutes. Deputy Clerk Pettit agreed to implement the changes for the January 9, 2024 regular meeting minutes.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

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

B. Chamber Director Report

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

C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

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

D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report

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

E. Port Expansion Project

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

F. Guiding Homer's Growth Group

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

G. HERC Update

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

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Short Term Rental Ordinance

BROWN/KIM MOVED TO ADOPT ORDINANCE 23-61 EDC FEBRUARY DRAFT AS PRESENTED.

Commissioner Brown stated that she was going to be voting against this draft of the ordinance, and she strongly encouraged all other members of the EDC to vote against it as well. She explained her reasoning for voting against it, stating that the first two whereas that the ordinance was drafted on have been stricken from the document, adding that there was no question that those two reasons were the premise for this ordinance in the first place. She continued, voicing that she's not attuned to supporting something that there's not a need for. She felt strongly that the ordinance isn't addressing the problems listed.

Commissioner Arevalo said that she was at a mental crossroad, claiming that this ordinance doesn't do a lot of anything in actuality, but added that it does bring forth some points that bear further discussion. She warned the Commission about scrapping the entire ordinance as a whole, explaining that doing so might make it hard for the ordinance to be brought back at a later time.

Commissioner Pitzman agreed with Ms. Arevalo in terms of this ordinance not doing a whole lot. Mr. Pitzman stated that he felt a lot of good things come out of regulation, pointing to his experience in the commercial fishing industry and the safety precautions that have been put in place within that industry as a result of regulations. Mr. Pitzman provided that he even has a rental in Homer, and would still be willing to provide his business license and meet all other proposed requirements of the ordinance. He added that communities change over time and the City needs to be able to react to changing times. His closing thoughts were that the City is well within its right to know who's conducting business within the City limits, and furthermore that the proposed ordinance is so innocuous in his opinion that he is in support of it.

Commissioner Hasche stated that he felt lines 19 through 21 should be stricken from the document. He was in favor of making the ordinance smaller.

Commissioner Brennan stated that she is still confused as to why this ordinance is being put forth. She continued, saying that overall she would be voting no in support of the ordinance, simply because that's what she's hearing from the majority of everyone, and that the ordinance isn't solving the issues that it was intended to.

Commissioner Kim said that he wished he had more context from Council Members Aderhold and Davis. He added that the policy objectives of this ordinance are not clear, and he felt that was being echoed by many in the room. He also said that the language of the ordinance doesn't clearly reflect what they're trying to do. Mr. Kim said that his overall feeling is that the ordinance needs a lot of work. He reasoned that the proposed outcomes don't seem unreasonable to him, but that he's also not a short term rental owner.

Commissioner Brown commented again, reiterating that she felt the ordinance needs to be voted down. She felt strongly that this proposed ordinance doesn't do anything to remedy the housing issues that are being raised.

Commissioner Pitzman took the floor again to explain that he's operating on the basis that the City having this information (registration, self-certification, emergency contact), they will be able to make informed decisions now and in the future. He added that it seems the ordinance should be kicked back to Council for them to have another look at it. Chair Marks stated that what Mr. Pitzman said would be a good lead into the process.

Chair Marks stated that she felt the whereas and the reason for doing something are very important. She continued, saying that she agreed that having statistics is important, but at the same time to pass something just so they can have some information might not be a good reason to have another ordinance. She suggested rather than amending it, it should be sent back to City Council with the basics of what's been said at the meeting tonight.

HASCHE/PITZMAN MOVED TO AMEND THE EDC DRAFT OF ORDINANCE 23-61 BY STRIKING OUT LINES 19 THROUGH 21.

Commissioner Pitzman stated that it's difficult to pick out there whereas, and that it seems that Council needs to readdress the whole whereas section and take another look at where this is coming from.

There was no further discussion on the amendment.

Chair Marks requested a roll-call vote for the amendment.

VOTE (AMENDMENT): NO: MARKS, AREVALO, BROWN, PITZMAN, BRENNAN, KIM.

VOTE (AMENDMENT): YES: HASCHE.

The motion for amendment failed with 6 against and 1 in favor.

Chair Marks requested a roll-call vote for the main motion.

VOTE (MAIN MOTION): NO: PITZMAN, BRENNAN, KIM, MARKS, HASCHE, BROWN, AREVALO.

The motion to adopt the EDC Draft of Ordinance 23-61 failed with 7 votes against and 0 in favor.

AREVALO/PITZMAN MOVED THAT THE EDC RECOMMENDS THAT CITY COUNCIL BRING THIS ORDINANCE BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD AND DRILL DOWN DEEPER INTO THE ISSUES THAT THEY ENVISIONED THAT THIS ORDINANCE WOULD ADDRESS AND TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION ALL POINTS MADE BY THE EDC, THE PLANNING COMMISSION, AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

Commissioner Kim stated that he felt it might be prudent of the Commission to give an economic reason for sending it back. He added that providing clear goals so that the Council knows what the Commission is asking of them would be a good idea.

Chair Marks requested a roll-call vote for the motion proposed by Commissioner Arevalo.

VOTE: YES: AREVALO, BROWN, KIM, BRENNAN, PITZMAN, MARKS, HASCHE.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Brown provided her reasons for voting to send the ordinance back to City Council, stating that the original ordinance is not necessary based on the objectives that she believes were the purpose of it. Further, she said that it's not solving a problem clearly.

Commissioner Kim stated that he voted against the ordinance because it lacks explicit policy objectives, the corresponding language doesn't clearly reflect these policy objectives, and that a lot more work can be done to address the root issues.

Commissioner Arevalo voted against the ordinance, stating that while she sees many flaws with the ordinance, she doesn't believe it should be scrapped entirely because there are issues that, with modification, could potentially be addressed, and also because the Commission is uncertain as to some of the objectives behind the authors of the ordinance. She concluded that the ordinance isn't very clear to anyone and could use some work.

Commissioner Hasche stated his reasons for sending the ordinance back to City Council, citing lack of enforceability and his feeling that the ordinance doesn't address the problems that it set out to solve.

Commissioner Pitzman said that his reason for sending the ordinance back to City Council was for them to reconsider it, and to modify the intent and the whereas to line up more closely with the ordinance.

Commissioner Brennan provided her reason for voting to send the ordinance back to the Council, stating that it was mostly due to the reason that she keeps finding perceptions and feelings rather than facts throughout the ordinance and documents pertaining to it. She pointed to the City Manager's memo from October that claims that short term rentals are clearly a contributor to the lack of availability and affordability in our local housing markets, stating that after months of meetings and forums the Commission has not been able to prove that's true.

Chair Marks gave her reasons for voting to send the ordinance back to City Council, saying that she thinks this ordinance unduly reflects zeroing in on one business sector. She added that she would like to see something addressed on a broader business-like situation, so that the entire business community is looked at in general.

- B. Winter Survey
Memorandum from Economic Development Manager as backup

Commissioner Arevalo departed the meeting at 7:37 p.m. for personal reasons.

BRENNAN/KIM MOVED TO FORWARD THE IDEA OF A WINTER SURVEY TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN.

Commissioner Kim asked if it was possible to attend the Chamber of Commerce luncheon to get traction for this idea.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

- C. Looking Ahead to the 2024 Strategic Plan
Memorandum from Economic Development Manager as backup

KIM/BRENNAN MOVED TO ADOPT THE 2024-25 EDC STRATEGIC PLAN.

Commissioner Kim inquired if it would be possible in a future meeting to plot this out into a calendar so that the Commission has an actionable working plan. Ms. Engebretsen confirmed that yes, this would

be possible. Chair Marks insisted that the Commission needs to bring forth what the next big project will be.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

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

Chair Marks noted the informational materials in the packet. She added that a change needed to be made to the EDC calendar, and Ms. Engebretsen stated that she would be able to assist with any changes that were needed.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Scott Adams, city resident, thanked City staff and the Commission for their hard work. He added that he's glad the short term rental ordinance is going to be sent back to Council for their review.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen shared with the Commission that the Planning Commission has guidelines and rules for making amendments to City Code. She added that it's been interesting working with the short term rental ordinance as it was the first one she's worked with that doesn't involve Title 21 of City Code.

Deputy City Clerk Pettit stated that it was a good meeting and the Commission worked through some really important items tonight. He also thanked the public for attending tonight's meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCIL MEMBER (If Present)

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Kim thanked City staff and members of the public for attending. He thanked Scott Adams specifically for showing up to many meetings and providing his input. He said that he respectfully disagreed with Mr. Adam's comment about the short term rental ordinance wasting the Commission's time as Mr. Kim felt that it was a great training exercise for the Commission.

Commissioner Hasche stated that he's looking forward to the March meeting, where another version of this ordinance will surely be up for discussion in his opinion.

Commission Pitzman thanked the community members for their input as well as the input from fellow Commissioners as it aids him in forming his own opinions.

Commissioner Brennan thanked the audience members for taking time out of their lives to gather facts, testify, et cetera.

Chair Marks thanked the public, City staff and the Commissioners. She is feeling very positive that the Commission got into the weeds in dealing with the short term rental ordinance. She added that it wasn't wasted energy dealing with the short term rental ordinance, and that she really does believe this was part of getting the Borough to take a look at their software and do something.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, March 12, 2024 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: _____

**CITY OF HOMER
HOMER, ALASKA**

Aderhold/Davis

ORDINANCE 23-61 (Substitute Draft)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA
AMENDING HOMER CITY CODE TITLE 8 TO ADD CHAPTER 8.05
SHORT TERM RENTALS.

WHEREAS, The use of private residences as short term rentals for visitors to Homer has been a very common source of income for property owners in the City, and has provided an important support for our local economy and our visitor-serving businesses; and

WHEREAS, Visitors staying in short term rentals have many positive impacts, in some cases enabling homeowners who might otherwise be priced out of the local housing market to afford to live in Homer; and

WHEREAS, There are anecdotal reports of a shortage of year round, and especially summer, housing in Homer, with tenants reporting that it is easy to rent a house or apartment in September, as long as they agree to move out May 1; and

WHEREAS, May-August is the period when our small businesses report that their need for workforce housing is the greatest; and

WHEREAS, The City, even as it welcomes the contributions that existing short term rentals are making, is interested in exploring the possibility of limits to future growth in this sector, for example, by discouraging the operation of multiple short term rental properties by out-of-town owners; and

WHEREAS, A necessary first step in considering possible limits to future growth in this sector is obtaining a clear understanding of its present scope; and

WHEREAS, In contrast to other local small businesses, details about the location and ownership of short term rentals are not readily available; and

WHEREAS, The Kenai Peninsula Borough's ongoing effort to identify the number and location of current short term rentals has so far identified only a small fraction of the estimated total; and

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41 WHEREAS, There is an interest to enact reasonable regulations related to short term
42 rentals to ensure that they are operated safely, not creating public nuisances, and are
43 remitting the appropriate taxes.

44
45 NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF HOMER ORDAINS:

46
47 Section 1. Homer City Code is amended to include Chapter 8.09, entitled “Short Term
48 Rentals”, to read as follows:

49
50 **Chapter 8.09 Short Term Rentals**

51
52 **Sections:**

53
54 **8.09.010 Definitions**

55 **8.09.020 Intent**

56 **8.09.030 Short Term Rental Permits**

57 **8.09.040 Permit Renewals**

58 **8.09.050 Nonconforming Uses**

59 **8.09.060 Public Safety, Noise, and Nuisances**

60 **8.09.070 Violations and Penalties**

61 **8.09.080 Appeal of Decision**

62
63 **8.09.010 Definitions**

64
65 **“Short-term rental” means a dwelling unit as defined in HCC Title 21, or portion thereof,**
66 **that is offered or provided to a guest for compensation for a period of less than 30**
67 **consecutive days. Short-term rentals may be in standalone buildings, individual rooms in**
68 **single-family homes, units in apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and multifamily**
69 **dwellings. They may be operated as a bed and breakfast, rooming house, not to include**
70 **commercial accommodations such as lodging, hotels and motels as defined in Title 21.**

71
72 **“Guest” means an individual, corporation, partnership or association paying monetary**
73 **or other consideration for the use of a short-term rental.**

74
75 **“Operator” means a person, firm, corporation, or other designated legal entity, who**
76 **offers for rent or otherwise makes available in the City dwelling units for monetary or**
77 **other consideration.**

78
79 **“Property” means real estate offered by an operator as a short term rental.**

80
81 **5.48.020 Intent**

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

87
88 **5.48.030 Short Term Rental Permits**

- 89
90 **a. Any owner wishing to make a dwelling unit available for use as a short term rental**
91 **must apply for and receive approval of a short term rental permit for each parcel**
92 **of land with an intended unit.**
- 93
94 **b. An annual short term rental permit application shall be submitted on a specified**
95 **form or platform provided by the City before offering a dwelling unit for rent. The**
96 **application shall include a fee as set by the City Council in the City's fee schedule.**
- 97
98 **c. No short term rental operator shall offer, advertise, or facilitate the short term**
99 **rental of property in the City unless the operator possesses a valid short term**
100 **rental permit. Any offer or advertisement for the short term rental of property in**
101 **the City that does not contain a valid short term rental permit number, or which**
102 **the City identifies as illegal, shall be immediately removed.**
- 103
104 **d. Required Information and Documentation: Applications shall provide:**
- 105
- 106 **1. Name, address, phone number, and email of the property owner, and, if**
107 **different from the owner, the short term rental operator.**
 - 108
 - 109 **2. A general description of the dwelling unit to be used as a short term rental**
110 **to include address, zone district, number of bedrooms, and available**
111 **parking spaces compliant with City code.**
 - 112
 - 113 **3. A 24-hour emergency contact residing within 50 miles of city limits.**
 - 114
 - 115 **4. State business license number.**
 - 116
 - 117 **5. Certification by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Finance Department in a tax**
118 **compliance certificate that the applicant is current in the payment of any**
119 **sales tax to the City and the Kenai Peninsula Borough.**
 - 120
 - 121 **6. Completed fire safety inspection form for the dwelling unit.**
 - 122

- 123 e. **Permit Number: Short term rental permits will be issued a unique permit number**
- 124 **which must be displayed in all advertisements and public listings for the short**
- 125 **term rental.**
- 126
- 127 f. **Permit Renewal: Short term rental permits must be renewed every two years and**
- 128 **are valid from January 1 to December 31.**
- 129
- 130 g. **Transfer of Permits: short term rental permits are transferrable between owners**
- 131 **with City Manager or designee approval, provided the use and operations remain**
- 132 **consistent. Permits are not transferrable between units or parcels.**
- 133

134 **5.48.040 Permit Renewals**

- 135
- 136 a. **Short term rental permits may be renewed starting November 1 each year using**
- 137 **the form or platform provided by city, and shall include a fee as set by Council in**
- 138 **City Fee Schedule.**
- 139
- 140 b. **Permits are eligible for renewal if the property and dwelling unit comply with all**
- 141 **applicable City regulations, taxes, fees are paid, and there are no outstanding**
- 142 **public safety or public nuisance violations.**
- 143
- 144 c. **Expired permits require a new application to resume short term rental use.**
- 145

146 **5.48.060 Public Safety, Noise, and Nuisances**

- 147
- 148 a. **Capacity: Maximum occupancy for a short term rental is five guest rooms or 15**
- 149 **guests, whichever is less.**
- 150
- 151 b. **Emergency Contact: The Emergency Contact provided on the permit application**
- 152 **will be shared with the Homer Police Department. The permit holder must**
- 153 **promptly notify the City of any changes to the designated emergency contact**
- 154 **information.**
- 155
- 156 c. **Fire Department Access: Properties with gated entries must have a Fire**
- 157 **Department approved device that allows emergency response access.**
- 158
- 159 d. **Noise: Short term rentals are subject to HCC 21.59.010 (b) regarding noise.**
- 160
- 161 e. **Nuisance: Any property with an unresolved nuisance complaint under HCC**
- 162 **Chapter 8.09 is ineligible for short term rental permit approval or renewal.**
- 163

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

166
167 **5.48.070 Violations and Penalties**

- 168
169 **a. Operating a short term rental without a permit, or in violation of this chapter, is**
170 **unlawful.**
- 171
172 **b. The City Manager, or designee, may revoke a permit for a short term rental upon**
173 **finding one or more of the following:**
- 174 **1. Negligence in responding to emergencies more than two times in a rolling**
175 **12-month period.**
 - 176
177 **2. More than two documented law enforcement violations related to the short**
178 **term rental in a rolling 12-month period.**
 - 179
180 **3. Chronic non-compliance with the requirements this chapter's**
181 **requirements.**
 - 182
183 **4. Failure to pay required sales taxes to the Kenai Peninsula Borough.**
 - 184
185 **5. Failure to correct noted Building or Fire code violations.**
 - 186
187 **6. Documented, significant violations supported by citations, written**
188 **warning, or other documentation from relevant authorities.**

189
190 **The penalty for an offense in this chapter is the fine listed in the fine schedule in HCC**
191 **1.16.040.**

192 **5.48.080 Appeal of Decision**

193
194 **Judicial review by the superior court of a final decision on a short term rental permit**
195 **issued by the City may be had by filing a notice of appeal in accordance with the**
196 **applicable rules of court governing appeals in civil matters. The notice of appeal shall be**
197 **filed within 30 days of notice of the final decision on the permit. Appeals of short term**
198 **rental permits are heard solely on the administrative record which shall be prepared by**
199 **the City. A copy shall be filed in the superior court within 30 days after the appellant pays**
200 **the estimated cost of preparing the complete of designated record or files a corporate**
201 **surety bond equal to the estimated cost.**

202
203 Section 2. Homer City Code 1.16.040, entitled "Disposition of scheduled offenses – Fine
204 Schedule" is hereby amended as follows:
205

Chapter 5.46 HCC	Special event – Permit required	\$1000
Chapter 5.48 HCC	Short term rental – Permit required	\$300
HCC 8.08.020	Itinerant or transient merchant – License required	\$300.00

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Section 3. This ordinance shall take effect January 1, 2025.

Section 4. This Ordinance is of a permanent and general character and shall be included in the City Code.

ENACTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA this _____ day of _____, 2024.

CITY OF HOMER

KEN CASTNER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

MELISSA JACOBSEN, MMC, CITY CLERK

YES:

NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

First Reading:

Public Hearing:

Second Reading:

Effective Date:

From: [Melissa Jacobsen](#)
To: [Julie Engebretsen](#); [Ryan Foster](#)
Cc: [Zach Pettit](#); [Renee Krause](#)
Subject: FW: Comments on STR regs
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 12:13:06 PM

Here is public comment for the PC and EDC when they have Ordinance 23-61 on their agenda.

Thanks! Melissa

From: Maureen Kennedy <maureenkenedy@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 12:51 PM
To: Department Clerk <clerk@ci.homer.ak.us>
Subject: Comments on STR regs

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hi: I'm the owner of a rental property outside City limits.

I live primarily in West Marin County, CA where short term rentals have been a big issue in recent years. The county is in the middle of a process of finalizing regulation of short term rentals here. The process it proposes is much more complex, expensive and detailed than Homer's (e.g. a septic system **and** water quality test has to be submitted, you need proof that the space was originally permitted under the building code, etc. etc.). But nevertheless I've read a lot of these draft regulations in the past couple of years. By the way, Scotland's new regulation prohibits you from lending the house to a friend for a weekend or donating it for a couple nights for a charity auction if there's no STR permit in place. We can definitely over-think this.....

I have three comments on the current draft:

—**At .050 (a) regarding non-conforming uses**, I'm concerned about the window in the draft for "grandfathering in" that extends through the end of this year. For those paying attention, the City might see lots of non-conforming units jamming in supposed short term renters (Neighbors? Children? Etc.) in the coming three weeks just to get retroactive approvals for units that really shouldn't get sign off (or have not been paying required taxes). Given that it's a proposed rule which could be changed before finalization, I'm not sure how this even works. If the Council changes the draft to the date of publication of the draft (which I think would be the normal protocol on this, precisely to avoid folks gaming the system), then some who thought they were likely grandfathered in would no longer be. **I'd argue that at the next reading, that language should be changed to the date of release of the draft language, and there should be no move to extend the date again into the future, so there is no "race to the barn" for properties that by definition, don't meet the planned City minimum requirements.** I totally understand the preference to grandfather-in local owners who legitimately have been in business and playing by the [looser] rules in place until now. But I'd really advocate that you not encourage owners with units that won't meet basic standards to get one tenant for one night before 12/31 just to qualify for the loophole.

—At 060 (a) I’m not sure on the definition of a bedroom. I’m not sure the City has a definition of a bedroom given its building code. Does it require a door that closes? I’m staying at a Homer AirBnB this summer that I believe is a larger studio, with a double bed in the one room and a fold out bed also in the one room. A curtain can enclose the main permanent double bed creating a bit of privacy. The owners coincidentally advertise it as a “one bedroom” and have a self imposed limit of 4 guests. Can that unit accommodate 4 adults and unlimited children in the one large room? If the owners considered the curtained area to be a bedroom and the open area by the kitchen with the second bed to be a second bedroom, is the limit 2+2+2 free plus kids? Is the plan to rely on the preferences of the owner in that case? Does a potential tenant have the right to argue for a total of 4 (or 6) adults and 3 kids in 300 square feet even though the owner prefers no more than four (i.e. is it a floor or a ceiling)? I’d suggest you clarify the definition of bedroom and either allow two extra adults OR unlimited kids but not both, just to reduce the potential for overcrowding.

--Relatedly, it would be useful to know if the fire certification requires two forms of egress; or perhaps just include a link in the reg to the standard that the fire department uses in making their assessment. If I owned a house in the City and was thinking about creating a compliant STR, it would be useful for me to know that information early in the process.

Thanks,

Maureen Kennedy
510-290-8535

Landlords or Lodging Providers

Helpful Tips Regarding the Sales Tax Code



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

Introduction

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

Education

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

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

Confirm Compliance

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

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

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

Reminders

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Determining Taxing Jurisdiction

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

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

Package Deals

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

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

Your Rights

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

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

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

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



Draft Short Term Rental Regulations

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

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

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

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

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

Draft Meeting Timeline - 2024

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

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

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

Past Work

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

Resources

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

Questions?

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

Please comment on the proposed regulation with the form below.

Name *

Comment *

STR owner or employee? Y/N *

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

Submit



Planning

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[Planning Commission](#)

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

[HERC 1 Historical Information](#)

[Long Range Planning](#)

[Map Resources](#)

[Permits](#)

[Signs](#)

[Helpful Links](#)

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[FAQs](#)

Contact Information

Mailing address:

Homer City Hall

491 East Pioneer Ave

Homer AK 99603

Phone:

907-235-3106

Email:

planning@ci.homer.ak.us

Fax:

907-235-3118

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

[View Full Contact Details](#)

Planning Public Hearings

There are no upcoming public notices posted at this time.



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

February 6th 2024

To the Economic Development Commission Members

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

*Presented by Charles Anderson

Overview:

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

Key Findings:

1. **Affordable Housing Criteria:**

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

2. **Rental Market Dynamics:**

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

3. **Housing Crisis Evaluation:**

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

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

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

5. **Affordability in Rental Market:**

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

6. **Argentinian Experiment:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

****Affordable Housing:****

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

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

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

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

****Housing Crisis:****

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

****Next Steps:****

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

****Some Recommendations:****

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

****Note:****

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

Charles Anderson

Charlesgoldenanderson@gmail.com

907-756-1973



MEMORANDUM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic
Development

DIVISION OF CORPORATIONS, BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSING

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

BUSINESS LICENSING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Per [AS 43.70.110\(1\)](#) “Business” means a for-profit or non-profit entity engaging or offering to engage in a trade, a service, a profession 61 an activity with the goal of receiving a

financial benefit in exchange for the provision of services, or goods, or other property.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. IMPORTANT – Check with other agencies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Landlord and Tenant Information](#)

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

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

Complaint FAQs

[Complaint FAQs](#)

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

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

Contact Us

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

Professional Licensing Section

Email: License@Alaska.Gov

Corporations Section

Email: Corporations@Alaska.Gov

Business Licensing Section

Email: BusinessLicense@Alaska.Gov

Mission Statement

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

Anchorage

Mailing/Physical Address

550 W 7th AVE, STE 1500
Anchorage, AK 99501-3567

Phone: (907) 269-8160

Fax: (907) 269-8156

Investigations Fax: (907) 269-8195

Office Hours

Monday-Friday

8:00am-11:30am

12:30pm-3:00pm

Juneau

USPS must use PO Box

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 110806

Juneau, AK 99811-0806

Physical Address

333 Willoughby AVE, 9th FL

State Office Building

Juneau, AK 99801-1770

Phone: (907) 465-2550

Fax: (907) 465-2974

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AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Short Term Rental Ordinance

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

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

Work Session

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

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

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

How is the EDC Draft Different?

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

Wrapping Up at the Regular Meeting:

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

Next Steps

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

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

Attachments

EDC February Draft Ordinance

Two comment documents from Charles Anderson

January staff report and attachments

February 6th 2024

To the Economic Development Commission Members

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

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

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

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

Furthermore analysis of the statistics and data from Census.gov and live.laborstats.alaska.gov

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

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

1. Requirement that they operate safely.

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

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

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

2. Nuisances.

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

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

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

4. Taxes.

Collection of Taxes is a function of the KPB.

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

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

The Borough is doing their job and has tremendous momentum.

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

This was an ordinance looking for a problem.

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

Charles Anderson

Charlesgoldenanderson@gmail.com

907-756-1973

January 6, 2024

City of Homer
Economic Development Commission
Sent via email

Dear Economic Development Commission Members,

Thank you for considering these comments regarding the draft short-term rental (STR) ordinances for the City of Homer. I own and operate several residential rental properties both inside and outside of city limits of Homer. All are currently long-term or mid-term rentals, but I have also operated a STR within city limits in the past. I am also working on developing short-term and mid-term workforce/student/intern housing in the Central Business District, which should be fully operational by this spring.

In addition to my general comments below, I've included comments organized by the proposed ordinance citation for clarity and ease of reference.

I do agree that ensuring that all businesses in Homer are following the laws already on the books regarding noise, nuisance, and sales tax collection is a worthy goal. However, the City has a lot of work to do to connect the dots about how this proposed ordinance relates to improving housing availability in Homer, besides just a loose mention of it in a Whereas clause or two. It also requires to City to explain why they cannot, with existing information and resources, achieve the same results (sales tax compliance, reduction of nuisances) without additional regulation of a very specific industry.

As this regulatory process unfolds over the next several weeks to months, I think committing to delayed enactment until 2025 would be crucial, as many STR operators are currently receiving bookings daily for the summer 2024 season. Significant changes to the regulatory landscape mere weeks before visitors come flocking to Homer could be damaging to local businesses, with no tangible benefits or improvement to the tight housing market.

I would also ask all the advisory commissions, City Council, Mayor, City Manager, and staff to consider whether this is the best use of time and resources to address the housing shortage in Homer. What are we *not* working on by focusing on STRs?

Thank you again for considering these comments. Unfortunately, I am not able to attend the EDC meeting in person, but I welcome any questions you may have by phone or email.

Respectfully,

Dorothy Duncan

(907) 299-2265
ursaminor907@gmail.com

5.48.010 Definitions

Some terms are used inconsistently throughout the ordinance and should be reviewed. “Owner” vs. “operator”. “Short-term rental” vs. “property” vs. “dwelling unit” vs. “vacation rental”.

5.48.020

General comment - are there other ways to ensure that existing laws are being followed? The City should have the same intent (collect taxes, reduce public nuisances) for all businesses equally. Are there specific barriers to obtaining this information from STRs vs other businesses? If there is a specific problem with rental properties, perhaps an educational campaign directed to STR operators would be more helpful.

5.48.030

(a) Substitute “operator” for “owner”. An owner of a property may lease to someone on a long-term basis, with the operator being the one that rents the unit short-term. This is a common practice.

(b) Specify that the operator, and not the owner, needs to apply for the permit.

(d)(2) How many parking spaces are required? Is there a cross reference to a City code that describes the exact measurements for what is considered a parking space? Perhaps 21.55.090? Otherwise, this seems subjective and essentially unenforceable.

(g) Strike the phrase “with City Manager or designee approval”. The text following it should set the standard for when transfers will be approved, and by including the additional language it makes it sound like there is additional discretionary power that the City Manager could carry out on a whim. See proposed 5.48.050(c) for a phrasing that does not add in the City Manager approval requirement.

5.48.050

General comment - without the companion ordinances regarding zoning districts that allow STRs as a primary use, it’s hard to meaningfully comment on this section. Suggest combining the two proposed code sections into one package for all future commenting and public hearing processes.

(a) Regarding the date of operation (currently cut off on December 2023), this could severely impact planned STR investments made in 2023 for the 2024 summer season. If not eliminated entirely, this date should be revised to be December 2024 or to read “prior to the effective date of these ordinances”.

5.48.60

(a) I highly recommend deleting this subsection entirely.

First, it is in the property owner’s/operator’s best interest to manage guest use to be as low impact as possible. No owner or operator wants an over-capacity rental, whether it is long-term or short-term. In fact, in the conversations in many STR investor circles is exactly about how to ensure stated capacity levels are maintained (most often, 2 people per *bed*, not *bedroom*). Leave this to the individual operators to self-regulate – they will. And if they don’t, regulations already on the books regarding noise, nuisance, parking, etc. will be waiting.

Second, this is too low of a threshold and does not address some of the unique lodging experiences in Homer. Studio apartments (zero bedrooms), boats, yurts, bunkhouses, hostels, temp workforce housing, etc. Many local real estate investors are currently trying to think out of the box to meet some of Homer’s unique and seasonal needs, and limiting them in this way discourages innovation and could cause a previously viable project to not pencil out anymore.

Third, it is an inequitable and unreasonable standard. No other ordinance in the City of Homer determines how many people can sleep in a room. No other ordinance in the City of Homer requires checking the ages of room occupants, and potentially having to evict a family when a child turns 13.

Fifth, this does not make a rental “safer” whether it is long or short-term.

Sixth, this is unenforceable. It is difficult even for STR operators with doorbell cameras to monitor and enforce the number of people in a rental, regardless of the occupancy limit set by the operator. How is the City going to enforce this?

(b) Remove the part about sharing the Emergency Contact with neighbors within 300 feet. If there is a bona fide emergency (fire, domestic dispute, etc.), neighbors should immediately call 911. If there is an alleged code violation, neighbors should contact the City during regular business hours to lodge a complaint. Not only would that lead to quicker response times for an actual emergency, it would ensure that the City be made aware of all issues as they happen. Its not common practice for businesses to have to share personal contact information with neighbors, and STRs should not be required to either as a matter of privacy and to avoid harassment. There are other options for neighbors if something is not to their liking.

(f) This seems to be a whole separate process, what are the standards by which someone needs to prove adequate parking?

5.48.70

General comment – all of these reasons for permit revocation sound good in simple terms, but in the real world would be very subjective and difficult to enforce in a non-arbitrary way. Recommend deleting this section, or amending to require more defined circumstances that would result in permit revocation.

(b)(1) Who determines what an “emergency” is, and what “negligence in responding” is? By what standards?

(b)(2) What is a “law enforcement violation related to the short-term rental”?

(b)(3) What is the threshold of if non-compliance is considered “chronic”?

(b)(5) What is a “noted” Building or Fire code violation? Is there a code cross reference that would be helpful here?

(b)(6) What is a “significant” violation vs a non-significant violation? What is a “relevant” authority?

5.48.80

General comment – especially as these proposed ordinances are new, and the unintended consequences have not yet been discovered, there should be an option for appeal that does not involve the court system. If the City Manager is the issuer of the permit, you could add an avenue to appeal to the City Council as a first step to more effectively hear complaints and resolve any issues. Having to sue the City (and pay their administrative expenses in advance) in order to have a legitimate issue or discrepancy heard would be extremely burdensome.

From: [Department Planning](#)
To: [Zach Pettit](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Draft Short Term Rental Regulations
Date: Monday, January 8, 2024 8:35:46 AM

From: City of Homer Alaska Official Website [mailto:homer-ak@municodeweb.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 26, 2023 1:23 PM
To: Department Planning <Planning@ci.homer.ak.us>
Subject: Form submission from: Draft Short Term Rental Regulations

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Submitted on Tuesday, December 26, 2023 - 1:22pm

Submitted by anonymous user: 209.112.183.200

Submitted values are:

Name William D. and Marianne Schlegelmilch
Comment

Dear Planning Department,

Short term rentals ruin neighborhoods, turning them from close-knit supportive and friendly environments into throngs of strangers wandering around day and night talking on their cellphones and disrupting neighborhood solitude. They also drive up property values and make it all but impossible for residents who do not have deep pockets to ever consider moving within our city as sales often happen within the span of 2-3 days to cash paying profiteers.

This has become increasingly evident in the Mountain View neighborhood where we live, along with unregulated new construction obviously designed for short term rentals that violate city codes on size and

height restrictions, all with the city apparently turning a blind eye to their significant negative impacts on neighborhoods, such as run-off issues, increased density and major uptick in traffic noise and congestion—all issues which our city council seem unconcerned with as they push their personal views and agendas on long-term citizens and even adjacent business owners who have invested heavily in this area.

As citizens, you have asked for our input. As government officials, will you care to hear us?

William D. and Marianne Schlegelmilch

4470 Kachemak Way

Homer

907 235-6913

STR owner or employee? Y/N Home owner, city resident

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/node/78385/submission/51508>

February 12, 2024

City of Homer
Economic Development Commission
Sent via email

Dear Economic Development Commission Members,

I want to thank the Commission and the City staff for acting on the comments received on the first draft of the STR ordinance last month. I see that many of the specific changes requested have been made to the new draft.

Anyone who has followed the discussion of STRs in Homer all know that this ordinance/conversation is at the request of the City Council due to the perceived impact of STRs on housing availability in Homer. The EDC and staff made the right call in declining to give legitimacy to that claim by striking the whereas clauses that allude to a correlation between regulating STRs and increased housing in Homer.

The remaining whereas clauses, however, are similarly flawed/unnecessary, and make the entirety of the draft ordinance moot.

For example, the issue of ensuring that sales tax is collected, while a valid objective, has several much simpler solutions. AirBnB can implement an automatic tool that will collect and remit sales or occupancy taxes if a law is passed by the local jurisdiction. I am not sure if this could be the City, or would have to be the Borough, but it is worth a few conversations amongst staff and Council/Assembly/AirBnB vs. enacting and implementing a burdensome regulation on potentially hundreds of Homer business owners. Perhaps all it takes is a Resolution by City Council?

Another example is the issue of nuisances attributed to STRs. As others have testified, per a records request, only one "STR" complaint was made to the City during last summer's tourist season, and it wasn't even clear if a violation had occurred. As Ms. Engelbretsen has often said, Homer is not the Jersey Shore, and our visitors are more of the quiet kayaking/birder types than hard core partiers. It makes sense that Homer STR guests make good neighbors.

The whereas clause about needing an ordinance just because there are no existing ordinances? I'll just leave that here...

It's my request that the ordinance in its entirety be set aside, and more efforts given to actually addressing housing by determining:

- 1) What exactly is the housing deficit in Homer? Is it 100 summer/workforce housing units? Is it 10-20 single family homes? Is it a new low-income apartment complex? Answering this question would be a valuable data point for future discussions about housing in Homer, and something the EDC could spearhead via surveys, statistical analysis, etc.
- 2) What is the housing potential of Homer? Surely the City was involved with the new development of a dozen or so 2-bedroom places for rent on Adams Street, the new neighborhood being developed next to Paul Banks Elementary School, and the re-development of the lot on Mattox and East End Road? What is on tap for construction season 2024, and will that address housing faster and more efficiently than squeezing STRs out of existence?

- 3) How can the City encourage the or facilitate a continuance of the boom in housing development? The answer may be as simple as staying out of the way of the free market and let supply and demand work towards equilibrium. Other options may include tax incentives for certain developments that fill need gaps or increasing subsidies for infrastructure development.

Again, I would also ask all the advisory commissions, City Council, Mayor, City Manager, and staff to consider whether this is the best use of time and resources to address the housing shortage in Homer. What are we *not* working on by focusing on STR regulation?

Thank you again for considering these comments. I always welcome any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

Dorothy Duncan

(907) 299-2265

ursaminor907@gmail.com



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Manager

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov

(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

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

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

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

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

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

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

Attachments

Background Information Memorandum

Case Study Comparison Matrix

Presentation Slides



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Homer, Alaska 99603

citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov

(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council

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

DATE: September 27, 2022

SUBJECT: Short Term Rental Basics

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

Impacts of STRs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Short Term Rental (STR) Context for Homer, AK

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

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

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

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

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

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

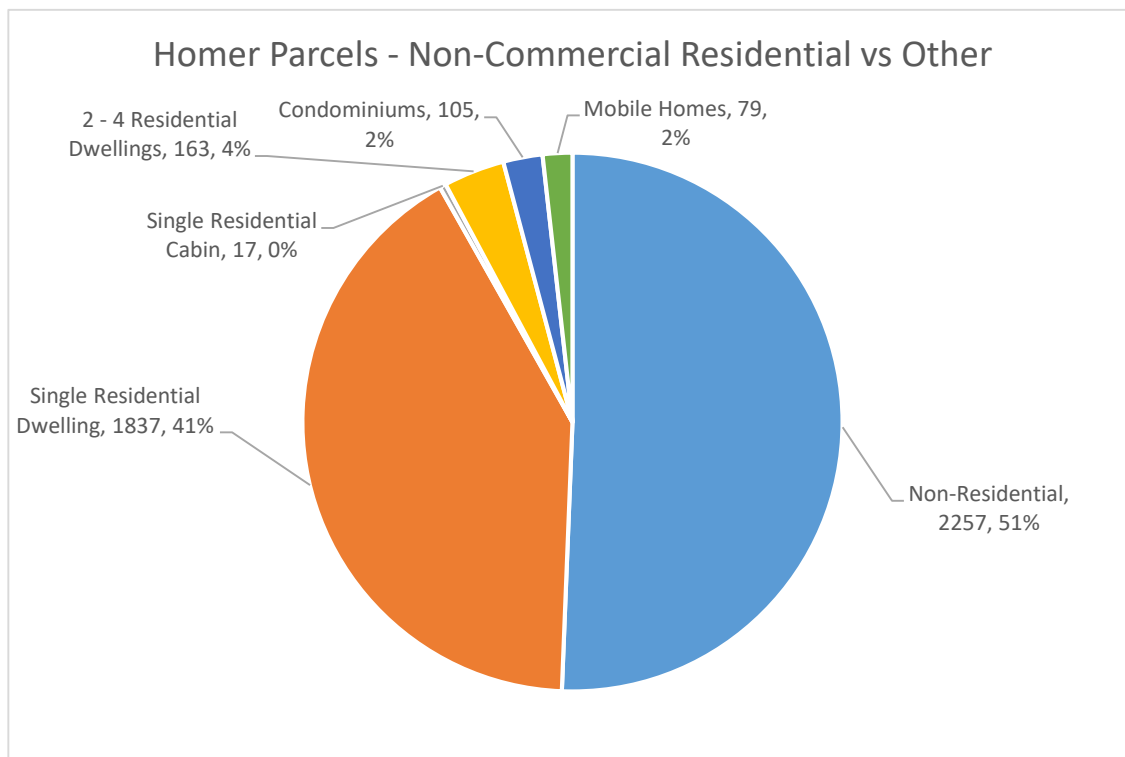
⁸ Jorday, E., & Moore, J. (2018). An in-depth exploration of residents' perceived impacts of transient vacation rentals. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 35(1), 90-101.

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

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

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

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



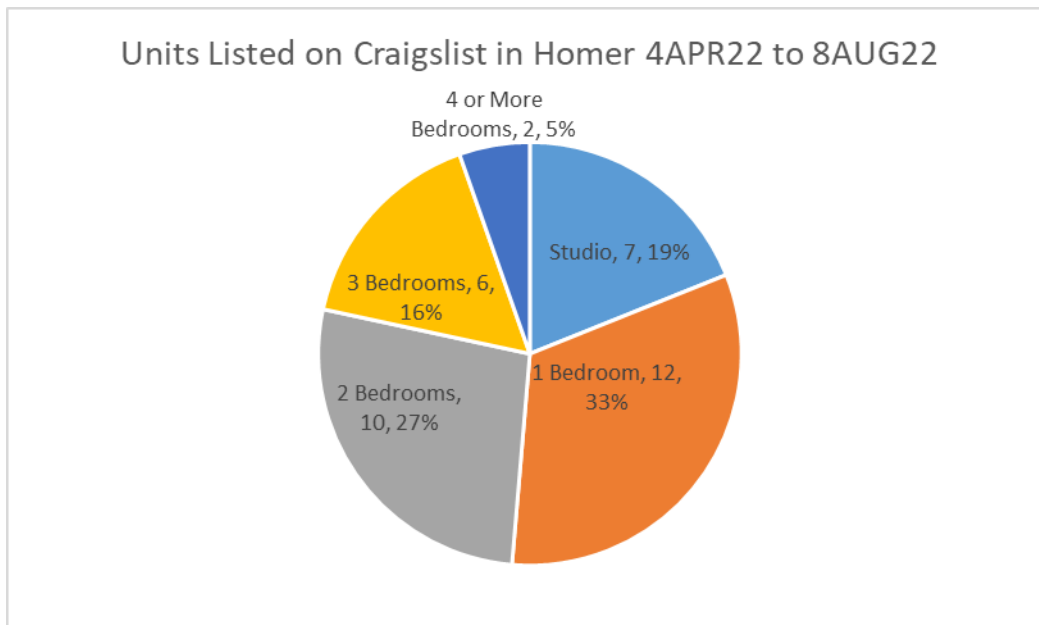
Current estimates on the number of short-term rentals (STRs) listed on Airbnb, VRBO, and other sites for the City of Homer is 326 units, which accounts for almost 15% of all the residential dwellings in Homer and 38.5% of all non-owner-occupied housing (per 2020 US Census statistics)¹². At an average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

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

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

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

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



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

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

A Look at STR Regulation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Case Studies

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

Seward, AK

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

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

Palmer, AK

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

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

Other Alaska Cases

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

Taos, NM

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

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

Aspen, CO

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

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

Durango, CO

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

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

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

Pacific Grove, CA

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

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

Palm Springs, CA

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

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

McCall, ID

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

Summary of Case Study Findings

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

Light Regulation:

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

Moderate Regulation:

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

Robust Regulation:

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

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

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

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

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

Some final thoughts:

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

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

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

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

Thank you.

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

2885 Kachemak Drive
Homer, AK 99603



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Manager

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov

(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
DATE: January 17, 2024
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for January 22, 2024 Council Meeting

STR Update

Public review of the short term rental (STR) ordinance continues to move forward in a productive way. The Economic Development Advisory Commission held a work session prior to their regular meeting on January 9th. The work session was well attended by short term rental owners who shared comments and concerns. They have also committed to sharing housing and short term rental data in the near future. Based on feedback received from the public and the EDC, staff has met with Council sponsors and plans to draft a substitute ordinance in time for the next EDC work session on February 13th. The Planning Commission has had a full schedule recently, but they are tentatively scheduled to consider the ordinance on February 21st. STR information for this project is available on the City website including the schedule of public participation opportunities and a public comment form: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/planning/draft-short-term-rental-regulations>

Harbor Expansion Study Update

In support of Resolution 23-130 and Ordinance 24-05, staff and Council Champions are reaching out to communities linked to Homer Harbor to request either letters or resolutions of support. The City of Seldovia is planning to consider a resolution on January 22nd and we hope to see other communities follow suit. The Homer Port & Harbor is a locally operated but regionally significant facility which benefits numerous coastal communities. Sharing this support with legislators in Juneau will help staff and Council show the widespread interest in coastal Alaska for increased moorage and port and harbor related services.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Application in Partnership with AML

In collaboration with City staff, the Alaska Municipal League developed a Notice of Interest for a grant application on behalf of the City of Homer for the State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management's Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs which distribute federal dollars to projects in Alaska. The proposed project is focused on Homer Spit climate resiliency. The project would develop data and design necessary to protect the 4.5 miles of state highway and critical evacuation route at the end of Alaska Route 1. The project will develop a climate-sensitive roadway repair and nature-based design solutions using beach renourishment based on a data driven understanding of short- and long-term climate impacts to the roadway facility. The project includes a beach sediment investigation and sediment management plan, analysis of preliminary design versus anticipated performance, cost estimation and development of a funding plan, public and agency involvement, and identifying phasing of projects for the

spit highway and beach renourishment. If awarded, the grant would bring upwards of \$1.8M. The non-federal cost share for the grant program is 25%, however, Alaska Department of Transportation has agreed to provide the match if awarded.

Master Plans for Hornaday Park and Bayview Park

Corvus Designs has provided staff with the initial drafts of the master plans for Hornaday Park and Bayview Park. PARCAC will be meeting to discuss the designs and work towards final versions that will come to Council at a future meeting.



Bayview Park concept to be reviewed by PARCAC

Finance Champions Update

Staff met with the Council’s Finance Champions, Councilmembers Lord and Davis, to discuss follow up to Resolution 23-120 and high level finance questions/concepts. We had a productive meeting and a memo from the Champions will be part of the packet for this meeting.

Federal Lead and Copper Rule Revisions

The Environmental Protection Agency recently passed regulations known as the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR). The purpose of the LCRR, which is part of the Safe Water Drinking Act, is to protect public health by minimizing lead and copper levels in drinking water nationwide. The LCRR requires that public water systems compile an inventory to identify the materials used for each water service line. The inventory must include all service lines connected to the distribution system, regardless of ownership status. The material of the entire service line must be included, from the main to where the line enters the building. The goal of this effort is to either ensure there are no lead materials in the water system, or to find out where lead may be located, so that it can then be removed and replaced. Water/Sewer Superintendent Todd Cook has been diligently working with the team at Public Works to prepare required reports for the parts of the system the City controls and maintains. We will likely be conducting public outreach and education later in the year to ask home and business owners to assist the City in gathering data on the rest of the system.



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Manager

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov

(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: MAYOR CASTNER AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: Andrea Browning, HR Director
DATE: January 22, 2024
SUBJECT: January Employee Anniversaries

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

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

WORK SESSION

AGENDA CALENDAR 2024

Council Meeting Dates	Work Session Topic
Monday, January 8	<i>Exempt Employee Wage Scale</i>
Monday, January 15 Off-cycle	<i>Joint Session with Parks Art Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission</i>
Monday, January 22	<i>Homer Harbor Expansion Baseline Conditions Report Overview – Ronny McPherson & KC Kent HDR</i>
Monday, February 12	
Monday, February 26	<i>Ord 23-61 Amending HCC Title 5 to add Chapter 5.48 Short Term Rentals</i>
Monday, March 11	
Monday, March 18 Off-cycle	<i>Joint Session with ADA Advisory Board</i>
Tuesday, March 26	
Monday, April 8	
Monday, April 12 Off-cycle	<i>Joint Session with Port & Harbor Advisory Commission</i>
Monday, April 22	
Monday, May 13	
Monday, May 20 Off-cycle	<i>Joint session with Library Advisory Board</i>
Tuesday, May 28	
Monday, June 10	
Monday, June 17 Off-cycle	<i>Joint session with Economic Development Advisory Commission</i>
Monday, June 24	
Monday, July 22	

Council Meeting Dates	Work Session Topic
<i>Monday, August 12</i>	
<i>Monday, August 26</i>	
<i>Monday, September 9</i>	
<i>Monday, September 16 Off-cycle</i>	<i>Joint Session with Planning Commission</i>
<i>Monday, September 23</i>	
<i>Monday, October 14</i>	
<i>Monday, October 28</i>	
<i>Monday, November 12</i>	
<i>Monday, November 25</i>	



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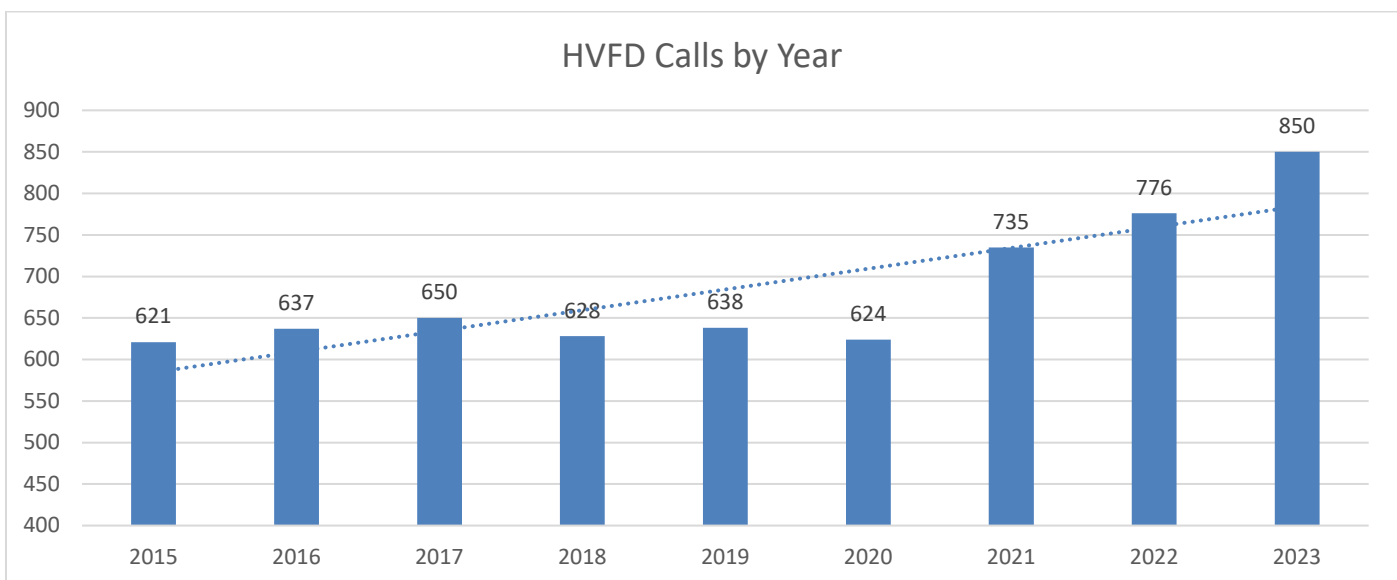
(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

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

HVFD Calls for 2023

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



Transportation Plan Update

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

Homer Projects Included in Draft STIP

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

Comprehensive Plan Update

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

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

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

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

Short Term Rental Update

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

2023 Library Report

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

Homer Public Library 2023 Annual Report



Seldovia Adopts Resolution Supporting Harbor Expansion Study Update

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

Finance Reports

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

Hornaday Park Master Plan Update

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

AMLJIA Meeting

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

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

Attachments:

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



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Memorandum

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

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

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



MEMORANDUM

Memorandums 101

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

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

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

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

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

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

Homer Public Library 2023 Annual Report



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

January

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

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

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



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

February

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

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

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

March

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

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

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

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



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

April

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

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



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

May

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

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

June

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

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

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



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

July

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

August

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

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

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

September

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

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

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



Halloween in Homer is serious business

October

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

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

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

November

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

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

December

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

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



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

Thank you!

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

Library Endowment Fund

Anonymous (2)

National Philanthropic Trust

Donna and Wayne Aderhold

Dave Berry

Marcia Kuszmaul

Kerry Ozel

Friends of Homer Public Library Endowment Fund

Anonymous

Doug and Landa Baily

2023 by the numbers at Homer Public Library



125,675

Visits to the library



157,634

Items checked out

729

New library cards issued

13,504

Patrons attended programs

2,919 sessions
Study Rooms + Meeting Room

1,135 attended
Summer Reading events

25,595 sessions
Public computers + library WiFi

2,466

Volunteer hours logged





THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Transportation and
Public Facilities

Office of the Commissioner

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

January 9, 2023

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

Dear Ms. Carroll:

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Keep Alaska Moving"

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,



Ryan Anderson, P.E.

Commissioner

Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

**CITY OF SELDOVIA
RESOLUTION 24-26**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

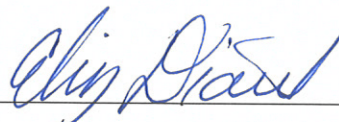
SECTION 1. That the City of Seldovia supports the State of Alaska providing \$288,523 in additional match funds in the FY25 State budget in order to fully fund local match requirements for the Homer Harbor Expansion General Investigation study in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the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

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

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

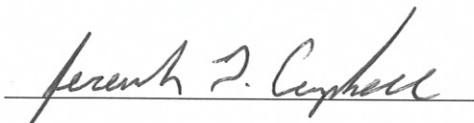
PASSED AND APPROVED by a duly constituted quorum of the City Council of the City of Seldovia on this 22nd day of January, 2024.

ATTEST:

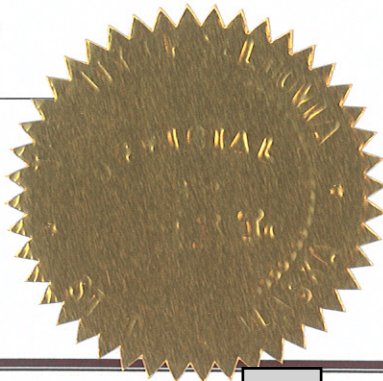


Liz Diamant, City Clerk

APPROVED:



Jeremiah Campbell, Mayor



Building a Strong Town

FREE • OPEN TO EVERYONE

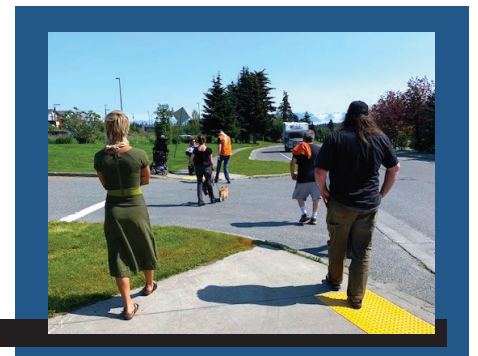
Homer community members, groups, and the City of Homer are actively seeking solutions to local challenges like sustainable growth, affordable housing, a walkable and bike-able community, and fiscally responsible local government.



A COMMUNITY PRESENTATION WITH CHUCK MAROHN STRONG TOWNS FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

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

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



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

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

In Person: Kachemak Bay Campus, Room 202

Online: Zoom



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

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

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

SPONSORED BY THE CITY OF HOMER

For more event info, contact:
planning@ci.homer.ak.us
Phone: (907) 115 3119



STRONG TOWNS

A FILM BY ELLEN FRANKENSTEIN & ATMAN MEHTA

CRUISE BOOM

A community on the cusp of change

- FREE ADMISSION -

HOMER SCREENING

sponsored by the City of Homer

TUESDAY | FEB 27TH | 6 PM | HOMER THEATRE



Archange Inc. presents
Directed, Filmed & Edited by Ellen Frankenstein & Atman Mehta
Consulting Editor Shirley Thompson - Animation Ryan Morse
Audio Post Tom Disher - Original Music by Bryan Lovett, Graham Lebron,
Fred Knowles, Rit [redacted] 116 [redacted] s & Ethan Vastola
www.cruiseboomfilm.com



Watch the Trailer



January 29, 2024

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

Dear Mayor Castner, City Council, and City Staff,

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

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

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

Topics

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

Industries

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

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

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

98AFA012679B4D7...

Jon Bittner

Executive Director
Alaska SBDC

CITY OF HOMER NEWSLETTER



VOL. III - ISSUE VI | FEBRUARY 2024

WHAT'S INSIDE?

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

HOMER ANNUAL WINTER CARNIVAL ORGANIZED BY HOMER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Parade on Pioneer Avenue

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Bit of History

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

118

- Homer Annual Winter Carnival
- Library Events
- Community Corner
- Community Recreation
- City Hall
- Parks
- Homer Public Library
- Economic Development
- Port & Harbor
- Harbor Expansion Study Update
- Public Safety Corner
- Fire Department
- Hazard Mitigation
- Public Safety Corner
- Meet City Staff
- Municipal Art Collection
- Stay Connected with City Council

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

Follow us on Social Media

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

Subscribe to the Monthly
Newsletter
[Click Here to Subscribe](#)

LIBRARY EVENTS

VIRTUAL AUTHOR TALKS

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

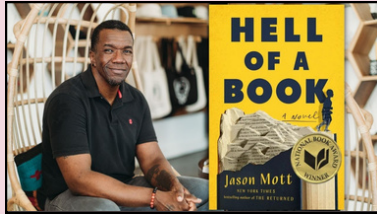
February 8 at 4 pm

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



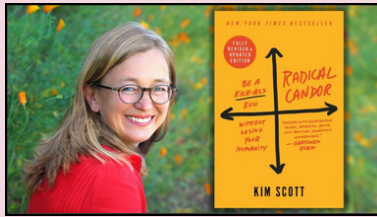
February 20 at 12 pm

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



February 28 at 10 am

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



SPECIAL & ONGOING EVENTS



Big Read 2024

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

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

Book copies are available at the library circulation desk.



Councilmember Conversations

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

February 13: Shelly Erickson

CHECK OUT MORE LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



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



COMMUNITY CORNER

What's happening around the City of Homer

SALSA DANCE CLASSES

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



Register Here:

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

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

SELF-DEFENSE CLASS



Attention Ladies!

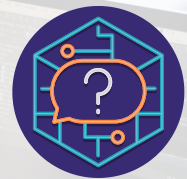
Homer Police Department is having it's 5th self-defense class!

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

Fee: FREE

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

Tech Help



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

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

Where: Homer Public Library

Fee: FREE

COMMUNITY RECREATION



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

Adult Basketball League Playoffs and Championship Game

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

When:

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

Where: Homer High School

Fee: Free

Women's Drop In Basketball

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

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

Where: Homer Middle School Gym

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

Youth Pickleball After School Winter 2024

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

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

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

Fee: \$25 per session

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

Drop-In Volleyball

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

When & Where:

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

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

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

Jewelry Making Classes Taught by Art Koeninger

City of Homer Community Rec Presents:
JEWELRY MAKING CLASSES
WINTER 2024
Taught by Art Koeninger

INTRO TO SILVERSMITHING February 17-18
LOST WAX CASTING February 23-25
INTERMED SILVERSMITHING March 2-3

COST: \$150 or \$90 for repeat students in addition to cost of materials (average project \$5-15). Classes at Homer High.

Contact Art to Register: 907-235-1014
or akoeninger@me.com

Scan for more info

When:

Intro to Silversmithing: February 17-18

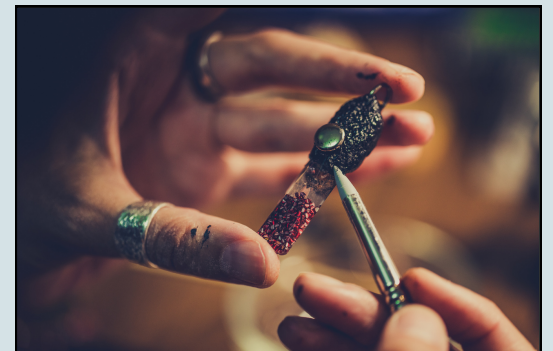
Lost Wax Casting: February 23-25

Intermediate Silversmithing: March 2-3

Where: Homer High School

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

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



Making Jewelry

CITY HALL

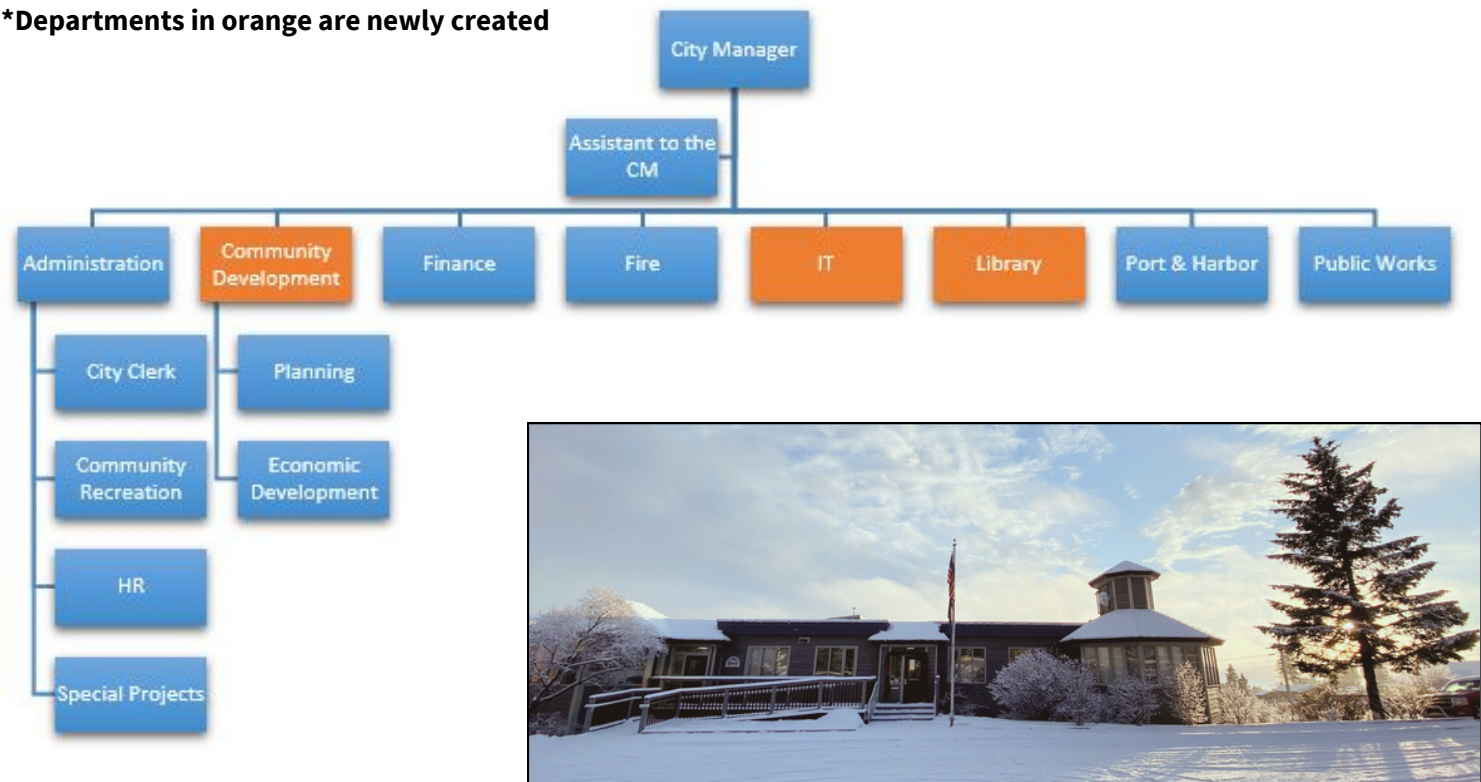
RESTRUCTURING

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

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

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

***Departments in orange are newly created**



Homer City Hall

STAY IN THE LOOP

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

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

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

PARKS

PARK PLANS

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



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

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

Where: City Hall, Cowles Council Chambers

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

Bayview Park Master Plan Update:



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

Karen Hornaday Park Master Plan Update:



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

LIBRARY

BENCH DESIGN PROPOSALS

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

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

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

Proposals can be submitted in three ways:

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

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

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SHORT TERM RENTALS

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

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



Cabin with a View

Share Your Thoughts

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

What does the Ordinance do?

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

What the Ordinance does not do.

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

COMMENT HERE



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

READ MORE



Click the Links Below

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Strong Towns Presentation

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

Homer welcomes nationally renowned speaker Charles Marohn of Strong Towns.

Free Movie “Cruise Boom”

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

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

<https://artchangeinc.org/cruiseboom>



Cruise Ship in Whittier, AK

PORT & HARBOR

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

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

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



Homer Fish Dock with Cranes



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

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

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



Fish Totes

DID YOU KNOW?

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

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

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



HOMER HARBOR EXPANSION



STUDY UPDATE



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

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

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

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

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

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

Keep engaged with the study at www.homerharborexansion.com

CAMPGROUND HOST NEEDED FOR MARINER PARK

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

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

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

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

FIRE DEPARTMENT

PROMOTION CEREMONY



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

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

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



Former HVFD Captain Tim Yarbrough and Captain Jaclyn Arndt



James Squires Pinning Captain Jake Richter



Councilmember Caroline Venuti, Captain Jaclyn Arndt, Councilmember Shelly Erickson

HVFD EMT 1 CLASS NOW UP AND RUNNING!



2024 EMT I Class

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

Excerpt by Assistant Chief of EMS Samantha Cunningham

HVFD LADDER TRUCK HAS ARRIVED



HVFD Ladder Truck

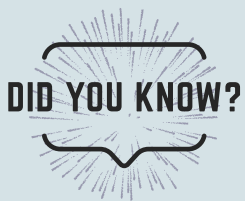
A long-awaited ladder truck is a welcome addition to the Homer Volunteer Fire Department (HVFD) fleet. The addition of this truck gives the department the ability to quickly and safely rescue people trapped by fire on elevated floors and assists with reaching windows and roofs faster to create ventilation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

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

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



HVFD Ladder Truck Extended



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

MITIGATION STRATEGY

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

1. Identification of Resources:

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

2. National Flood Insurance Program Participation:

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

3. Mitigation Goals:

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

4. Recommended Actions:

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

5. Prioritized Action Plan:

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

6. Plan Integration:

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




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




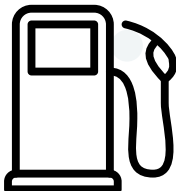
In this section, we aim to keep readers informed about the latest developments in public safety in the community. Whether it's news about crime prevention, emergency preparedness, or updates on local law enforcement activities, we've got you covered. Our goal is to promote a safe and secure environment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

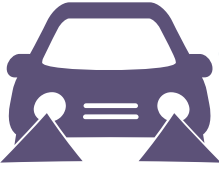
Winter Driving Tips

- 1** **WARM UP**

Warm up your car at least 1 minute before driving to warm up the oil. This will keep your engine running smoothly.
- 2** 

Clear snow and ice off windows, mirrors, and lights.
- 3** 


Have an emergency kit for the unexpected.
- 4** 

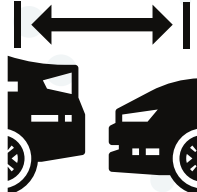
Fuel up! Keep gas tank at least half full. If you get stuck, you will want to keep the car running to stay warm.
- 5** 


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


If your windshield wipers are on, turn your headlights on.


Use low beams and fog lights for snow, fog, or rain.


Turn off brights when approaching other drivers.
- 6** 

Wear your seatbelt and make sure kids are buckled in too!
- 7** 

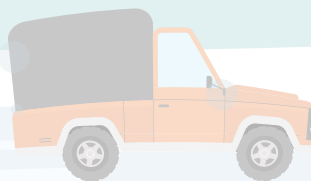
Keep a safe distance from the car in front of you. At least 3 car lengths.
- 8** 

Avoid using cruise control in icy and snowy conditions.
- 9** 

Service your car regularly to check oil and fluids.
- 10** 

Keep speed slow and steady in snow and icy conditions.
- 11** 

Check your tire pressure and tread regularly.



Work Anniversaries

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

January

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

Welcome

January New Hires

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



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



Ed Gross, Associate Planner

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

DEL WAS ON THE TODAY SHOW!



Barbara and Del Masterhan

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

EMPLOYEE HIGH FIVES

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



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



Ian Overson (HPD Jailer) Clearing Snow

CITY OF HOMER ROSTER

Mayor - Ken Castner (2024)

City Council

Donna Aderhold (2024)

Jason Davis (2025)

Shelley Erickson (2024)

Storm P. Hansen (2025)

Rachel Lord (2026)

Caroline Venuti (2026)

City Staff Leadership

Rob Dumouchel, City Manager

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

Mark Robl, Chief of Police

Bill Jirsa, Chief Technology Officer

Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

Elizabeth Walton, Finance Director

Mark Kirko, Fire Chief

Dave Berry, Library Director

Andrea Browning, Personnel Director

Bryan Hawkins, Port Director

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

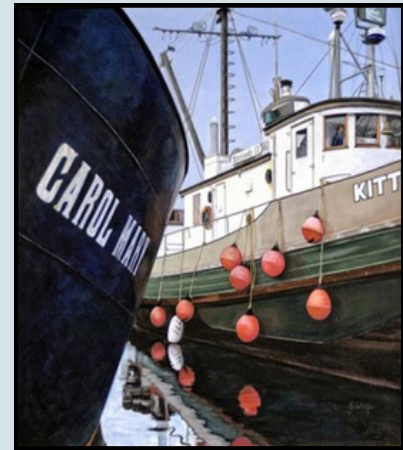
Planning Commission

Port and Harbor Advisory Commission

MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION



Homer Harbor, by Ed Tussey- City Hall



Kittiwake II, by Gaye Wolfe - City Hall

Learn more about the municipal art collection at:

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

STAY CONNECTED TO CITY COUNCIL

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS

February

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

130

Meeting



JOIN OUR TEAM

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

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

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

City of Homer

491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska 99603

907-235-8121

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

**PLANNING COMMISSION
2024 Calendar**

	AGENDA ITEM DEADLINES	MEETING DATE	COMMISSIONER SCHEDULED TO REPORT	CITY COUNCIL MEETING FOR REPORT*	ANNUAL TOPICS FOR AGENDA AND EVENTS PLANNED
JANUARY	12/13/23 Public Hearing Items 12/15/23 Preliminary Plat Submittals 12/22/23 Regular Agenda Items	01/03/24		Monday, 01/08/24 6:00 p.m.	•
	12/27/23 Public Hearing Items 12/29/23 Prelim Plat Items 01/05/24 Regular Agenda Items	01/17/24		Monday 01/22/24 6:00 p.m.	•
FEBRUARY	01/17/24 Public Hearing Items 01/19/24 Prelim Plat Items 01/26/24 Regular Agenda Items	02/07/24		Monday 02/12/24 6:00 p.m.	• NFIP Staff Training • This meeting was canceled.
	01/31/24 Public Hearing Items 02/02/24 Prelim Plat items 02/09/24 Regular Agenda Items	02/21/24		Monday 02/26/24 6:00 p.m.	• Short Term Rental Ordinance
MARCH	02/14/24 Public Hearing Items 02/16/24 Prelim Plat Items 02/23/24 Regular Agenda Items	03/06/24		Monday 03/11/24 6:00 p.m.	• Transportation Plan
	02/28/24 Public Hearing Items 03/01/24 Prelim Plat Items 03/08/24 Regular Agenda Items	03/20/24		Tuesday 03/26/24 6:00 p.m.	
APRIL	03/13/24 Public Hearing Items 03/15/24 Prelim Plat Items 03/22/24 Regular Agenda Items	04/03/24		Monday 04/08/24 6:00 p.m.	
	03/27/24 Public Hearing Items 03/29/24 Prelim Plat Items 04/05/24 Regular Agenda Items	04/17/24		Monday 04/22/24 6:00 p.m.	• APA National Planning Conference
MAY	04/10/24 Public Hearing Items 04/12/24 Prelim Plat Items 04/19/24 Regular Agenda Items	05/01/24		Monday 05/13/24 6:00 p.m.	•
	04/24/24 Public Hearing Items 04/26/24 Prelim Plat Items 05/03/24 Regular Agenda Items	05/15/24		Tuesday 05/28/24 6:00 p.m.	•
JUNE	05/15/24 Public Hearing Items 05/17/24 Prelim Plat Items 05/24/24 Regular Agenda Items	06/05/24		Monday 06/10/24 6:00 p.m.	• Reappointment Applications will be sent out by the Clerk
	05/29/24 Public Hearing Items 05/31/24 Prelim Plat Items 06/07/24 Regular Agenda Items	06/19/24		Monday 06/24/24 6:00 p.m.	

JULY	06/26/24 Public Hearing Items 06/28/24 Prelim Plat Items 07/05/24 Regular Agenda Items	07/17/24		Monday 07/22/24 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reappointment Application Due to the Clerk
AUGUST	07/17/24 Public Hearing Items 07/19/24 Prelim Plat Items 07/26/24 Regular Agenda Items	08/07/24		Monday 08/12/24 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of Officers • Capital Improvement Plan Presentation by Jenny Carroll
	07/31/24 Public Hearing Items 08/02/24 Prelim Plat Items 08/09/24 Regular Agenda Items	08/21/24		Monday 08/26/24 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training – Conducted by the City Clerk
SEPTEMBER	08/14/24 Public Hearing Items 08/16/24 Prelim Plat Items 08/23/24 Regular Agenda Items	09/04/24		Monday 09/09/24 6:00 p.m.	
	08/28/24 Public Hearing Items 08/30/24 Prelim Plat Items 09/06/24 Regular Agenda Items	09/18/24		Monday 09/23/24 6:00 p.m.	
OCTOBER	09/11/24 Public Hearing Items 09/13/24 Prelim Plat Items 09/20/24 Regular Agenda Items	10/02/24		Monday 10/14/24 6:00 p.m.	
	09/25/24 Public Hearing Items 09/27/24 Prelim Plat Items 10/04/24 Regular Agenda Items	10/16/24		Monday 10/28/24 6:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Meeting Schedule
NOVEMBER	10/16/24 Public Hearing Items 10/18/24 Prelim Plat Items 10/25/24 Regular Agenda Items	11/06/24		Tuesday 11/12/24 6:00 p.m. or Monday 11/25/24 6:00 p.m.	
DECEMBER	11/13/24 Public Hearing Items 11/15/24 Prelim Plat Items 11/20/24 Regular Agenda Items	12/04/24		No Meetings for Council in December	

*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. Reports are the Commission’s opportunity to give Council a brief update on their work. Attend via Zoom or in Person.