



Agenda

City Council & EDAC Joint Work Session

Monday, November 06, 2023 at 5:00 PM

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

Homer City Hall

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

Zoom Webinar ID: 965 8631 4135 Password: 792566

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

CALL TO ORDER, 5:00 P.M.

AGENDA APPROVAL (Only those matters on the noticed agenda may be considered, pursuant to City Council's Operating Manual, pg. 6)

DISCUSSION TOPIC(S)

- [a.](#) City Council and Economic Development Advisory Commission Joint Training
- [b.](#) Economic Development Advisory Commission 2022-2023 Strategic Plan

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE (3 minutes)

ADJOURNMENT Next Regular Meeting is Monday, November 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., Work Session at 4:00 p.m. and Committee of the Whole at 5:00 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

City Council and Economic Development Advisory Commission Work Session

ADVISORY BODY TRAINING – NOVEMBER 6, 2023

Where did we come from?

- Boards and Commissions are created by the City Council via Ordinance. *Alaska Statutes 29.20.320 & Homer City Code 2.58.010*
- The Economic Development Advisory Commission (EDAC) was established October 25, 1993 with the adoption of Ordinance 93-15(S)(A). The Commission was inactivated on January 24, 2000 and reactivated February 27, 2006 by Resolution 06-20.

EDAC Membership

- In accordance with HCC 2.76 the EDAC is made up of 7 members. A minimum of five shall reside in the city limits and shall be registered voters in the city or borough.

- The Mayor, City Manager, and one Council Member serve as consulting members of the Commission, along with a representative of the Homer Marine Trades Association, and the Director of the Homer Chamber of Commerce. They may attend all meeting and they have no vote.

Responsibilities of the EDAC

Homer City Code 2.76.040 outlines the duties and responsibilities as follows:

- a. Oversee responsibility of the City of Homer's work with KPEDD in developing a strategic plan for the specific Homer portion of the regional CEDS that is written every five years.
 1. Cohost with KPEDD public meetings to collect comments on local strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats especially relating to the economy to determine the City's needs and wants. This is done to broaden public involvement.
 2. Review and comment on yearly CEDS updates.
 3. Monitor the implementation of the regional CEDS in terms of the Homer portion.

Responsibilities of the EDAC

- b. Collect and analyze data to evaluate existing City of Homer resources.
- c. Formulate and develop the overall long-range economic development goals of the residents of the City of Homer through public hearing process.
- d. Identify specific alternatives or projects to accomplish the City's objectives.
- e. Recommend priorities for the projects or alternatives.
- f. Promote public interest in overall economic development.

Responsibilities of the EDAC

- g. Make inquiries regarding matters related to economic development.
- h. Commission may take part in activities with the Chamber of Commerce, Kenai Peninsula Borough Economic Development District, and Kenai Peninsula Borough Tourism Marketing Council upon the approval of the Council.
- i. Commission should provide a representative for the KPB Economic Development District Board.

City Council Roles

- Create and disband boards and commissions by ordinance.
- Direct boards and commissions to consider any specific proposal, problem or project.
- Direction comes from Council, as a body, by memorandum or resolution.

Reporting Structure

Homer City Code 2.76.040 explains:

j. Any recommendation the Commission may have regarding economic development is to be directed to the City Council through the City Manager or the recommendations of the Commission concerning policy issues shall be sent directly to the Council upon request of the Commission.

k. The Commission shall consider any specific proposal, problem or project as directed by the City Council and any report or recommendations thereon shall be made directly to the Council, unless otherwise directed by the Council.

As outlined the Council's Operating Manual, the Commission also provides a written or verbal report at the Council Meeting that follows the Commission's meeting.

Conflict of Interest

- Must be disclosed immediately after the Chair announces the agenda item.
- The member with the conflict announces they have a conflict of interest.
- It is moved and seconded by the Commission that the member has a conflict of interest.
- The member with the conflict discloses the conflict.
- The Commission votes. If the member is determined to have a conflict they must leave the dais for the duration of consideration of the matter.
- The decision of the Commission is final.

Strategic Planning & Council Expectations

- What are Council expectations for EDAC input on ordinances and projects?
- What are Council expectations for EDAC on working with local businesses on same ordinance and projects?
- What information or types of information can EDAC provide to Council? What is useful to Council?
- Is it useful for EDC to be a conduit to the business community and help with outreach? How quickly does Council want feedback – EDAC meets monthly.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
2022-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN & GOALS**

<p>Ongoing Goals</p>	<p>1. Use the Commission’s SWOT analysis to develop strategies to implement policies that support Homer’s quality of life.</p>
	<p>2. Keep our ears to the ground and seek out areas of "lack." Confer with Julie about communicating with City Council and advising them on ways to overcome barriers- "the nexus of economic goals."</p>
<p>Near Term Goals < 6 Months</p>	<p>1. Familiarize with smart growth principles and best practices, and also green infrastructure concepts. Have these in our toolbox when development decisions come our way for consideration.</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Staff to provide smart growth resources.</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Promote energy resiliency through diversity and efficiency. Invite a speaker to talk about energy as that impacts cost of doing business and cost of living. (Perez)</p>
	<p>2. View economic development through the lens of balancing growth with quality of life.</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Create an EDC Mission statement as a guiding principle for what the EDC does.</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Define positive economic development, and what is the role of the EDC is in balancing growth and quality of life.</p> <p>(Perez volunteered, first quarter 2023)</p>
	<p>3. Housing: affordable short and long term housing. Seasonal workers, general work force, seniors, etc. affordable year round housing. (Marks)</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Stay engaged with the City for all housing conversations</p>
	<p>4. Present an annual report of EDC accomplishments to the City Council</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Approve memo to Council, read accomplishments to Council</p>
	<p>5. Have a conversation with the Chamber of Commerce about other economic development beyond tourism. How can the City and the Chamber work together to promote quality of life, and economic development for industries other than tourism, including messaging?</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Have a work session with the Chamber</p>
<p>Mid Term Goals 1 - 3 Years (2022 – 2025)</p>	<p>1. BR&E – review annually and plan for a new report (5 year mark is 2022-2023) <i>Opportunity:</i> Consider a funding request for the FY 2024-2025 budget</p>
	<p>2. Downtown vitalization momentum and wayfinding/streetscape plan</p> <p><i>Status:</i> Wayfinding and Streetscape work ongoing through 21 and implementation activities in 2022-2024</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Participate in the Transportation Plan, focusing on a walkable town with greenspace and connected business districts</p> <p><i>Longer term:</i> Consider storefront/Downtown and landscaping improvement program</p>

	<p>3. Economic resiliency planning.</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> EDC provide suggestions to KPEDD on the business tool box. EDC promote tool box to community.</p> <hr/> <p>4. Assess jobs training needs, workforce development, availability of workers and workforce supports including child care, housing.</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Invite KBC Director Reid Brewer as speaker, how does the college make course offering decisions? How is work force development part of the planning? What does the KBC Advisory Board do?</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Invite 9-Star to make a presentation</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Brief survey to businesses and employees on their needs.</p>
<p>Long Term Goals 5 Years or More (2025+)</p>	<p>1. Multipurpose community center (HERC)</p> <p><i>Status:</i> Scoping study has been funded. Demolition of the smaller building has been funded; tear down planned in 2023.</p>

OVERALL EDC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

DUTIES OF COMMISSION/STAFF

Commissioners

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

Staff (Julie Engebretsen)

- Aid the Chair in setting the agenda.
- Compile packet material from commissioners, write backup memos, and submit to Clerk.
- Provide information on items the commission needs to review annually.

- Inform the Commission of City Council actions and discussion of economic development related issues.

Clerk's Office

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

Background

The City of Homer Economic Development Advisory Commission has an ongoing goal of defining what is positive economic growth for Homer, and how it leads to the quality of life and growth outcomes desired by the community. The Commission has begun working on this goal by conducting a SWOT analysis - strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats- for Homer's quality of life. There are four board categories included in this document: Business Climate, Built Environment, Natural Environment and Social Climate. As the Commission discovered, it's the people who make Homer, Homer. This analysis is offered as a gateway to a larger community conversation about Homer's future as a place to live, work and thrive as we proceed to Homer Comprehensive Plan.

Acknowledgments

Economic Development Commission

Karin Marks, Chair

Nicole Arevalo

Deborah Brown

Jay Cherok

Luke Gamble

Hazel Pearson

Adele Person

Tulio Perez

Debbie Speakman

Staff

Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

Rachel Tussey, CMC, Deputy City Clerk II

Strengths

- Small town feel and scale
- Eclectic businesses, buildings and people
- Wide variety of locally owned small businesses
- Integrated town with outdoor environment
- Connected community with vibrant cultural and business groups

Weaknesses

- Lack of worker support: Housing, Childcare, Training.
- Difficulty for early to mid- career residents to thrive
- Some infrastructures is in need of repair (roads) or expansion - storm water + green infrastructure
- Local regulation is not resulting in the patterns and development the community would like to see.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Opportunities

- Encourage multi-family housing
- Increase ease of walking and biking
- Collaborate with community partners on habitat, climate, erosion and other natural environment issues that impact quality of life
- Find ways to keep young or returning residents in the community

Threats

- Difficult to recruit new talent
- Poor retention of workers
- Loss of town/wildlife interface
- New residents may not become involved in the community; slow loss of volunteer run organizations, events and services; Risk of gentrification; becoming a community of empty households.
- Costs of living and doing business

Business climate

Strengths	Variety of businesses and activities.	Working town with rich history.	Lots of jobs for entry level workers.	Small, locally owned business are the majority; few chains.	Vibrant cultural community that has rich opportunities for arts, sports, music, gathering, education, and entertainment.	Community that is growing and maturing, that is developing opportunities for families, businesses, visitors, but at a pace that does not create change so quickly that what is here is lost or displaced.
Threats + Weaknesses	Low availability of vocational training.	Not enough homes available for sale or rent to meet the demand. Affects the work force and tax paying residents.	Lack of year round affordable housing. Problem for entry level and low income workers, and also potential future middle income workers. Losing the potential to build up the work force due to entry/early hurdles.	Cost of living and doing business here is increasing. Harder to live and move here. (food, housing, development, energy costs).	Risk of over-regulation. Potential mismatch between level of local regulation and community desire for regulation.	Uncertain energy supplies and future prices (natural gas in Cook Inlet).
Opportunities	Tax breaks could encourage growth by certain groups that could improve commerce. A tax break to encourage certain business activities, such as construction of multi family homes.	Solicit developers (could be from outside of Homer) to build multifamily housing.	Keeping youth in the community and providing skills training to grow the local work force. Kachemak Bay Campus, voc tech training/apprenticeship programs, and partnerships with existing businesses such as NOMAR, Bayweld and other small manufacturing operations are all opportunities.		Promote policies that are favorable to economic growth (tax environment, seasonal labor initiatives, etc.).	Balance growth with cohesive town "feel."

Built Environment - Town buildings and infrastructure

Strengths	Eclectic, organic feel to the town. Human scale buildings.	Integrated town with the outdoors - can observe wildlife (moose, eagles) and be in nature.	Small town feel and scale.	Multiple economic zones; Homer Spit, spit trail & boardwalks, Pioneer Ave, Old Town, Ocean Drive, East End Road.	Wild spaces - less manicured yards, trails in town, remote access opportunities to the back country and across the bay.	Unique houses, not cookie cutter.
Threats + Weaknesses	Lack of mechanisms to pay for growth or balance the pace of change.	Infrastructure - road system in need of repair, limited access options. Storm water management is a growing issue.	Lack of housing including multi family housing and creative ideas for seasonal housing.	Low density can cause sprawl; cost of utilities and infrastructure increases as a result.	Lower levels of energy efficiency, at risk for pricing swings in energy prices.	Cookie cutter buildings/strip mall.
Opportunities	Accommodate population growth with zones of increased density & reduced commute. Encourage ADU's (Accessory Dwelling Units).	Use the City HART Fund wisely to address roads maintenance + trails.	Increase walkability/biking. Promote an easy flow of people whether they walk, bike or drive within the community, with wayfinding. Plan for all transportation modes to keep the small town feel and the opportunity to meet.	Manage growth wisely, such as road and infrastructure planning with new subdivisions, planning for pedestrian and storm water drainage, and rezoning to allow more housing and tiny homes.	Collaborate with the Homer Chamber of Commerce to help maintain focus towards building up our local small businesses across sectors.	Aesthetics: Use some natural living landscape to break up box store type look. Blend built environment with nature.

Natural Environment

Strengths	Natural beauty	Community connection to outdoors, nature, skiing and beaches in the same day.	Coastal living - maritime culture of sport and commercial fishing and water based activities	Abundant and pristine natural resources.	Large areas of park and public lands surrounding Homer.
Threats + Weaknesses	Human affect on natural environment. Pollution, overfishing, lack of crab in K Bay, warming climate.	Development of lands without consideration of wildlife/habitat corridors, wetlands (salmon habitat, water connectivity) + groundwater + storm water flow channels.	Destruction of built and natural environment. Storm drains and roads based on 1970's planning and engineering ideas.	Oil + gas lease sale potential in lower cook inlet.	Fisheries: closure of lowed CI salmon fishery, other declining or poorly managed fisheries. Large vessel trawl fleets. (threat to marine economy, wealth + culture).
Opportunities	Local potential for use of alternative energy sources from Tidal energy to household heat pumps.	Study groundwater to increased understanding of this local resource and the ability to plan for the natural environment.	Collaborate with partnerships to create connected greenspace for trails, water management, and wildlife. Purchase or preserve key habitat locations.	Identify wildlife and habitat corridors, and take steps to maintain the health of local fish and wildlife within these corridors.	Fisheries: City could be participating more in partnerships that aim to identify solutions to bycatch issues.

Social Climate

Strengths	Community has many social connections between residents, and also with the natural environment.	Small business and small non-profit, integrated nature of the community (fundraising, meeting community needs).	Community feeling: People are here by choice at the end of the road.	Eclectic nature of the town and people	Safety - low crime	Diverse and rich heritage.	"Work from Anywhere" trends increasing nationally to benefit novel living locations.
Threats + Weaknesses	Cost of living does not support middle/low income work. Median income 60K, Median House costs of \$20K/year	Many young families need to work outside of Homer to live year-round. Childcare difficult to obtain.	How to entice mid-career small business owners to move to Homer, and have all new residents embrace Homer culture.	Explosive growth (outside wealth outpacing local population) second homes, short term rentals, rapid change.	Addiction education - need for resources, outreach, networking.	Risk of losing the full character of Homer. Not talking to enough people about Homer's future.	Not a very age - diverse population. Unbalanced demographics. 20% of the population over 65. Increasing rate of snowbirds.
Opportunities	Provide education on what government does. Highlight what makes Homer a unified community.	Educate the community on how decisions will impact taxes, utility rates, and cost of living as Homer grows.	Use social appeal to support businesses in obtaining out of area workers. Resource in helping get H2B & vetted workers.	Art/murals/ landscaping as a draw for downtown, in a thoughtful way. Could encourage more businesses participation, cost sharing	Partner w NTC or SVT on community health, well being & cultural heritage. They have other funding streams not available to the City.	Revisit the Parks, Art Rec+ Culture needs assessment, and potential city partnerships with other organizations	Provide a spectrum of housing for all residents: housing first.

General Fund
Administration Department, Economic Development

OBJECTIVE STATEMENT

Promote Homer’s quality of life by supporting economic development efforts, community partnerships, municipal facility planning and grant writing for city projects.

FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Provides special project support to the City including public outreach and community partnerships, park planning, grant writing, and land management functions. Staff is assigned to the Economic Development Advisory Commission and supports other City bodies on a regular basis. Staff participates on the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and provides volunteer coordination for park and trail projects.

LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

- Increase capacity and efficacy by providing project managing training and tools

PRIOR YEAR’S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ Supported city grant writing efforts which resulted in one state grant for Bayview Park and one federal grant for Green Infrastructure (Kachemak Sponge)
- ✓ Coordinated volunteer efforts for city parks and trails
- ✓ Continued to lead community efforts to redevelop the HERC site to ensure continued access to a city-owned indoor recreational facility

BUDGET PERIOD GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Complete Bayview Park planning and construct improvements
- Complete Karen Hornaday Park Plan
- Support Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Rewrite projects
- Continue to make progress on demolishing HERC 2, by pursuing EPA Brownfield funding
- Begin placement of Wayfinding signage
- Continue grant writing to secure funding for priority city projects

2.76.040 Duties and responsibilities of the Commission.

- a. Oversee responsibility of the City of Homer's work with KPEDD in developing a strategic plan for the specific Homer portion of the regional CEDS that is written every five years.
 1. Cohost with KPEDD public meetings to collect comments on local strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats especially relating to the economy to determine the City's needs and wants. This is done to broaden public involvement.
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- j. Any recommendation the Commission may have regarding economic development is to be directed to the City Council through the City Manager or the recommendations of the Commission concerning policy issues shall be sent directly to the Council upon request of the Commission.
- k. The Commission shall consider any specific proposal, problem or project as directed by the City Council and any report or recommendations thereon shall be made directly to the Council, unless otherwise directed by the Council.
- l. The City Council may at a future date expand or withdraw duties and responsibilities of the Commission. [Ord. 20-64(A) § 1, 2020; Ord. 93-15(S)(A), 1993; Ord. 06-25 § 1, 1993. Code 1981 § 1.78.040].