

Memorandum 11-084 Support for Homer Playground Project

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Memorandum Status: Backup

Memorandum No. 11-084

To: Mayor & Council

From: Anne Marie Holen, Special Projects Coordinator

Through: Walt Wrede, City Manager

Date: June 8, 2011

Re: Ordinance 11-27 – Support for Homer Playground Project

Ordinance 11-27 is intended to support one of the goals of the Karen A. Hornaday Hillside Park Master Plan; specifically the creation of a new improved playground to replace the worn-out play structures currently at the park. The ordinance authorizes transfer of \$5,000 to the Homer Foundation where it will serve as seed money for a community-wide campaign led by a new group called the Homer Playground Project (HoPP).

This group of volunteers has now held three meetings and shows all indications of having what it takes to coordinate a successful campaign using the community-built playground model. It is a model that has been used successfully within the last few years in Soldotna, Seward, and Talkeetna and HoPP members have been in communication with project leaders in all those towns. The formation of HoPP makes the goal of a new playground at Karen Hornaday Park entirely realistic within a relatively short timeframe. The goal is to raise at least \$200,000 by the end of summer 2012 and, with a lot of volunteer labor, build the playground over the course of five or six days. The City, of course, will have authority to approve design and construction plans and will own the playground when it is completed.

HoPP is well aware that the playground needs to reflect community input and be built to established safety standards and also with long-term durability in mind. Both Angie Otteson, Parks Maintenance Coordinator, and Mike Illg, Community Recreation Specialist, are attending HoPP meetings and expect to remain involved through the duration of the campaign. HoPP is also planning to work with professional playground consultants with extensive experience designing and facilitating community-built playgrounds.

To accomplish its goal by the end of summer 2012, HoPP needs to move quickly and efficiently. Immediate needs include developing a website complete with a graphic image (logo) representing the campaign, raising public awareness, contracting with a playground design firm, and then launching into the design process. It is important that HoPP have access to seed money right away to cover some of these costs. HoPP has already raised money from its membership but before it can kick off the campaign in a big way in the community, additional funds are needed.

A separate ordinance in your packet (Ordinance 11-22), introduced May 24, authorizes certain expenditures for improvements at Karen Hornaday Park, including \$5,000 for the playground, in keeping with a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Commission. Ordinance 11-27 will simply transfer those funds to the Homer Foundation to support the efforts of HoPP. The Homer Foundation has already agreed to serve as fiscal agent to HoPP, which will allow community members, businesses, and foundations to make donations to the Homer Foundation in support of the playground project. HoPP will also be seeking to leverage the initial \$5,000 in a grant application to the Homer Foundation.

A Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Homer, HoPP, and the Homer Foundation is being drafted to clarify responsibilities of each organization in this effort. It is hoped that the MOA will be approved by June 17, at which time the Homer Playground Project can proceed full-steam.

RECOMMENDATION:

The formation of HoPP is an exciting development. Based on what I have observed so far at three meetings and in daily correspondence with HoPP leaders, I believe they have the skills, energy, and commitment to succeed in their goal. Their offer to help raise funds and coordinate volunteers to build a new playground should be welcomed by the Homer City Council and supported with an initial contribution of \$5,000.

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Related Ordinances **Memorandum - Related Ordinances:** [Ordinance 11-27\(A\) Appropriating Parks and Recreation Reserves to the Homer Foundation to Support Community Efforts to Create a New Improved Playground at Karen Hornaday Park](#)

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