

MANAGERS REPORT

January 25, 2010

TO: MAYOR HORNADAY / HOMER CITY COUNCIL

FROM: WALT WREDE

UPDATES / FOLLOW-UP

1. Climate Action Plan: The Kachemak Bay Research Reserve is organizing and hosting a Climate Change Adaption Workshop at the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center on February 17 and 18. Megan Murphy of KBRR attended the City Department Head meeting last week to inform us about the Workshop and to ask for City participation. A draft agenda is attached for your information. The City is planning to participate and at a minimum will have a table at the workshop to discuss what has been done so far at the City level. Information provided to the public will include the Climate Action Plan, parts or all of the Deerstone Report, and information regarding concrete steps the City has already taken to reduce energy consumption. Also last week, PW had a third party engineering firm visit the Library to review the Deerstone Report and its recommendations. We expect a report soon and will then proceed with implementing some of the recommendations, especially those that can be done with changes in computer programs and settings. Anne Marie is carefully monitoring funding sources for implementing the Climate Action Plan. We have submitted a preliminary application for Block Grant Funding.
2. Kachemak Drive Phase II Water and Sewer. This agenda contains a resolution authorizing the administration to take the first preliminary steps toward an eminent domain proceeding to obtain any remaining easements that might be needed in order to proceed with construction of the project. We bring this to you now because we really need direction from the Council. The landowners who voted for the LID are really anxious to get this project going and cannot understand why it is taking so long. Public Works has now obtained all of the environmental permits necessary to start construction. The Code contains a provision that states an LID expires after five years (this year) if construction does not proceed for some reason. The Code also provides that the City will absorb the costs of engineering, design, and permitting, if the project does not go forward. In the meantime, failing septic systems threaten the environment and the stability of the bluff and local property owners are having difficulty selling property, getting insurance and mortgages, etc. From a construction point of view, the only thing preventing us from building this project this summer is the 14 or so outstanding easements that need to be obtained. Carey's back-up memo is very informative and fills in more of the details.
3. Comprehensive Plan: At the last meeting, several residents testified that they were not aware of the proposed transition maps (Land Use Designations) and that in

their view, the City had not done enough to get information about these maps out there and engage the public. It was suggested by some that the City should do things such as hold neighborhood meetings or send informational mailers out. The planning staff discussed this and decided that one thing they could do quickly and with little cost was to work with the local newspaper reporters and editors on informational stories and pieces (see attached article by Rick). The staff also attempted to pull some information together for Council consideration about what it might cost in time and resources to do some of the things suggested. For example, an informational flyer that included a color map and explanation mailed to every Homer resident would cost approximately \$3,000. Holding neighborhood meetings in at least six neighborhoods would take about 3 months to accomplish and cost approximately \$3,000 in overtime, advertising, printing, and materials. Please let us know if you wish to proceed with these or any other public information strategies.

4. Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation / Bridge Creek Reservoir and Watershed: For the past few years we have been discussing the fire danger that exists around the Bridge Creek Reservoir. These discussions have included State and Borough agencies. We have looked at both how a fire might be fought in that area and what steps might be taken to prevent or mitigate a wildfire. This week staff from the Borough Spruce Bark Beetle Mitigation Program came down and met with Bob Painter, Rick Abboud, and I. The Borough has a new shot of stimulus funding for the Spruce Bark Beetle Program and is interested in working with the City on a possible fire mitigation program around the reservoir. The next steps include doing some fire modeling scenarios, developing range of mitigation options, and bringing some soils and water/hydrology experts on board as part of the study team. This is a very sensitive area as you know. A wildfire in this area could result in extensive erosion, siltation, and ash accumulation in the reservoir, a real challenge for the new water treatment plant. On the other hand, we would not want to take mitigation measures that resulted in soil disturbance or increased erosion either. We will provide you with more information as it becomes available. No mitigation or prevention action will be taken without approval by the Council.
5. East Boat Harbor Feasibility Study: I believe we are getting closer to decision time on the East Boat Harbor. As you may know, the feasibility study has been underway now for several years. The cost has been shared by the federal government (50%), the State (25%), and the City (25%). The agreement was that we would focus on the economics first. The preliminary economic reports indicate that this project is marginally feasible at best. We have some concerns about the assumptions and data used by the Corps and we believe the cost / benefit ratio could be improved. I went to Anchorage last week to discuss this project with members of Senator Murkowski's staff. Bryan and I are scheduled to meet with our project partners from the state this week to discuss the next steps. After that, we will likely go to Anchorage to meet again with the Corps to discuss our concerns and the future direction of this project. Regardless of what our ultimate recommendation is (keep going or pull the plug), we will ask the Corps to come down and discuss their findings with the Council.

ATTACHMENTS

1. January Employee Anniversaries
2. Memo from City Clerk re: Reduction of Non-Essential Services
3. Memo from City Planner re: Proposed Junk Care removal Program
4. Letter to Kenai Peninsula Borough re: 2008 Commercial vessel Tax
5. Letter from Chamber of Commerce re: Winter Carnival
6. Climate Change Adaption Workshop
7. Comprehensive Plan Informational Article