

Session 15-07 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Brown at 6:00 p.m. on August 11, 2015 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONER BROWN, FRIEDLANDER, MARKS, SANSOM, STANISLAW

ABSENT: ARNO

STAFF: ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER LAWRENCE
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

AGENDA APPROVAL

MARKS/STANISLAW MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting Minutes July 14, 2015

MARKS/SANSOM MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

VISITORS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & MARINE TRADES ASSOCIATION REPORT/ COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOROUGH REPORT

Karen Zak, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, reported to the Commission that 9377 visitors have visited the Homer Chamber of Commerce since May. The peak month of July was 3440, and the peak day was 195 people on August 4th. The volunteers are busy talking with visitors and providing information for the businesses that can meet their needs. They have met the cruise ships and provide

maps to the busses that include businesses along the route that are members of the Chamber. They have had feedback that it has helped increase visitors to those businesses. The back of the map has information for what the cruise ship visitors can do when they come back for an extended visit. The chamber is also doing a three minute survey with visitors to gather some general statistics about their group and how they heard about Homer. The information will be provided after the season. She reported on updates to the relocation guide and information people are looking for. This year's visitor guide will be promoting all seasons and highlight events to help promote year round tourism. There are three conferences scheduled for this year and they have information set aside for those visitors. They are also working with the Borough to collect sales tax data to help track how these events impact the local economy. Mrs. Zak provided stats for 2013-2014 that guided water was up 22%, lodging up 48%, restaurants and bars up 42%, retail trade up 5.5% with a net gain of more than \$1 million. They are hearing this is one of the best summers in years and looking forward to getting the new numbers.

Mrs. Zak talked about the International Economic Development Council Annual Conference (IEDC) happening in Anchorage on October 4-7. She prepared a budget on attending as an exhibitor. The booth, lodging and travel for two people, redoing the booth design, and jump drives to distribute would be \$3500 to \$4000 to participate. The group discussed other groups that might be interested in partnering and help share the cost to attend and participate.

The Commission, staff, and Mrs. Zak touched on discussion of the city budget and the idea of a bed tax. It was suggested and the Commission agreed that the bed tax could be added to a future agenda for further discussion.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Old Building Business Renewal
 - i. City of Soldotna Storefront Improvement Plan Guidelines

The Commission discussed whether to forward a request for direction from Council regarding this topic or whether to begin formulating a recommendation on a concept like this for the City of Homer. They agreed to discuss the topic and begin working on a recommendation for Council on the program.

They requested further information to discuss at the next meeting:

- How Soldotna funds their program
- What fund the city would use
- Who writes grants for the city
- What changes staff would recommend for the city's program

There was consensus to include this on the next agenda.

- B. Bylaw Amendment – Adding Pledge of Allegiance before roll call

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 11, 2015

BROWN/MARKS MOVED TO FORWARD THIS AMENDMENT TO INCLUDE THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE BEFORE ROLL CALL TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

C. Draft 2016-2021 Capital Improvement Plan Review & Recommendation

Assistant City Manager Lawrence reviewed the process for the capital improvement plan, projects that relate to economic development, and answered questions about the projects. The Commissioners stated their top two projects for the CIP.

Commissioner Sansom – Seafarer’s Memorial Parking expansion, with the caveat that it’s paid parking, and Kachemak Shellfish Grower’s Association

Commissioner Friedlander - Deep Water Dock Cruise Ship Dock expansion and Marine Ways Large Vessel Haul Out facility

Commissioner Stanislaw – Jack Gist Park improvements phase 2 and Karen Hornaday Park improvements phase 2

Commissioner Marks – Ice Plant upgrade and Storm Water Master Plan

Chair Brown – Ice Plant upgrade and Barge Mooring Facility

There was no consensus of projects and discussion ensued. Projects like the Ice Plant, park improvements, Seafarer Memorial parking, and storm water planning are low cost projects that could be reachable and also bring in revenue. The Deep Water Dock and Cruise Ship dock have a completion date of 2016 and they would benefit revenue for the entire city in support services, housing, and tourist related business for example. It will also benefit the Coast Guard. The large vessel haul out will benefit the marine trade services as well.

BROWN/FRIEDLANDER MOVED THAT THE HOMER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION SUPPORTS THE DEEP WATER DOCK/CRUISE SHIP DOCK EXPANSION AND THE BARGE MOORING FACILITY.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

A. City of Homer Marketing Plan

The Commission agreed that they will have this topic on a future agenda after they see what develops with the IEDC Conference and when Chamber Director Zak can work with the Commission.

B. Defining New Economic Engines for Homer

The Commission discussed preparing a speakers list so the Commission can hear from the groups around town and help them in developing a marketing plan. Some suggestions included:

- Patrice Krant, who worked with an Irish town who had an interested in their community and environment. She assisted the town in bringing in business that fit with the community's interest
- The Port and Harbor Director to talk to the Commission about what is happening with their improvements and goals moving forward
- The Woodard Creek Coalition

Commissioner Marks said she would provide a list to staff to be included in the packet. Staff noted the list can be included as an informational item in each packet and the Commission can add or remove speakers as they choose.

C. Commissioner Attendance at City Council Meetings

Commissioner Marks said she could attend a council meeting in September and Commissioner Friedlander said he could attend a council meeting in November.

The calendar will be included in future meeting packets so Commissioners can sign up to attend as their schedules allow.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. City Manager's Report July 27, 2015

Assistant City Manager Lawrence briefly reviewed the status of the beach policy updates.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

None

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

None

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

None

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Brown thanked the Commission and staff for their work.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Sansom said she appreciated the opportunity to review and give feedback on the Capital Improvement Plan projects.

Commissioner Friedlander apologized for being late and said it was a good meeting.

Commissioner Stanislaw had no comments.

Commissioner Marks commented that she was contacted by and spoke with the Homer Tribune about information from the town survey. She said the Commission hadn't had a chance to discuss it yet, but probably would in the near future. She made the comment from her own perspective that after all the discussion at the town hall meeting she appreciated the City Manager's comment that there is another piece to the puzzle besides taxes, and it is economic development.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 8, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____