

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 7, 2016

Session 16-04 a Special Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Marks at 6:00 p.m. on June 7, 2016 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONER GUSTAFSON, MARKS, PETERSON, RICHARDSON, SANSOM

ADVISORY: COUNCILMEMBER SMITH

STAFF: SPECIAL PROJECTS & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR CARROLL
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

AGENDA APPROVAL

GUSTAFSON/SANSOM 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 of May 10, 2016

SANSOM/GUSTAFSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

VISITORS

REPORTS

A. Marine Trades Association Report

There was no report from the Marine Trades Association

B. Chamber Director Report

There was no report from the Chamber Director

C. Pioneer Avenue Task Force Report

Asia Freeman, Pioneer Avenue Task Force member, introduced Katy Perry, the visiting artist who is a muralist and an expert in facilitating public projects related to murals. She came up through the Artist in Residence program through Bunnell. They are working in a cross sector partnership with the City, private businesses, and other non-profits to enliven Pioneer Avenue. The goal is to establish an identity for Pioneer as a place people might like to linger and shop. Ms. Perry created a proposal around a mural project.

Katy Perry introduced herself and explained she is a teaching muralist. She studied math and engineering as an undergrad and grew up in a small community where a majority of residents lived below poverty level. She stumbled on the power of public art and started implementing programming locally in her hometown. In 2010 she wrote a research proposal to bring funding in to open a co-op gallery in Binghamton NY on the main street, similar to Bunnell Art Gallery. She was one of three store fronts in an abandoned downtown, where now there isn't an empty storefront left. From that, she has traveled around the country to work in mid and small size cities to do similar work. In her program she offers workshops, including presentations to administrators as well as artists to learn to organize projects, communicate, what it means to be part of the global phenomenon of public art, and how to paint murals. Through community conversations they came up with peonies as a graphic as something the community can celebrate. Through the process Pioneer Avenue came forward as an area for a face lift. From her perspective a successful program happens when you concentrate it on one street and let it blossom naturally. She has presented to a number of economic development commission and councils, she served as a Commissioner in the state of New York for several terms and serving now as Mayoral Advisor for Public Art Acquisitions. She wants to spread the joy of art and help towns that are faced with resource depletions or scarcity. Ms. Perry said she sees positives of the program being that Homer has an amazing art community and she encourages continuing to celebrate it. She has gone into cities where it has been not as warmly embraced, and if you can do a successful project, which can be done here, it's a huge positive. The only negative she sees is more opportunity after this is done. All the energy created with this project can die out, so it's important to ride that creativity, energy, and enthusiasm.

Ms. Freeman said the first mural is done and it's at the car wash on Pioneer Avenue. It was done by four artists and took about 75 man hours. They hope to finish 5 more; the next is the wall at the corner of Pioneer and Heath Street, then K-Bay Coffee, Skiff Chicks, the Art Shop Gallery, and Ulmers. She gave a brief overview of the peony farms in the area, noting they bloom here when they aren't in bloom in other major growing areas and encouraged considering a Peony Festival toward the fall.

In response to questions Ms. Freeman explained the growing season and addressed city sign regulation of murals being allowed on businesses provided they don't specifically promote the product of the business.

D. Staff Report

Special Projects and Communication Coordinator Carroll reported that Dotti Harness is working in the City Manager's office half time and half time in Planning. Ms. Carroll said she feels like she has been working on along the lines of what Homer provides for people. One task has been the Coast Guard, with their new cutters, is looking at where to locate them in Alaska. The city was asked to produce some information that describes Homer and why Coast Guard Families would want to locate here. It was a fun project to work on and between all of the relocation packets and what not, we have a lot of material to work from.

There was discussion of the challenges particularly that right now we don't have the capability of mooring the new ships because of the size. Special Projects and Communication Coordinator Carroll noted that one of the Capital Improvement Plan priorities to work on a dock facility and security to accommodate the vessels. She said the Coast Guard is collecting information from Homer, Seward, and Cordova.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Action Plan Goal 1 - Attract/encourage business as a significant component of the city's economic mix

Chair Marks summarized their worksession discussion. She and Commissioners Gustafson and Samson will work to come up with some more specific information for the media marketing plan and also marketing Homer as a wellness destination to address at the next meeting. The intent will be to have a recommendation to vote on in August and for Councilmember Smith to take to council.

Discussion ensued and the following points were addressed:

- An economic cost and benefit of creating a media marketing plan would be an effective tool to share with council
 - Ms. Carroll said it will take a fair amount of research.
 - Commissioner Gustafson said there is a lot to a plan as they are typically pretty big projects where you would have someone in the media industry contracted to create a plan.
- The concept of a marketing video is a good one, but to be effective in the approach it has to get people's attention. It can't be done without a great deal of thought.
- The goal is to have the Council include funding in the budget to create this video.
- The Harbor/Marine Trades video was made for a specific media outlet, so it raises the question of what media outlet we would be looking for
- It would be helpful to look at what other cities have done to help narrow down the creative scope
- Each person bring a few ideas of what Homer's strengths and weaknesses are to the next meeting
- In preparing the tailored message recognizing and acknowledging challenges that will face anyone who wants to move here will need to be considered, the message will have to overshadow the challenges
- This seems like something that is in the Chamber's wheelhouse, maybe this is something we partner on with them
- The video seems like it's a tactic in a bigger picture of recruiting people; it should be a bigger message and a bigger way to talk to people who are interested in Homer

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 7, 2016

- Maybe it's a better suggestion and use of time and money to recommend adding \$10,000 more into the Chamber's budget for the purpose of create this video
 - First get something going with the Chamber to promote not just coming to homer for more than a week but to stay even longer
 - Then we get back to thinking about the bigger plan
- If the best bang for the buck is to justify to council why we need to progress beyond pushing for the tourists and harbor; we need to push for the other kinds of businesses and provide more funding to the Chamber that has started some of this, to continue to do a good job of it
- Currently the Chamber focuses heavily on tourism and doesn't have manpower to do more, maybe the council can look at redefining and focusing in the role of the chamber

Chair Marks commented that using the information the group will be gathering is worthwhile to lay out and put into a report to review next meeting. They can start to build the message to council that this is important, and then move on from there. The Commission agreed this seems like a reasonable task to look at at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Elect a Vice Chair

Chair Marks opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair.

GUSTAFSON/PETERSON NOMINATED COMMISSIONER SANSOM

Commissioner Sansom accepted the nomination.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried

- B. Comprehensive Plan Update Economic Vitality Chapter

Chair Marks noted they discussed this at the worksession with Deputy City Planner Engebretsen and will bring comments and recommendations to the next meeting.

- C. Scheduling Worksessions

Chair Marks confirmed with the Commission that if they need to hold worksessions in the future that meeting the hour before the regular meeting works better than trying to poll everyone for avialalbielty.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. City Manager's Report May 23, 2016
B. Commissioner Attendance at City Council Meetings

Chair Marks agreed to attend the June 13th City Council meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen briefly reviewed the Open Meetings requirement for advisory-only bodies that a gathering of more than three members that is pre-arranged to talk about something they are advising on is not allowed. She encouraged them to remember this as they talk about sections of the action plan. She also said she would include a copy of the marine trades' video RFP in the next packet so the Commission can get an idea of the RFP process.

Special Projects and Communication Coordinator Carroll advised the Commission that a draft of the Borough's CEDS document is available for review on their website.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

Councilmember Smith thanked the Commissioners for their time and effort. He appreciates what's been discussed tonight and while he may not always agree with Chair Marks, he too has a great interest in seeing the City flourish and develop economically in a way that's sustainable and promotes the kind of life we want to live here. He thinks it's a difficult task, it has been for a long time, and it's something they'll have to chip away at. He thinks we need to be on the same page with the Chamber and how to succeed with what both entities are trying to achieve. What we are talking about in Chapter 8 of the Comp Plan, the Chamber should be talking about. The duplication of labor is one of the cardinal sins of business because it's inefficient. As a Councilmember he is very interested in seeing the development of other Chambers and how they are tackling the needs of their communities. If we need to look at expanded funding for the Chamber then it's something that needs to be put on the table. Compelling cases will need to be made to Council because there are some councilmembers that would rather give them no money. He's interested to see how this project develops.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Marks appreciates his comments. She is thick skinned and if believes if you don't speak up and get involved, you won't progress. She appreciates everyone's comments and ideas. She agrees that for too long people say "Oh everyone knows about Homer", not really though. When the Alaska Magazine had a poll and the top 10 voted destinations in Alaska it did not include Homer. She thanked Commissioner Sansom for stepping up as Vice Chair. She is sorry that Commissioner Stanislaw resigned, he has been with the group for a while, but understands his decision. She encouraged everyone to recruit for two new members.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Peterson commented that she was recently in Mexico and observed that a lot of the businesses use trip advisor to promote their business. It might be an interesting way to promote business in Homer.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 7, 2016

Commissioner Gustafson commented it's good to have a couple meetings under his belt and he's starting to learn the ropes. Commissioner Richardson made a good point earlier about or overall plan and one thing he wonders about is what exactly do we do as a commission and our defined role. Finding where all these pieces fit with the City and Chamber, it's a learning curve so he appreciates everyone's patience as we work through it.

Commissioner Richardson and Sansom had no comments.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 12, 2016 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: _____