

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 13, 2016

Session 16-06 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Marks at 6:00 p.m. on September 13, 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, KIESEL, MARKS, RICHARDSON, SANSOM

ABSENT: PETERSON

STAFF: SPECIAL PROJECTS AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR CARROLL
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN
CITY PLANNER ABBOUD

AGENDA
APPROVAL

AGENDA APPROVAL

SANSOM/GUSTAFSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PUBLIC
COMMENTS

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

RECONSID-
ERATION

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MINUTES
APPROVAL

A. Regular Meeting Minutes of August 9, 2016

RICHARDSON/GUSTAFSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

VISITORS

VISITORS

Public
Safety
Building
Update

A. Ken Castner- Public Safety Building Update

Ken Caster, Chair of the Public Safety Building Review Committee, gave the commission a brief overview of the history of the police station locations in Homer. The current station is overcrowded, over utilized, policing needs for the department itself as well as for the community, and the conditions of the current building negatively impact recruiting. The station provides housing for the officers and

as well as a lot of strategic things. There will be times when the public can walk through the station and get an idea of the need. He was recruited to this project because of his background in construction and construction estimating. He never bought into the \$30 million design for a complete police and fire station facility. They came to the conclusion the city isn't getting any help, the ambition of the larger facility was far beyond reach, and the fire station could have its life extended, which is underway now. They worked to utilize what buildings we already have and keep new construction to a minimal amount of square footage. He believes the project will come in around \$9.4 million. Council approved an amount not to exceed \$12 million to go to the voters, but he doesn't want to send a message that we want to build a \$12 million building to anyone, including the architect and contractors. They have worked hard to give the message that we want to give police the functionality they need for the next 40 years at a price we can afford. He is convinced now is the time to do this, we have momentum and planning, a good contractor on board, and after the bond proposition passes the new Mayor and Council will have an opportunity to review this.

There was a brief question and answer exchange between the Commission and Mr. Castner.

REPORTS

REPORTS

A. Marine Trades Association Report

Marine
Trades

Marine Trades Association Secretary Cinda Eckert provided a written report.

Chamber
Director

B. Chamber Director Report

Karen Zak, Chamber Director, gave an update on visitor numbers, reporting over 18,000 visitors have come to the visitor center, the halibut derby office, and also cruise ship visitors. Chamber members are being surveyed on their activities for the season and Mrs. Zak will report the results at a future meeting. She reviewed information about their new website and reported on the new building on the Baycrest pull out area which will be completed soon.

There was brief discussion about working with DOT on signage for the new visitor information center.

Pioneer Ave
Task Force

C. Pioneer Avenue Task Force Report

Chair Marks reported the task force is still meeting and anyone is welcomed to attend. The newest mural is up on the building next to Bay Realty, peony gardens are being put in this fall, and more will be done in the spring. They have also been discussing signage recognizing Homer as a city of peonies as well as halibut, and also about moving the Pioneer Avenue business district sign to a more visible location. They are hoping to do sidewalk and parking lot painting and also an open house event.

D. Staff Report

Staff
Report

Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll reported she has prepared a final draft of the CIP for Council review at their worksession and regular meeting September 26th and they will have a public hearing on October 10th. She also gave an overview of work done on updating the relocation packet included as an informational item.

The Commission provided feedback on the relocation packet.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Comprehensive Plan Update Economic Vitality Chapter

City Planner Abboud reviewed the timeline and process for the Comprehensive Plan update.

It was noted the commission has reviewed the chapter and are now reviewing the chart and point was raised that the chart essentially is the chapter. The chart is long and has a lot of redundancy and a lot of the goals are too specific. They addressed some of the specificities within the chart and goals.

It was suggested they eliminate *Goal 6: Support community efforts to establish affordable housing*. As it's defined, there is very little the city can or will do to see it come to fruition.

City Planner Abboud noted that traditional affordable housing is created by an agency that is doing it and having it as a goal in the City's Comprehensive Plan shows support for those agencies that are applying for state funding for housing special populations.

Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll added that it's also a way the commission can try to influence the ability to have more affordable housing in relation to zoning. Coming from that industry she explained often the funding that goes to the agency to build the affordable housing requires the city supports it as a goal in a city plan. Agencies will have a better chance at funding if it's part of a comprehensive plan and completely removing the goal would hinder that ability somewhat.

City Planner Abboud said he will continue to go through and work on the chart and chapter and will provide an update to the commission before the draft goes to the public.

B. Action Plan Goals on Marketing and Promoting Complementary Medicine

i. Memo re: Scheduling and information gathering session with business owners

Chair Marks and Commissioner Gustafson explained their goal of getting feedback from local business owners in an informal setting and bringing the information back to the group in November.

There was brief discussion about the process and the Commission agreed by consensus that Chair Marks and Commissioner Gustafson hold an information gathering session and bring their report back to the Commission at their November 8th regular meeting.

ii. Wellness Video

The Commission watched a video of Sallie Rediske, a local Physical Therapist at Homer Physical Therapy, responding to questions prepared, presented, and filmed by Commissioner Sansom. They also reviewed a written interview from Ken Domela a local holistic healer and martial arts instructor.

PUBLIC
HEARING

PENDING
BUSINESS

Comp Plan
Economic
Vitality
Chapter

Action Plan
Goals
Marketing &
Complementary
Medicine

Commissioner Sansom would like support for going forward and working with the Chamber on the video and in putting together a small package to advertise in a couple of trade magazines promoting Homer as a wellness destination. People who travel for wellness experiences come with a lot of money.

The commission shared ideas about the video presentation, crafting a message about coming to Homer to feel better, and the need for a written comprehensive communication plan. In promoting as a wellness destination, wellness packages would need to be developed rather than having people come and figure out their own plans. Ms. Sansom commented a challenge is that brokering the services has a thin profit margin and some providers don't have budgets for advertising or to pay a third party. Also, like some artists, they aren't capable or desirous of promoting themselves and need assistance with that. It was suggested wellness practitioners could establish a wellness industry association, as the Marine Trades has, to promote themselves in their industry and help create that draw for people to use their services.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Memorandum re: South Peninsula Amateur Radio Club

The commission briefly reviewed the memorandum in the packet and the recommendation to make a motion to forward a memo to the City Council through the City Manager that the Economic Development Advisory Commission supports the efforts of the South Peninsula Amateur Radio Club and encourages the City Council and staff to support them as well.

GUSTAFSON/SANSOM MOVED TO SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATION IN THE MEMORANDUM.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. Commissioner Attendance at City Council Meetings
- B. Homer Relocation Package – final draft

Commissioner Sansom said she would attend on September 26th. Other Commissioners said they would try to confirm closer to the other meeting dates.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Bryan Zak commented he serves on the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District board and can provide an update at a future meeting. The Economic Outlook Forum will be happening in December or January and he'd like to report back on that. He would also like to present on programs available for small business development. He is the Associate State Director for the Small Business

Development Center and works full time in Homer offering one on one confidential business advising free through the state. He will provide information on the Economic Outlook Forum when it's available.

Chair Marks confirmed with him to attend on October 10th.

STAFF
COMMENT

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

COUNCIL
COMMENT

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

Councilmember Smith thanked everyone for what's been going into the thought process and what they are putting together for an action plan. He appreciates the time Anna put into the video. He shared a comment that we have to be careful in the sense that it's great that we provide a platform for these businesses so they can take the horse and run. But they have to buy into it and if they are so busy they can't take time to expand and grow the effort to bring people into the city, then he isn't willing to sell it for them.

Mr. Smith also commented about the police station and hopes people will look at the project in more detail. He has attended most of the committee meetings and there are a lot of things going on. He appreciates the educated guess on cost, but we don't know what the final price is going to be. One of his biggest issues is we are going to the ballot to vote without knowing the number. He agrees we need a new police station; there are components of this he doesn't agree with. It's correct that after the vote it can come back to council to pull out the knife, but he doesn't want to do that as council. That's what the committees are for, to do their due diligence, recognize and acknowledge where we are financially, the cumulative cost of what we have to do, and present a plan that recognizes those things. He doesn't know what they have to offer sincerely recognizes where we're at. He encouraged everyone to look at the plan and the information in detail.

CHAIR
COMMENT

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Marks said she is delighted to see so many people here tonight.

COMMISS-
ION
COMMENT

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Gustafson thanked Councilmember Smith for his assessment. He thinks some of the community has been keeping up with it and others have kind of glazed over after more than a year of meetings. Getting the update tonight was helpful. A big reason he and his family moved to Homer was because they felt it's a good, safe community to raise their children. Every community has crime and problems, but by far we are doing a lot better than Anchorage, and maintaining that is important. Knowing costs is critical too. He will be absent from the October meeting.

Commissioner Sansom also appreciated the perspective on the police station. He thinks the point about what's essential in essential service is something we need to consider. She will miss the next two meetings but will continue to work on this and work with Karen at the Chamber.

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Commissioner Richardson said it was a great meeting and thanked everyone for the traction they have been making.

Commissioner Kiesel said it was a good meeting and she looks forward to the next one.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m. ADJOURN
The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 11, 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: _____