

Session 16-05 Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was called to order on May 19, 2016 at 5:30 pm by Chair Matt Steffy at the Cowles Council Chambers City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS ARCHIBALD, ASHMUN, LOWNEY AND STEFFY

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS HART, ROEDL AND BRANN (EXCUSED)

STAFF: JULIE ENGBRETSSEN, DEPUTY CITY PLANNER
RENEE KRAUSE, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Steffy called for a motion to approve the agenda.

LOWNEY/ASHMUN - MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Rika Mouw, city resident commented on the access and destruction to beaches on the east side of the Spit and informed the Commission of a project in place by the DNR, Alaska Department of Transportation, Fish & Game, the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve and property owners.

Laurie Daniel, non-resident, also commented on the impending partnership to address the access to the beaches on the east side of the spit and the changes to the Beach policy regarding motorized access to the beaches. They are hoping for support from the commission and to make them aware of the community efforts.

There was a discussion between the commission and the visitors regarding a letter of support for the joint efforts from the commission and advisement by staff that the commission cannot supply a letter of support since they are only an advisory commission and letters of support must come from the Council. Staff further stated that inclusion in the Beach Policy is a stronger show of support.

VISITORS

RECONSIDERATION

ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes for the regular meeting of April 21, 2016

Chair Steffy called for a motion to adopt the consent agenda.

LOWNEY/ARCHIBALD - MOVED TO APPROVE.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOROUGH REPORTS

A. Staff Report - Julie Engebretsen, Deputy City Planner

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen reported on the removal of sod and dirt accumulation including vegetation along Pioneer Avenue explaining that it compromises the plowing efforts in the winter. It is a periodic maintenance task that Public Works department schedules and it has not been done in quite a while. She provided information on the changes in the staffing levels which will affect her efforts for the Commission and also noting that she will be gone for the months of July and August so much of the burden will fall to the Clerk's Office.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen provided an update on the designation of the estuaries, shores, sloughs and tidal areas of Kachemak Bay have joined the prestigious Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), a partnership between government and private enterprises that designates important shorebird areas in an effort to boost public awareness.

There are 90 sites in 14 countries worldwide, including four others in Alaska – Copper River Delta, Kvichak Bay, Nushagak Bay and the Yukon Delta.

Twenty-two years ago, such Kachemak Bay sites as Fox River Flats, Mud Bay and Mariner Park Lagoon were added to the network. The city of Homer, Kachemak Bay Birders, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Fish and Game supported the move. The remarks on Kachemak Bay were that it has international importance to the shorebirds.

She additionally requested input on adding annual review of the following plans to the Commission's annual calendar: Beach policy and Diamond Creek Park plan and the Non-motorized Trails and Transportation Plan. She elaborated that it would be a cursory review and not intended to be an in depth formal review. The Commission agreed to add these to the annual calendar with comments that these are living documents and it would be beneficial to review on an annual basis.

The City is applying for a TAP grant to complete the Soundview project.

Ms. Engebretsen followed up by stating the June meeting agenda will have the bylaws for the newly formed Commission, budget ideas, the Skateboard Park and Basketball Court relocation and a donation of Art to the Library, she has received no responses to the requests for additional trash cans and doggie bag dispensers; the planning staff will be helping out three days a week in the City Manager's office since the administrative assistant is relocating so that will limit her time to what she can provide to the commission. They are advertising for a temporary for the summer but you never know how long that will take. She informed the commission also of her intention to be out the month of July and August.

The Council adopted HART program changes and the commission will see something shortly regarding those changes and a new funding for trails option.

Deputy City Clerk Krause noted that an issue may come before the commission regarding Jack Gist Park and Disc Golf. That memorandum of agreement has expired so the issues may be addressed through that venue. A brief discussion on the issue ensued. Ms. Krause noted that the commission will have a visitor scheduled who will be presenting an idea for Pioneer Avenue for August meeting. No additional information is available at this time. She will try to have the information for the June meeting.

B. Community Recreation Report - Mike Illg

C. Parks Report - Angie Otteson

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Scoop the Poop Update: Recommendations on Doggie Bag Dispensers, Trash Bags

Chair Steffy introduced the item into the record and staff is requesting direction on what to do with the remainder of the doggie bags that is being stored currently in the staff office.

Commissioner Lowney advocated for using as educational incentive and having at kiosks in the parks, there was consensus that the visitors were compliant and do very well cleaning up after their pets. There are more problems with the locals not cleaning up after their pets.

The commission discussed flyers and the design that was included in the packet was a big hit and agreed to use that one if they could, the discussion included laminating the flyer so it can be posted in more areas and at kiosks in the parks.

Commissioner Lowney requested time to work on the proposal and bring it back at the next meeting. She will try to contact some businesses; Commissioner Archibald offered to stop in at KBBI regarding a PSA.

The commission also discussed trash cans and noted that trash cans are needed where dispensers are posted. It was noted that they may be able to approach the near businesses to take on that responsibility. Further discussion ensued on the liability issues and responsibilities to collect and empty the trash cans. Staff provided an example of streetscaping and choosing a design, process and the ability of the city and willingness of the community.

Chair Steffy cited time and lengthy agenda to get through and invited Commissioner Lowney to report on the Trails Symposium.

B. Trails Symposium Recap and Next Steps

Commissioner Lowney reported that they had a very good showing and response, 34 people attended and many took forms and she is hopeful that they will complete and return those forms. She additionally reported that many of the attendees preferred longer sessions; polling provided lots of feedback and the following trails were listed as requesting further attention:

1. Forest Glen Trail received the highest vote of 39
2. Greatland Trail
3. Karen Hornaday Park
4. Crittenden 25
5. Shellfish
6. Homer High School to East End Road
7. Islands & Ocean Extension
8. Library Extension

All the scores were weighted and these will at least give direction on giving priority and requesting funding from HART and other sources. So she will be bringing the information back to the Trails Group and proceed on getting this going. Commissioner Lowney commented on getting the Trails Funding program. Ms. Engebretsen stated that if there was a group that was interested in working on a trail and there was nothing stopping them from going before Council to requests funding. She added that just because there was no program in place at this time does not prohibit a group from approaching Council. Commissioner Lowney stated she has already presented a summary report to Council at the May 9, 2016 meeting.

C. Comprehensive Plan Update

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen had a few question regarding landscaping and requested some input from the Commissioners on this idea and she believed that it was directed to Karen Hornaday Park and is this something that the commission wants for all city parks.

Chair Steffy responded that he believed it should be in respect to the individual park since some parks such as the Skateboard Park is not natural at all and where a trail through the woods is 95% natural. The term, "Landscaping Standards" sounds technical and very limiting. He questioned how much of a park is natural versus manicured and offered the following points:

- a. those two words would need to have technical definitions created for them
- b. decreases the diversity of the types of parks that the city would have

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen added that some of this language in the comprehensive plan was directed at Karen Hornaday and the city does not have landscaping standards but has outlined in certain building standards technical requirements for landscaping such as requiring so many types of trees of a certain size, etc. She did not advocate against it but was concerned that the commission wanted to keep this as a near term item and if it was a good thing to keep in the plan.

Commissioner Lowney was in favor of keeping some landscaping standards since it was too easy to watch them become overtaken by the natural environment. Chair Steffy suggested a less restrictive such a maintaining a balance between natural and maintained. Commissioner Ashmun agreed noting that the ability to maintain our parks is going to be questionable for a while.

Staff requested assistance with wordsmithing the requirement from the Chair who suggested the following:

Maintain ~~Create~~ Maintain park landscaping standards to ~~find~~ provide a balance between natural and manicured park development.

The next question is requesting input on funding ideas for community recreation and parks and this can also be put to the public when they have meetings on this document.

The commission raised concerns with the city funding private enterprise projects that do not have any city oversight. There was concern that tax payer dollars were being given to private enterprise and then the tax payer would be unable to use the facility because it is being built for basically a single purpose. Further discussion on using public funds for a non-public facility ensued. The commission can keep this in mind to see how things develop and it may end up in a larger agreement between the City, School District and SPARC. Ideally in the future a South Peninsula Recreation District will be formed with all the smaller groups forming one larger group. Additional points on the large financial stake the individual group has undertaken and that they will be managing the facility, the facility is following item ten on page 7-3 of the Comprehensive Plan by pursuing financial strategies that leverage city tax dollars but there was concern on how to make sure the city residents have opportunity to use the facility, long term consideration is if the city managed it would they be able to perform that.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen pointed out the implementation table and asked for their review and if anything needed changing. Commissioners recommended the following:

- Change 1-E-5 to ongoing from near term
- Change 1-E-10 to ongoing from mid term
- Change 1-E-3 to change to ongoing from near term while they may be able to flesh out wording but maintaining that mechanism also has to be considered.

The Commission would like Ms. Otteson's input on the parks maintenance needs and would appreciate her attendance at a meeting.

Staff clarified 1-E-15 regarding discouraging right of way and public access easement vacations in response to a question from the Commissioner Ashmun.

Staff will make the edits and then the Planning Commission will review Chapter 6 to make sure that it is not piecemeal and it flows together and the public meetings on the revised document will be in the fall. Commissioner Lowney questioned more public process especially to have items of concern to the commission to come before the commission before going to the Council. Staff explained that having an endowment fund through the Homer Foundation there would be public process. Further comments on appreciating the efforts of Councilmember Lewis' efforts with recreational funding, the Homer Foundation handles all aspects and staff was unsure whether the City stipulated certain requirements.

D. Beach Policy Review and Revisions Continuation

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen did not complete that and is hoping to have everything completed and will keep an eye on the Airport Access issue and bring this back for the June meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Diamond Creek Park Plan Review

Commissioner Brann requested this item on the agenda. Staff provided a brief update and history regarding the plan and the steps taken to create the plan. Deputy City Planner Engebretsen noted that it is non-motorized at this time, educational uses, as far as the city plans long term is restrooms, more trails, parking, and the city will own this property in perpetuity. Chair Steffy noted the strategies on page 39-41 of the packet under Recreation. Staff will look into the status of the Roger's Loop property.

Commissioner Ashmun commented on the idea of more year round trail access in that area.

Commissioner Lowney noted that one interest group, which this may not be the area, but Motorized Trail Use. There is a large interest in it, need for it and group. Chair Steffy added some information regarding Motorized use and they may be interested in having the group come in and inform the commission on their goals and plans - long and short term. Further discussion on the area in this particular plan in mostly wetlands so would not be a good area, this was a great ski area too.

B. Increasing Campground Fees

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen stated that in the past the goal was to keep recreation affordable but we also need to be able to maintain facilities. She has reviewed and included in the packet information on what other cities and campgrounds are charging and recommends raising the fees 20% to include taxes.

LOWNEY/ARCHIBALD - MOVED TO APPROVE STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS 1-3 AND FORWARD TO CITY COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL.

1. Consider raising camping fees 20% to \$13 for tent camping per night, RV to \$20 per night inclusive of taxes.
2. Eliminate the discount for multiple night stays.
3. Request Council budget funds into reserves or increase the parks maintenance budget to address ongoing deferred maintenance issues.

Discussion included recommending that additional fees be used to address deferred maintenance desperately needed for all city parks and it still makes Homer reasonable and would even support implementing a "Peak" season.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

C. Abandoned Campers on the Spit

There was a brief discussion on commissioners keeping their eyes on things and keeping records of the issues and calling the police and reporting the issues. Reporting issues to the City Manager's office and the Harbor is needed when it is seen.

Further discussion on enforcement of the 14 day limit and if we have these rules they need to be enforced, allowing some to stay, accumulation of "stuff", revisiting the official camping season and considering year round camping and chasing those few all around town and the time and expense to perform, instances from other towns and having additional discussions as the issue evolves.

D. Review and Renewal of Memorandum of Agreements:

- Generic template
- Karen Hornaday Park

Chair Steffy introduced the item into the record and commented that from previous experience and review of the template he believed that it would be appropriate and could be tailored to meet the needs of the City.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen stated that if the commission approves this template that the Jack Gist Disc Golf Group agreement has expired and also the Kachemak Nordic Ski Club agreement is also expired and the City Manager can use this document to start the process of getting a new agreement in place. She further noted that the Little League agreement is a little different and entailed a bit more items.

Commissioner Lowney opined that there were a few items that should be addressed in the agreement that are not. The maintenance of the buildings and the issues around parking on the service road that was put in to the pavilion between the upper field. Commissioner Lowney reported that there have been as many as 20 vehicles or more traveling along that road. Staff will apprise Angie Otteson and have field access addressed in the agreement.

The templates included are intended to be used as “boilerplate” documents. Staff did note that the Little League one is different and many items were included that would not necessarily be included in other agreements with other organizations.

The commission entertained discussion on whose responsibility is maintaining the infrastructure such as the batting cage, field fencing, etc. Establishing solutions to address the existing problems and Little League has problems just as the City and that these agreements represent exclusivity of the premises wherein the user group can arrive at the location and have people vacate the premises since they have an agreement in place.

Staff will contact the City Attorney regarding the questions and concerns voiced by the commission and submit for comment to Angie Otteson for review.

E. Rotary Adopt-a-Park Sign

There was no discussion on this item.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

A. Commission Annual Calendar 2016

Chair Steffy reviewed the calendar and Ms. Engebretsen requested Commissioners to email her for the June meeting. The bylaws revision will be on the June agenda also.

B. Commissioner Attendance at City Council Meetings 2016

Chair Steffy volunteered for the June 13th meeting.
Commissioner Ashmun will attend the meeting on the 27th
Commissioner Lowney will attend the August 22nd meeting.

C. Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Strategic Plan 2016

D. Letter to the Editor re: Adopt a Park

E. Rotary Adopt a Park Sign

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Ms. Engebretsen had no comments.

Ms. Krause reported that clarification on the two new members to the new commission will need to reapply while all existing commissioners for the Parks will just assume those seats, however Michele

Miller has resigned her seat since she is moving to Anchorage so if you know of any interested parties have them come in for an application or go online.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER *(If one is present)*

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Ashmun reported on a conversation with Marie from the Land Trust and she spoke about the Symposium and was responsive to the connectivity and that she was concerned with what they were going to do with their three acres in the center of town.

Commissioner Archibald thought it was a good idea to review the Homer Non-Motorized Trails Plan and that they have completed the survey on the eastern side of park, and they look at the area to see where it would be a good area to run a trail alongside Fairview, staff noted that there is only a have easement but they could ask for easements.

Commissioner Lowney reported on the June 11th trail clearing at the Pratt along the creek; she questioned the status of beach signage; and she will confirm who the President of Little League actually is. She is looking forward to working on the Non-motorized Trail Plan and the grant program for trails, good meeting. She also commented on prescriptive trails and effort to involve local doctors can prescribe trails for their patients.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Steffy had a blast in April with a bunch of 4th graders, commented on the progress of SPARC, trails and doing it right the first time and he will try to put together a meeting with all interested parties under the guise of his other hat. He then reported on the North to South Corridor Trail that follows the oil pipeline and the Soldotna to Seldovia trail. Chair Steffy also offered information on UTAP which is assessments on trails.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Steffy adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m. The next **REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 2016** at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall Cowles Council Chambers 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

Renee Krause, CMC, Deputy City Clerk

Approved: _____