

Session 12-11 a Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was called to order on August 19, 2012 at 5:45 pm by Vice Chair Dave Brann at the Homer City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS BRANN, BELL, LOWNEY, BREMICKER

TELEPHONIC: COMMISSIONER ARCHIBALD

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER LILLIBRIDGE (EXCUSED)

STAFF: JULIE ENGBRETSSEN, GIS/PLANNING TECHNICIAN
MIKE ILLG, RECREATION SPECIALIST
CAREY MEYER, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
DEPUTY CITY CLERK RENEE KRAUSE

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Brann requested a motion to approve the agenda.

LOWNEY/BELL – SO MOVED.

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Beth Cumming, member of the Kachemak Drive Committee, commented on the request for funding to recommendation to the Transportation Advisory Committee. She hoped that the commission would vote in approval of the portion of the Kachemak Drive Pathway. She stated that she was uncertain if could be done and distributed some information and comments regarding the path.

RECONSIDERATION

There were no items for reconsideration.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES *(Minutes are approved during regular meetings only)*

A. Meeting Minutes for the Regular Meeting on July 16, 2012

Vice Chair Brann requested approval of the minutes.

LOWNEY/BELL – SO MOVED.

The minutes were approved as amended by consensus of the Commission.

VISITORS

A. Bryan Hawkins, Harbormaster Re: Port & Harbor Gangway Recommendation

The scheduled visitor was unable to attend the meeting.

STAFF & COUNCIL/COMMITTEE REPORTS/ AND BOROUGH REPORTS

A. Community Recreation – Mike Illg

Mr. Illg provided a verbal summary on the following:

- HERC Building work in progress
- Disc Golf Course has a kiosk for participants to sign in to quantify users
- He recommended they quantify the volunteer hours also
- A request to leave the park gate open in the winter
- Playground for Karen Hornaday Park was mentioned in the Washington Post
- He has nominated the City of Homer Recreation and Parks Maintenance as an outstanding organization and the Karen Hornaday Park.
- He strongly urged the commissioners to read the 2000 Public Survey as it contained some interesting information
- He is working on the website for parks and recreation at the suggestion of the commissioners
- He did create a City of Homer Facebook page for Parks & Recreation

B. Staff Report – Julie Engebretsen, Planning Technician/GIS

Ms. Engebretsen offered to answer any questions on her staff report and provided one update to the Mariner Park Driveway relocation. She suggested the commissioners schedule a Park Walk Through at this time.

The commissioners held a brief discussion on the best day and which parks they should visit. Ms. Engebretsen briefly outlined the purpose of the Walk Through and stated that there has been a lot of focus on Karen Hornaday and they may want to expend their energies on some of the other parks the city has or not. Some points discussed were:

- WKFL Master Plan
- Good time to visit the Spit is when a cruise ship is in to get a good perspective on the improvements needed.
The staff briefly described the Trail Project and responded to a question regarding commission input or recommendation, that this project is already designed for the most part since it is a completion of the Spit Trail. Commissioners advocated for information on the Trail Project so when asked questions by the populous they could answer those questions knowledgeably.
- Establish a separate cleanup day in October before snowfall for Karen Hornaday Park
- Commissioners can on their own and assist HoPP on their scheduled day in September
- Walk through area proposed for the Woodard Creek Trail and Fairview Trail
- Arrange to visit the Spit at the time of the cruise ship passengers are getting off
- Visit Jack Gist, Mud Bay Trail and the Spit
- Meet at 9:00 a.m.

It was agreed by consensus to meet at City Hall and carpool to Jack Gist, Mud Bay Trail and the Spit Parks on September 15, 2012 at 9:00 am

Chair Bremicker arrived at 6:15 p.m. Vice Chair Brann turned the gavel over to the Chair.

Ms. Engebretsen advised the Commission that she will be very busy with the gas line project and will not be able to produce much for the commission until after that is completed but that will be done shortly. She updated the Chair on the discussion for the Park Walk Through.

A brief discussion on attendance ensued with regards to the Annual Calendar. Commissioner Lowney will be gone all November and will not be able to call in; Commissioner Brann will be gone September 28-October 20, 2012 and November 12-30, 2012. He may be able to call in; Commissioner Archibald will be gone from October 17- December 4, 2012, he may be able to call in for the October and November

meetings. Chair Bremicker noted he may be gone for the October meeting as well but nothing concrete at this time.

Staff indicated that they will see in October if there will be a November meeting.

C. Parks Maintenance – Angie Otteson

There was no report for this meeting. Ms. Otteson was unable to attend.

D. Kachemak Drive Path Committee Report – Dave Brann

Commissioner Brann provided an update on the actions of the Committee. They did have a meeting and unanimously agreed to request funding for surveying for the first 1/3 mile of the proposed Kachemak Drive Pathway. They noted the comments provided as a lay-down from Kevin Walker. Commissioner Brann requested the discussion with DOT visitors in September include the proposed trail.

Ms. Engebretsen commented she was unsure their reason for requesting attendance at a meeting of the commission.

F. Karen Hornaday Park Committee – Robert Archibald

Commissioner Archibald provided a brief summary of the last meeting. Commissioner Lowney stated she attended the last meeting and added that the committee is very concerned regarding the direction and purpose of the committee and discussed reduction in meetings and possibly disbanding. The committee would like direction from the commission on what they should do from this point forward. The committee forwards recommendations to the commission which is forwarded to Administration or the Council and nothing is done. The committee expressed concern regarding the engineering not being completed yet for the many different issues. Commissioner Lowney commented on the Thank You signs posted by the Little League on the dugouts.

Commissioner Archibald commented on the frustration of the committee members in getting some action on the recommendations that have been forwarded.

PUBLIC HEARING

There were no items for public hearing.

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Karen Hornaday Park Updates

1. Projects – Carey Meyer

Carey Meyer, Public Works Director reported updates on various projects related to Parks and Recreation. He cited the following:

- Completed cleanup of remaining debris from the playground build
- Volunteers are repairing the drainage swale that was filled in to provide access during the playground build
- Remaining work needed to get rid of muddy area below the slide
- Invitation to Bid being advertised for removal of the Red Shed
- Still to complete parking lot improvements to the northern parking area and where the Red Shed was quotes are expected before Labor Day
- Improvements to the Day Use Area – no projects immediately planned at this time for the Day Use Area
- There is a window of opportunity to get surveying completed before snowfall
- Seven new projects on his schedule now
 - Pre-Bid meeting regarding relocating the Mariner Park Driveway looking at getting that awarded and completed after Labor Day.

- Removal and Installation of the Beluga Slough Trail for after Labor Day; Installation will start on September 10th of a new elevated trail. The sections can be stored in the PW yard and take the winter to decide on a use for the sections. It was noted that until the Kachemak Drive Trail is approved by Council the old sections cannot be repurposed for it.

Mr. Meyer reported on funding process for the rebuild of the Beluga Slough Trail.

Chair Bremicker inquired about the drainage issues in back of the back field. Commissioner Lowney reiterated that necessity to remove the alders from the fencing; old fencing that was never removed on the west end. Mr. Meyer was unaware and will look into that aspect. Commissioner Brann questioned the construction of a new picnic pavilion; college welding project creating fire rings for Karen Hornaday Park; Commissioner Lowney brought up the possibility of creating an area for a bonfire or fire pit; Chair Bremicker asked about making the access road a road and the area where Lake Hornaday was is still a low area and still needs more attention.

Commissioner Lowney acknowledged that the commissioners agreed at the last meeting to wait until the engineering was completed before any decisions were implemented in that area.

Mr. Meyer he stated that the conditions of the lower areas are too changeable and therefore the focus should remain in the upper northern areas. So the road thing is not a Phase One work effort in his mind but the fire pit or the covered picnic area there is still a budget for something but he opined the commissioners should stay focused on the removal of the red shed, parking improvements and stay up in the upper area as much as possible.

Commissioner Lowney stated she could not visualize where a fire pit could be in that area and possible changes in elevations so they should wait for the engineering to be completed.

Discussion ensued on whether the funding request of \$10-20 thousand would be enough for surveying and engineering on the proposed Kachemak Drive Trail. Mr. Meyer felt the higher number would be adequate. He briefly described the process that would be used for this type of project. The discussion included the use of volunteer labor.

Mr. Illg promoted the idea of the camp host project for Karen Hornaday Park for funding considerations.

Commissioner Bell inquired about the method used for removal of the Red Shed and the cost to do so. Mr. Meyer responded that they may get offers on no cost and it will be the decision of Council on who to award the contract.

Commissioner Lowney stated that Ms. Koester has stated the \$50,000 for engineering was not adequate and seems to be the holdup with getting the engineering done and is the basis of the frustration of the committee and the commission in moving forward. She further stated that this directly impacts the day use area and spending the funds for that area. How would Mr. Meyer address that issue?

Mr. Meyer responded that he has provided some general cost estimates and they divided up the individual projects and they would need to get started at least \$150-160,000 for a 35% conceptual drawing. This \$50,000 amount would provide a basic survey, ground profiles. His understanding was the \$50,000 was to focus on the road into the park. He agreed that removing aspects of the projects would allow them to expend in other areas. Overall they have a \$5 million dollar master plan that they only have \$300 thousand, while a considerable amount of money it is just a fraction of what is needed. Much of the current funding has not been expended.

Ms. Engebretsen brought forward the idea of considering goals for next year projects using some of the engineering money to configure design and location of a fire pit and picnic shelter; how could volunteer efforts and commissioners work with public works and what can they do; how can they get ready for it this fall and winter in preparation to start in the spring? Mr. Meyer stated that there was \$50,000 for engineering; \$90,000 for day use improvements and \$55,000 for parking improvements. He indicated

that he was unsure what they could get for that amount of money. Mr. Meyer just reiterated that they needed to use the money they have now before getting any more. Staff inquired what can be completed for \$90,000 in response to Mr. Meyer statement that they cannot get everything they want for the day use area. He did not provide an answer.

It was determined that the Park Committee could work on that prioritization of uses and or design of the Day Use Area to be submitted to the Commission for approval and forwarding to Public Works in January or February. It was noted that the commission may not have a meeting in November and there is no meeting scheduled for December unless that is changed. Ms. Engebretsen will create new maps that will delineate the new areas for the committee to reference.

The packet deadline for the commission meeting in January is the 9th and the recommendation on the Day Use Area needs to be to the Clerk before that date. The commission meeting is January 17, 2013 and the Council meeting is January 28, 2013 so this would be timely.

Clarification on the task set for the committee was made for Commissioner Archibald and Commissioner Lowney will notify the members of HoPP.

Mr. Meyer updated the commissioners on the following:

- Signage posts for Jack Gist Park installed
 - o Before signage is installed need to check sign code
- Capital Budget Request for Jack Gist Park
 - o Expanded Parking Improvements
 - o Spectator Seating
- Remind Council regarding the importance of Parks & Recreation to the Community
 - o Currently not expressed in the budget
 - o Request money for Depreciation Reserves
- Additional Trails and Restroom Facilities

Commissioner Lowney pointed out some drainage issues with Jack Gist and logistical issues with installation of seating.

Clarification on the dates for cleanup and new construction on Beluga Slough was provided for Commissioner Brann. Mr. Meyer provided a few additional details. Mr. Brann stated he could be available September 4-5, 2012 and then again the following week after the 10th. Commissioner Archibald agreed to assist with the removal of the old trail since he will be back on the 5th.

Chair Bremicker called for a five minutes recess at 7:25 p.m. The meeting was called back to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. Grant Budget

There was no discussion on this topic. The commissioners agreed by consensus that it was adequately covered in previous topic.

3. Jack Wiles Day Use Proposal

Ms. Engebretsen stated that these items were covered earlier and the commission did not need to cover them again. It was noted that further discussion may be needed on the design proposals submitted by Jack Wiles. This was not included in the discussion with Mr. Meyer to be addressed at the committee level.

Ms. Engebretsen will check with Mr. Meyer regarding the proposals on the parking area. She noted that the necessity of a recommendation from the commission is not required. Chair Bremicker inquired if there was a need to discuss the proposals.

Commissioner Lowney commented on the proposed changes being above the grade change.

4. Fall Cleanup Day

This topic was previously discussed during the staff report. A date will be established next month for the October Fall Clean-up Day at Karen Hornaday Park.

B. Parks & Recreation Department

Chair Bremicker introduced the item for discussion.

Mr. Illg stated that the concept of a Parks and Rec Department is not necessarily going to cost a huge amount but to use or designate the HERC building for the use of the PR Department. He stated that he did see the need for one more additional staff member as the work load would be more than one person can handle. Mr. Illg noted the following that will be beneficial in creating a PR Department:

- Prioritizing Services – Creating a structural hierarchy
- Improved Communications – Waiting for Public Works to get things done
- Quality of Life and Prevention Issues
- Standardization -
 - Currently according to population numbers, Homer ranks 11th; all have Parks & Recreation departments; Dillingham is currently working on creating theirs right now.
 - Need to have the members of the community speak to the issues

Mr. Illg responded that he would like to see this for the 2013 Budget period; there may be other things that do come before it such as city support of using the HERC Building for the PR Department/Community Recreation. He agreed with combining outreach, customer service, parks & trails maintenance, campgrounds, under a Parks & Rec Department. He further advocated that tourism needs to be considered in the budgeting requirements. He has received support from both Carey Meyer and the City Manager in support of a Parks & Rec Department. Creating this department would be a significant government institution and would be beneficial to the community. He reported that a ½ time person would be needed to start and he has been in talks with the City Manager regarding his job description.

Commissioner Bell questioned what currently is under the purview of this commission that he is not involved with that would change if a Parks & Rec department is created?

Mr. Illg responded that Community Recreation is currently an Ad-hoc advisory, his field is recreation programming; this is more of a goal to streamline the decision process and communication regarding the trails and parks; he provided an example that someone posted a sign that said no dogs at Karen Hornaday which did not follow the city processes. Discussion on a proposed recommendation or support of a department and the requirements to share the information and what would be needed to get this accomplished. Commissioners requested Mr. Illg to do some outreach to the public to have support expressed to Council. They also discussed the benefits to the Public Works aspects of the issues. It was noted that Council's first question will be on the cost of creating a department. The creation of a department is separate from the HERC building, but the use of the HERC building for a department would be a beneficial use of an existing structure.

Chair Bremicker inquired what was needed from the Commission as a whole for this issue.

Commissioner Lowney commented on the data that has been collected but questioned where the commission goes from here.

Commissioner Archibald inquired how the commission should get the word out since that is usually the downfall with informing the community. The comment always heard is I did not know...

Mr. Illg responded the advocacy and promotion of recreation and parks. He has even been approached to writing a column in one of the local papers.

Commissioner Archibald further commented that he believes this will be critical and that maybe they should advocate for a bigger budget for advertising.

Further comments on using alternative methods for getting the word out continued. Chair Bremicker recommended waiting for the next meeting. Commissioner Brann would like to see an organizational chart on how the department would be formed; Commissioner Lowney asked about the status of their recommendation to establish a Parks and Recreation Department.

Ms. Engebretsen outlined the process and advised that they probably would not see a Parks & Rec Department from Council. She reiterated the line that staff must maintain regarding advocacy of a department.

Mr. Illg will work on an organizational chart for the next meeting.

Commissioner Lowney inquired about the process regarding the needs assessment and the information received from MAPP.

Ms. Engebretsen suggested that they asked to be scheduled for a presentation to Council using the information they have; Ms. Krause offered to put the information into a PowerPoint with the stats. Mr. Illg could provide the Council with a report and update. The Commission has the ability to report on the Council's agenda. Further discussion on advocating before Council and as a private citizen and resident or as a Commissioner and Council understanding that fact; additional latitude is given by Council.

It was additionally noted that the Commission could request recreation be included under the Commission's purview.

C. P&R Needs Assessment – Discussion and Update on Progress

This was included in the prior topic. No further discussion on the item.

D. HERC Building Discussion

This was included in the prior topic. No additional discussion was held.

E. Signage – Jack Gist Park Design

Commissioner Lowney received this design from the Park Association and shared that they are not really happy with it; Ms. Krause expressed the interest from the Public Arts Committee working with the Parks & Recreation Commissioners on designing signage for that park and all parks and recreation areas in general.

Vice Chair Brann offered agreement in uniform signage and that there are standards for Parks and Recreational areas that they could take advantage of for this project.

Chair Bremicker was in favor of letting Public Arts Committee take the lead in this project since they were able to get the funding.

Mr. Krause explained how the Committee has received funding for their projects. She noted that the PAC could submit a request for a signage budget. She further explained that the committee meets quarterly.

Ms. Engebretsen recommended scheduling a meeting after the budget process. Ms. Krause explained she will notify the Chair of the results from this meeting and they may schedule a Special meeting to discuss budget requests.

Commissioner Archibald requested the Jack Gist Association involved in the sign design.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and Recommendation on Proposed Use of Gangway for Woodard Creek

Ms. Engebretsen recommended postponing the discussion on this since Mr. Hawkins was unable to attend the meeting regarding its proposed use for a bridge over Woodard Creek; or even Kachemak Drive. The Parks and Recreation would be buying it from the Port and Harbor.

B. Funding Request for Kachemak Drive Pathway

Chair Bremicker read the item into record and asked if Staff would further elaborate on the request.

Ms. Engebretsen explained that the Committee has requested the

BELL/LOWNEY - MOVED THAT THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDS CITY COUNCIL APPROVE AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING UP TO \$20,000 OF HART TRAIL FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SURVEYING THE WESTERN MOST PORTION OF THE KACHEMAK DRIVE TRAIL CURRENTLY KNOWN AS THE MUD BAY TRAIL.

Discussion ensued on the purpose of appropriating the funds to get the surveying started for a bike trail also up to the long term parking to avoid going up that hill by the road which is the most dangerous part of the road. It will also identify where the city property boundary is actually. Staff will revise the request and flesh out the details of the request.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

A. Strategic Plan 2012

There was a brief discussion on a new trail pamphlet. The request for a budget is approved then in January the commission can work on it. If there is no money then there is no reason to discuss the issue. The website is a totally different issue. Clarification was provided on defining the brochure and updating and getting updates for the existing brochure is not too big an issue but designing another brochure that would be more detailed and enlarged then that is another story. Sponsorship would be beneficial to cut costs.

B. Commission Annual Calendar 2012

Commissioner Lowney would like to put the trail map on the Annual Calendar document and if it does not get funded then they can take it off; she would also like to add the Town Center item too and if they have to postpone it then they can but she would like to see items from the Strategic Plan inserted into this Calendar.

Chair Bremicker commented that the Town Center was a big issue and would take more than one meeting and should also involve other interested parties.

Ms. Engebretsen explained that the Annual Calendar reflects the items that the Commission works on at the same time year after year. She addresses those items in her staff report at each meeting.

Commissioner Lowney commented on getting before Council regarding the budget issues; she also noted that they never really addressed the Fall Clean Up Day at Karen Hornaday Park and she further noted that only some things were donated by SBS and that there will still be a bill from them. She still needs to meet up with Jess.

Staff noted that this could be addressed at the September meeting.

There was an explanation from Commissioner Archibald on the reason for the Cleanup Day. Commissioner Bell will be attending the next council meeting.

C. 2012 Commissioner Attendance at Council Meetings

D. Memorandum to City Manager Re: Budget Requests for 2013 Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission

E. Memorandum to City Manager Re: Disposition of Red Shed in Karen Hornaday Park

F. Memorandum to Mayor and Council through Katie Koester, CEDC Re: CIP 2013 Recommendations

G. Memorandum to Transportation Advisory Committee Re: Kachemak Drive Pathway

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

There were no audience comments.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Mike thanked everyone and acknowledged Julie and Renee's hard work.

Julie reminded the Commission about the Open House and that Renee did a wonderful job organizing the event and that she hoped they would stop in and take a look around. She stated that they should take advantage of visiting the Manager's digs.

Renee stated that the scouts will be performing a Flag ceremony, Ukulele Players and Brownie Troop 564 will assist with serving the food; plus they can get a free magnet with all the department phone numbers.

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

There was no councilmember present.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Bremicker thanked staff and the commission is behind getting the Parks Department that it will be a good thing for this city.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Lowney commented it was a good, productive meeting; great having Carey here and providing all the information; Robert great to have you on the phone; thanked Julie and Renee for all your hard work.

Commissioner Bell thanked Robert and Mike this is a big project and if he can help in any way to let him know.

Commissioner Brann thanked staff for their hard work; he will be looking for volunteers after the holiday to help take apart that trail. Good job everybody! Great meeting.

Commissioner Archibald offered to help Dave and it was a good meeting. Thanked everyone for putting up with him and see you in person next time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission Chair Bremicker adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for September 20, 2012 at 5:30 pm at City Hall Cowles Council Chambers 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

Renee Krause, CMC, Deputy City Clerk I

Approved:_____