

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 2, 2015

Session 15-06 a Special Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was called to order on April 2, 2015 at 5:35 pm by Chair Matt Steffy at the Cowles Council Chambers City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS LOWNEY, MACCAMPBELL, STEFFY, ARCHIBALD, BRANN,
ROEDL AND LILLIBRIDGE

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

Commissioner Lillibridge arrived at 7:24 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Steffy requested a motion to approve the agenda.

MACCAMPBELL/LOWNEY - MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA

There was no discussion.

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Chair Steffy invited the public to comment and requested them to please sign in they will have 3 minutes.

Nolan Buntins, non-resident, President, Homer Youth Birding Group, another group of Homer High School Students, commented on the importance of the habitat to the birds, advocated for the closure of the beach in front of Beluga Slough to motorized vehicles and that all dogs remain on leash. He further stated that all recommendations should be for and inconsideration of Beluga Slough. This will better protect the Slough for the future.

Louise Ashmun, commented on waiting to submit written comment since she was a new resident; personally would advocate for no vehicles on the beaches but in deference to the overall general public she recommended that the commission use strong ordinance language for no vehicles in area 7, seasonal closures, dogs on leash, increased enforcement and improved signage and removal of old signage. Ms. Ashmun recommended the Commission follow the recommendations of Jack Wiles. She did not make any specific recommendations regarding the other issues of great concern.

Lani Raymond, city resident, commented on "ifs" - regarding vehicles in Area 7 on the beach. If the commission is to implement seasonal closures in the winter they should consider the impact of climate change since the berm would not be frozen to any suitable depth to offer protection needed from vehicles driving upon them; and, this may not be a long term solution but if they allow seasonal driving then they must ban all motorized traffic from the berms. The second if, if they are going to close area 7 to vehicular traffic all year long with some access through a permit system and one of the goals is to restore the outer berms to better protect the slough and upper wetlands from storm surges and sea level rising in the future be careful that your final plan does not result in damage and degradation to the berm area and defeat this goal. For example under a permit system allowing vehicle use in the winter on the beach there should be an iron clad restriction to prohibit any type of vehicle use on the berm. There would need to be an ordinance specifically identifying the berm as off limits with a physical barrier and the support for enforcement provided.

Beverly Macy, city resident, commented on developing a volunteer program to enforce rules on the beach relating to similar actions conducted as a resident of Hope, Alaska for Fire Restrictions/Enforcement. She described how the residents were given the authority, vests and hard hats and how the program worked. Ms. Macy commented on the enormity of dog feces on the Beluga Slough beach area.

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 2, 2015

Andy Haas, city resident, civil defense lawyer, commented on the rampant drug usage destroying the community and should be a number one priority of the commission. He believed that the number one deterrent would be prohibiting vehicles on the beach. He stated that if the only prohibition to result was dogs on leashes that would be a crime.

VISITORS

There were no visitors scheduled.

RECONSIDERATION

There were no items for reconsideration.

ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes for the regular meeting of March 19, 2015

Chair Steffy requested any comments, questions or corrections regarding the items on the consent agenda. Hearing none he requested a motion for adoption of the consent agenda.

BRANN/LOWNEY - MOVED TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA.

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

Ms. Engebretsen reported on the following:

- The telephone survey has been completed and she hopes to have a full report at the regular meeting April 16th
- the survey results are on the city website and included in the packet under informational materials
- she encouraged the commission to wrap up the discussion about Bishop's Beach area and Area 8A/B in the next two meetings as she would really like to invite the old town neighborhood and land owners affected by recommendations in area 8 before the tourist season is upon us and before any public hearings.

Ms. Engebretsen then reviewed the recommendations made to date:

1. City of Homer to purchase 500 Doggie Bag Dispensers
 2. City to place Stationary dog waste dispensers at public buildings, trails and parks and encourage other agencies and businesses to do the same
 3. City to partner with other organizations to provide education and materials on responsible pet ownership.
 4. Following areas to be designated as Leashed Only Areas: Area 2, Area 5, within Mariner Park, within Bishop's Beach Park, and Area 7
 5. Moved to change Area 8 to Area 8A Beach Access west to Crittenden and Area 8B will be Crittenden West
- Install 3 fire pits on city owned parcels Bishops Beach Park, near the end of Main Street & Ohlson Lane and at the end of Crittenden
 - Consider 3 options for closing the beach to vehicles
 - a. No vehicles Bishop's Beach to the Slough mouth
 - b. No vehicles between Bishop's Beach and Mariner Park April 1st - September 30th
 - c. No vehicles east of Bishop's Beach to the end of the spit April 1st - September 30th
 - Place a Permanent, Natural materials Barrier to keep vehicles out of the area between Bishop's Beach and the mouth of the slough

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 2, 2015

- Add Bishop's Beach and Beluga Slough to the existing Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN)
- Hire two seasonal beach patrol employees
- Draft and Ordinance to define and ban reckless driving as it would apply to all of City of Homer beaches
- Improve Signage

The following has been postponed: Place a natural barrier to the right from beach access to deter vehicles traffic from crossing private property and extend to medium tide line

Other recommendations or solutions:

- Increase dog waste education
- Additional Trash receptacles at Crittenden and Main Street/Ohlson locations
- Community outreach and education on beach rules
- Education on beach resources
- Delineate private property in the Bishop's Beach Access area
- Placement of rocks to prevent or mark where vehicles should drive east of Bishop's Beach
- placement of a Park Host, Chief Robl stated that this person would also be required to testify in court on beach enforcement issues.

PUBLIC HEARING

There were no items scheduled for this meeting.

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Land Allocation Plan 2015 Recommendations

Chair Steffy read the title into the record. He asked Commissioner Lowney to start with her recommendations.

LOWNEY/ BRANN - MOVED TO MAKE LOTS 9A & 10A Page A-2 DEDICATED PARKING FOR BUSINESS AND PUBLIC ON THE SPIT.

There was a brief discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

LOWNEY/BRANN - MOVED TO SUBMIT A REQUEST TO COUNCIL FOR \$5000 TO DEVELOP A PUBLIC ACCESS/PEDESTRIAN TRAIL (PAGE C-6) TO THE BEACH AND PLACEMENT OF A FIRE PIT AND REFUSE CONTAINER.

Commissioner Lowney provided her reasons for requesting funds to develop the parcel. Further discussion on the public using the private access and needing additional time to study this proposal since the location is extremely steep and would need a staircase. Plus there may be grants to use with this type of project and the difficulty in maintaining refuse can on the beach, parking is already limited in the Old Town area. Staff recommended that the Commission submit a recommendation that Council designates this parcel as a park and then they can discuss the recommendation to budget funding at a later meeting.

The commission agreed by consensus to postponed this recommendation until the June 18, 2015.

LOWNEY/ROEDL - MOVED TO RECOMMEND LOT PAGE 75 (C6) AND PAGE 78 (C9) BE DESIGNATED AS PARK LAND.

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 2, 2015

Discussion on the retention of the property off of Ocean Drive Loop and the previous request to designate as open space view shed or green space, concerns expressed regarding safety. Staff also recommended they address the details at a different meeting. The property is not appraisable and it is difficult sell land that is basically not usable. There are costs related to the property in the form of assessments.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

LOWNEY/MACCAMPBELL - MOVED TO SUBMIT A RECOMMENDATION TO THE PORT & HARBOR THAT THEY DESIGNATE THE PARKING AREA (D21) AS SHORT TERM PARKING INSTEAD OF 7 DAY PARKING.

Discussion ensued on submitting this recommendation to the Port & Harbor Commission to make the changes to the parking from long term to short term since the issue of parking is so prevalent on the spit.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

LOWNEY/BRANN - MOVED TO DESIGNATE THE MOST SOUTHEASTERLY LOT OF THE DEVELOPMENT BE DESIGNATED AS A PARK AND THAT THE CITY WORK ON ESTABLISHING A TRAIL EASEMENT THROUGH THE UNDEVELOPED ADJOINING LOT OFF OF SITKA ROSE CIRCLE FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE TO WEST HOMER ELEMENTARY FROM WEST HILL.

There was a brief discussion on an easement and there are plans for the construction of a house there this summer and staff is doubtful that the owner will grant an easement. Staff explained that it is likely that this land will be re-platted as it does not fall within established subdivision guidelines. It is too early in the process since there will likely be several changes to this property. Commissioner MacCampbell wanted to urge that whenever large neighborhoods like this are being considered that greenbelts or greenspace be maintained at an optimum.

Commissioner Lowney withdrew her motion.

LOWNEY/BRANN - MOVED TO DESIGNATE MARINER PARK (E24) AS A PARK.

There was a brief discussion regarding determination of ownership and staff confirmed that the city owns the property however a title search was not done.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

There was a brief discussion on the current clearing underway on the property behind the Cleaners off of Main Street. Staff was unaware of the work being done on FAA property. They explained the efforts to clear out the Poopdeck Trail and surrounding land.

Commissioner Lowney also mentioned the clearing and trails at Mullikin and Along Fairview Ave at Karen Hornaday Park.

MACCAMPBELL/BRANN - MOVED TO DESIGNATE THE CONTIGUOUS LOTS (C10) SOUTHEAST OF MARINER PARK AS PARK LAND.

There was a brief discussion on the recommendation.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the changes to the land at the corner of Homer Spit Road and Freightdock Road regarding the placement of new restrooms and a sculpture of a large fish hook.

The next discussion was entertained on the area next to the Chip Pad on A4 would be a great place for the Barge Haul out Area. No recommendation was made.

There was a brief discussion on designating the additional land to Woodard Park. No recommendation at this time.

There were no further recommendations from the commission.

B. Parks, Recreation and Trail Symposium - Homer...On the Move!

Commissioner Lowney provided the commission with the progress of the steering committee on the organization and planning of the first symposium. Commissioner Lowney provided the following:

- Currently they have the following organizations confirmed
 - State Parks, City of Homer, ReCreate Rec, Cook Inletkeeper, Coastal Studies, Walkability Group, Homer Area Trails and the Woodard Creek Coalition
 - There was interest from Howl, Bicycle Club, Running Club, and Ski Club but haven't received confirmation
 - It has been advertised on Facebook, Please Share it!
 - They need to discuss advertising on the radio or paper

Commissioner MacCampbell asked about the time to set up on the 18th. Commissioner Lowney stated that there is not much to set up so she figured if people could be there about 10:30, the event starts at noon.

Commissioner Archibald agreed that they needed to advertise and inquired about the cost. Staff advised that it may be approximately \$350 for two business card sized advertisements. Chair Steffy inquired from Mr. Armstrong about advertising the Homer News and he advised them of the alternative means to advertise the event that are free but to contact the Newspaper for Advertising.

Commissioner Lowney will draft the ad and meet with staff next week to finalize. Staff will provide her with the contact information for the radio station.

Commissioner Lowney appreciated the positive reaction from the groups that are participating in this event and it has the potential to be very beneficial.

ARCHIBALD/ROEDL - MOVED TO ALLOCATE UP TO \$600 FROM THE PARKS AND RECREATION FUND TO PROMOTE THE PARKS AND TRAIL SYMPOSIUM.

There was a discussion on advertising venues, distributing flyers, and providing light refreshments.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 2, 2015

Chair Steffy called for a 5 minute recess at 6:45 p.m. The meeting was called back to order at 7:53 p.m.

C. Dogs, Birds and Habitat Oh My!

1. Recommendations to Protect Birds and Habitat

Chair Steffy read the title into the record and opened the floor for discussion. It was noted that this was to finish the discussion on Birds and Habitat and for the commissioners to recommend any additional changes. He reviewed the previous recommendations made by the commission.

ARCHIBALD/BRANN - MOVED TO DESIGNATE THE UPPER VEGETATED BERM AREA IN AREA 7 AS DOGS ON LEASH ONLY.

Commissioner MacCampbell offered a friendly amendment to include All Domesticated animals. There was a brief discussion that all animals should be banned from that area used as habitat for wildlife including but not limited to dogs, cats and horses. The amendment was accepted.

ARCHIBALD/BRANN - MOVED TO PROHIBIT DOMESTICATED ANIMALS IN THE VEGETATED BERM AREA IN AREA 7.

There was brief discussion on the reason for no animals in that area.

VOTE.YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Lowney requested clarification for dogs on leash in parking areas. Chair Steffy stated that they have made a motion regarding that and noted the page in the packet for reference.

Chair Steffy asked for additional motions regarding dogs and habitat.

ROBERT/LOWNEY - MOVED TO DESIGNATE AREA 8A, BISHOP'S BEACH ACCESS WEST TO CRITTENDEN ACCESS, AS DOGS ON LEASH ONLY.

Discussion ensued on the issue of most congested and used and that beach actually being private property above the tide line and if dogs are there off leash in the sandy berm then it is more of an issue of trespass. It was noted that this could be part of the education process.

LOWNEY/BRANN - MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO READ DOGS OFF LEASH ONLY WEST OF CRITTENDEN AND BELOW MEAN HIGH TIDE LINE.

Discussion on there being no jurisdiction on private property. The city owns below mean high tide and the commission is giving owner's permission to run their dogs west of Crittenden and below mean high tide. Clarification on the established rule of dogs under voice control was offered.

VOTE. (Amendment) YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

ROBERT/ROEDL - MOVED TO DESIGNATE AREA 6 AS DOGS ON LEASH ONLY DURING THE SEASONAL MIGRATION AND NESTING PERIOD ANNUALLY, NORMALLY MARCH - OCTOBER.

Discussion centered delineating the area without including all the area from Crittenden West to Mariner Park. Discussion covered splitting Area 4 in two parts. Staff recommended making it Area 4 -Rip Rap South, towards to end of the Spit, an off leash area and Rip Rap West would be on leash.

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 2, 2015

LOWNEY/ - MOVED TO MAKE AREA 4 FROM THE RIP RAP SOUTH TO THE END OF THE SPIT OFF LEASH AND RIP RAP NORTH AS ON LEASH.

Chair Steffy voiced recommendation that dogs are on leash in Mariner Park. There was a determination that there was confusion on establishing leashed and no leashed areas in Area 6 and 4.

Commissioner Lowney decided to withdraw her motion.

Staff recommended making motions specific to the area. If they present a combined recommendation to Council and they do not approve it then they lose all but if it is by specific area then Council may approve the recommendation for one area but not the other.

The Commission agreed with the staff recommendation.

Chair Steffy read the motion made by Commissioner Archibald currently on the floor.

Commissioner MacCampbell stated that he would support the option if it was seasonal during the migration and nesting seasons as it is the only area that is not used much by pedestrians or dog owners. Further comments noting that the area is not heavily used and could support off leash use. Commissioner Archibald agreed to amend his motion to reflect the seasonal closure. Commissioner Roedl questioned the early March closure since birds usually arrive in April. It was noted that the seasonal closure was established by Mr. Matz. Commissioner Lowney called for the vote. Commissioner Roedl accepted the amendment.

Ms. Krause read the amended motion into the record.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

LOWNEY/ROEDL - MOVED TO DESIGNATE AREA 4, MOUTH OF THE MARINER PARK LAGOON TO THE CITY OF HOMER CAMPGROUND AT THE FISHING HOLE, AS DOGS ON LEASH ANNUALLY.

Discussion on the area being recommended as on leash only ensued. They discussed redrawing area section lines and the purpose is to control dogs in the more congested areas. There was a preference to keep or have more control while in parking areas and parks and if they have it different in all areas it will be hard to control or follow.

Staff recommended not changing the lines of areas since there are other items that still need to be addressed. It was also noted that Mariner Park cover this area and is dogs on leash.

Commissioner Lowney withdrew her motion at this time.

Commissioner Lowney explained that it addresses habitat but wanted to discuss access and fire pit installation at Crittenden. It was noted that there was a public access installed at least a year ago. They received permission and agreement with the property owner and everything was a done deal.

Chair Steffy asked for additional recommendations.

LOWNEY/BRANN - MOVED TO RECOMMEND CREATION OF A PUBLIC ACCESS TRAIL TO THE BEACH FROM OHLSON LANE AND ANCILLARY PARKING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Lillibridge arrived at 7:36 p.m.

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 2, 2015

Commissioner Archibald requested reading of the motions passed so far this meeting. Staff read the motions made and passed. There were four.

LOWNEY/LILLIBRIDGE - MOVED TO LIMIT MOTORIZED TRAFFIC BY PERMIT ONLY IN AREA 8 and 8A

Discussion on the use of this prohibition to deter drug dealing, private property rights, that this action would be punishing the majority if the good users, but by permit would allow those users that require the access, enacting this recommendation would add to the parking problem at the beach already and where will those additional people park.

Additional comments against total closure from the majority of the commission were offered and that they need more enforcement down there and if they had to take it to a vote of the community it would not pass.

Commissioner Lowney advocated that they consider the science of what they are doing, and the fact that they may be challenged but they need to make that recommendation. They can designate areas for parking and if it is full then there are other areas to park and view the water, she gets that Bishops Beach is convenient. She questioned whether they still need to drive on the beach and that with more and more people coming to the area they need to be aware of the issues driving on the beach causes.

VOTE. YES. LOWNEY, LILLIBRIDGE.

VOTE. NO. MACCAMPBELL, STEFFY, ARCHIBALD, BRANN, ROEDL

Motion failed.

STEFFY/BRANN - MOVED TO POSTPONE ITEMS D AND E AT THE APRIL 16TH MEETING.

Staff explained that as long as the discussion is wrapped up at the April 16th meeting they will have an extra week between that meeting and the May 4th Special meeting that they can invite the Old Town property owners to comment on the recommendations. Staff also noted that the same packet materials will be used for the postponed items.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

D. Map Depicting the Existing Zones and Proposed Zones

1. Recommendations to Define a Pedestrian Only Zone
2. Recommendations regarding Motorized and Non-Motorized Traffic Zones
3. Recommendation to Establish a Limited Permitting System
4. Recommendation to Designate a New Zone
 - a. Boundaries
 - b. Allowable Activities

E. Placement of a Barrier at Bishop's Beach Access

A Motion postponed from the February 19, 2015 regular meeting to place a barrier to prohibit vehicles from turning immediately right upon the beach to deter crossing private property and extend said barrier to medium tide line.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no new business items on the agenda.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Commission Annual Calendar 2015
- B. Commissioner Attendance at City Council Meetings 2015
- C. Needs Assessment Survey Results
- D. Safe Kids Fair - Vendor Application

Chair Steffy read through the informational items.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

There were no comments from the audience.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Ms. Engebretsen commented that they did a great job on the coffee table yesterday and they will keep plugging along.

Ms. Krause commented had no comments.

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

There were no council members present.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Lillibridge apologized for being late, she was working with patients. She really likes the process, and believes that they are meeting enough along with the history; she will make an effort to catch up this week. It was a good meeting.

Commissioner Roedl will be missing the next meeting and agrees that they have gotten a lot done but still have a lot to do, he knows he will be missing out on something so please don't hesitate to talk to him to catch him up.

Commissioner Brann will be here for the next meeting but will be gone after that, he agreed that they got a lot done but wanted to caution the commissioners not to get mired down in the details as they move forward so that they don't lose the general public or get lost themselves in discussion. Specific rules are required for some things but they do not need to micromanage everything. Good radio discussion yesterday. Good work guys.

Commissioner Archibald was not sure that they covered the discussion on the dogs on or off leash from the Rip Rap south. He is sorry to have lead them astray talking about two things at once.

Commissioner MacCampbell thanked everyone he may not be here also on the 16th but if he can call in that is permissible as long as there is a quorum present also.

Commissioner Lowney good meeting they did cover a lot but she was also hoping that they make good decisions based on facts and try to keep emotion out of the equation. She will be working on the flyers for the symposium and would appreciate everyone approaching the other organizations to participate.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Steffy appreciated the lively back and forth; he confirmed that they did resolve the motion on Area 4 by Commissioner Lowney withdrawing her motion for Commissioner Archibald. He commented on the hiring Jeff Scarsi as the new schoolyard Habitat Coordinator who will start in May. They extended the grant for additional year. He requested status update in the donation of the equipment. He confirmed the date of the symposium for April 18th and he thanked the press for being in attendance and getting the word out to the public.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Steffy adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m. The next **SPECIAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2015** at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall Cowles Council Chambers 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

Renee Krause, CMC, Deputy City Clerk I

Approved: _____