



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Clerk

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Memorandum

TO: PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
FROM: RENEE KRAUSE, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK
DATE: MAY 15, 2015
SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED

RECOMMENDATION:

Informational in Nature. No Action Required.

May 20, 2015

City of Homer
Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
2015 Review of Beach Policy

email rkrause@ci.homer.ak.us or fax 907-235-3143, by 4 pm the day of the meeting.

Dear Advisory Commission Members;

I would like to comment on the 2015 review of the City of Homer's Beach Policy. I am a land owner in the Old Town/ Bishop's Beach area, a beach front land owner, and my family and I use the beach in this and other areas within city limits extensively. I appreciate the time and effort the Advisory Commission has put into this review. I do not, however, agree with most of your recommendations. I believe the existing 2007 Policy is adequate, and if its recommendations were actually implemented we would not need to change much else.

- **Install fire pits** at these three locations: Bishop's Beach Park, City parcel near the end of Main Street/Ohlson Lane, and at the end of Crittenden, and make trash cans available.

This is a hastily concluded and poorly conceived proposal. This city lot is approximately 50 feet wide at the bottom of Main Street. The only legal access is from Ohlson Ln. and the bank there is easily eroded. How does the city plan on providing access to fire pits? How does the city plan on keeping people who are making fires on city property and not on adjacent private property? The only way to get to this lot from the beach on anything other than a lower low tide is across private property. Is the city going to provide signage and enforcement to keep people from either using private property to get down the berm or unknowingly crossing private property? If the city wishes to develop park lands it needs to do so with much more careful planning and involvement than placing fire pits in a small area where neighboring property will be adversely affected.

- **Hire** two seasonal beach patrol employees

The city has many recreation needs. Hiring two seasonal patrol employees is not a priority use of recreation funds. Most of the complaints on Bishop's Beach are about criminal or reckless activities. Enforcement is a role for police officers, not a seasonal beach patrol. I can think of a dozen better uses for new or existing city employees who are not police officers than patrolling a beach.

- Draft an ordinance to **define and ban reckless driving** as it would be applied to all of City of Homer beaches

This I support.

- **Improve signage** at Bishop's Beach.

This is a 2007 Beach Policy recommendation, and I support it.

- Create areas where **dogs must be on leashes**. See map [here](#)

I will limit my comments on leashes to area 7 and 8A by Bishop's Beach parking lot. Again, most of what users consider the city beach in 8A is actually private property. Dogs like grass, and most of the vegetation along that strip of beach is private property. Is the city going to enforce leash rules on private property? I would support a leash rule in the city parking lot and on city land if there are issues that need to be addressed. I would support leashes for area 7. I would support efforts to inform dog owners about where their dogs are roaming and encourage them to clean up after their dogs.

- **Close all beaches to vehicles in summer**, and **allow winter use** along a portion of the west part of the Spit. (Land owners of beach front property and their guests are exempt). See map [here](#)

I do not support this. I support citing reckless and dangerous activities on the beaches as we should on frozen lakes and elsewhere where pedestrians are recreating. I support enforcing speed limits on Main St and Bunnell Ave leading to the parking lot at Bishop's Beach.

The beach provides access to private property. The beach provides access to coal for residents. The beach provides access to recreational opportunities to responsible drivers.

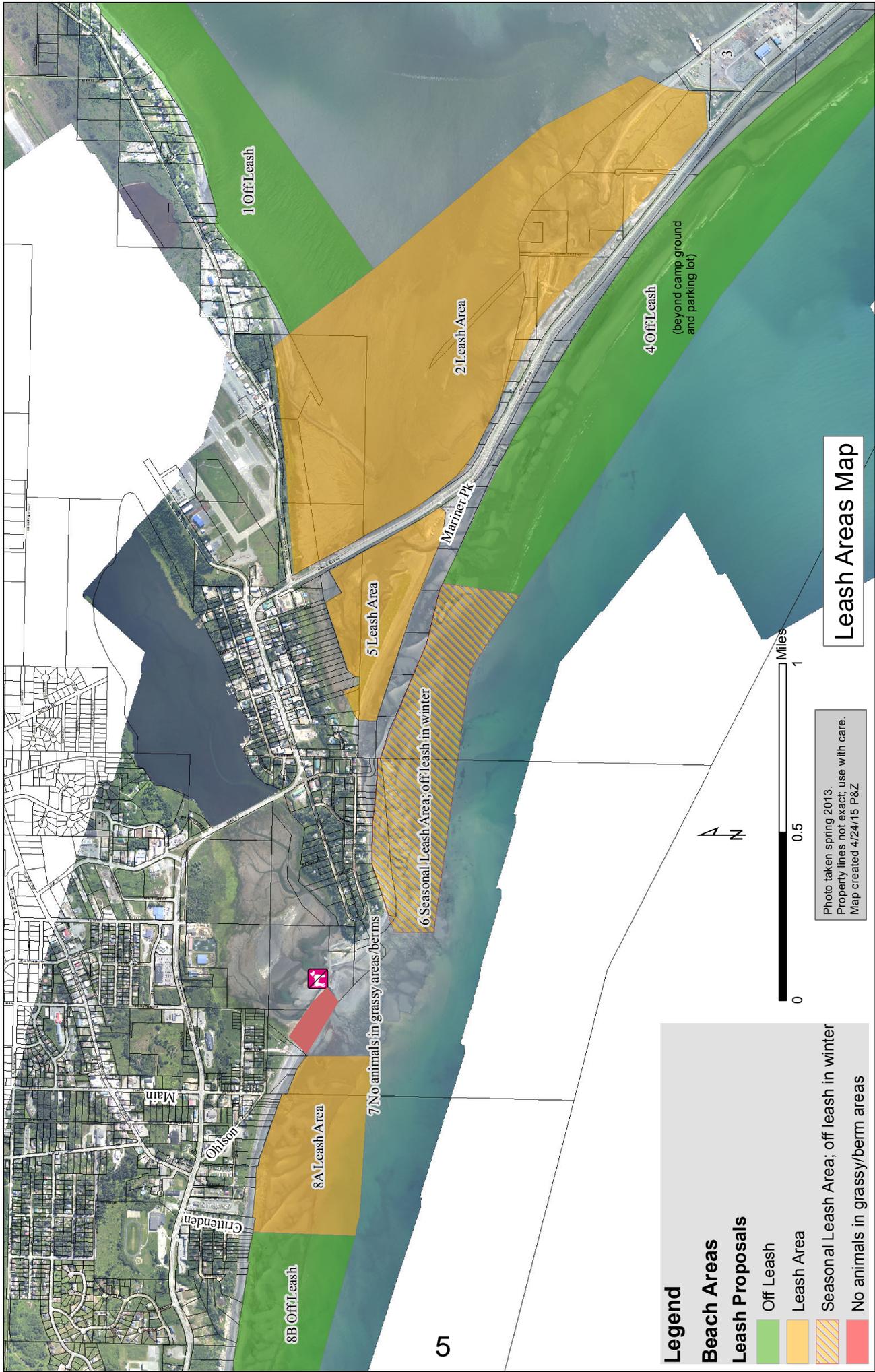
I support keeping vehicles off of private property and vehicles that damage vegetation and eroding shoreline berms.

- Add Bishop's Beach and Beluga Slough to the existing Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. (WHSRN)

I don't support adding Bishop's Beach to WHSRN where most of adjacent land is private property.

Sincerely,

Buck Laukitis



Leash Areas Map

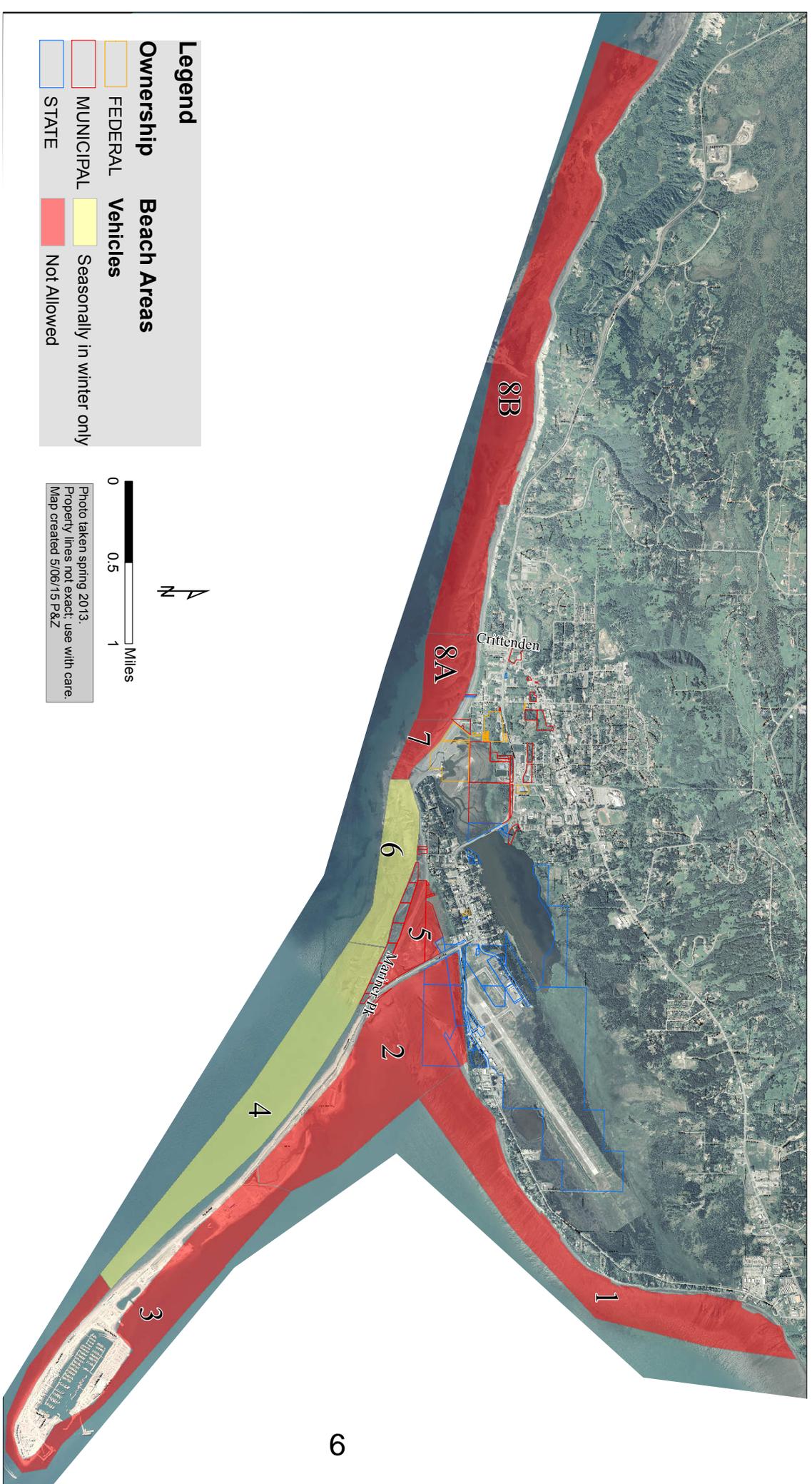
Photo taken spring 2013
 Property lines not exact; use with care.
 Map created 4/24/15 P&Z

Legend

Beach Areas

Leash Proposals

- Off Leash
- Leash Area
- Seasonal Leash Area; off leash in winter
- No animals in grassy/berm areas



Legend

Ownership	Beach Areas
FEDERAL	Seasonally in winter only
MUNICIPAL	Not Allowed
STATE	

0 0.5 1 Miles

Photo taken spring 2013.
Property lines not exact; use with care.
Map created 5/06/15 P&Z

Beach Areas Map: Where Vehicles are allowed on the beach.

From: George Long <glong4155@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 4:57 PM
To: Renee Krause
Subject: Beach Policy Review 2015

My name is George Long and I own the beach front lot at the corner of Crittenden and Hidden Way. I am in the process of building a retirement home on the property and I did spend considerable time observing what was happening on the beach last summer. I have read all of the proposed changes and other solutions. As a landowner at one of the primary access lanes to the beach there are important issues that do not appear to have been addressed at all. The first issue is CAMPING ON THE BEACH. I was amazed at the number of transient people living on the beach. I don't personally know what the rules are about camping on the beach but there are no rules posted at the Crittenden access. With No bathroom facilities anywhere near the Crittenden access or on the beach it seems obvious to me that common sense sanitation is not possible. Personally, I avoid any use of the beach at night because of the drug and alcohol parties. With no beach patrol, it appears to be the perfect place to party..

The second problem not addressed is specific to the Crittenden access " Parking". All of the water front lot owners along Hidden Way rely heavily upon being able to park on the street because the slope of the land prevents off street parking. Crittenden is also not a good place to park because it has a ditch down one side which means you cannot get out of the traffic lane and the other side has grass up to the pavement.

My Recommendation is:

1. PROHIBIT Overnight camping on the beach unless the city is willing to provide sanitation facilities.
2. PROHIBIT Use of alcohol or drugs on the beach.
3. PROHIBIT Excessive noise
4. PROHIBIT Littering
5. PROHIBIT Glass Containers

6. LIMIT Parking on Crittenden to specific designated areas that will not interfere with normal traffic or access to adjoining property
7. LIMIT Parking on Hidden Way to adjoining property owners on a lot by lot basis. This is the only way to insure that the people living on Hidden Way will have a place to park when they go home at night and MUST park on the street.
8. LIMIT Speed on Beach to 15 MPH

9. PROVIDE Night time beach patrol to enforce Ordinance
10. PROVIDE On site trash receptacles and pickup at all beach entrances during peak usage.
11. PROVIDE Signs at all beach entrance to explain Rules
12. PROVIDE Safe Fire Pits away from vegetation (or prohibit open fires)

Thanks

George Long

From: John & Janet Szajkowski <jszajkowski@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2015 9:59 AM
To: Renee Krause
Subject: Beach Policy Review 2015 Comments

HPRAC:

I am unable to attend tonight's meeting, but I would like to express the following concerns to the Commission.

I am a resident of beach area 6, which appears to be relatively unaffected by the proposed changes to the beach policy regulations of the City of Homer, but I do understand and sympathize with the concerns of those who live in the other areas and those who recreate in the Bishop's Beach area.

More importantly, and my concern is, the cost to the City of Homer if the Proposed changes and Other Solutions are implemented.

It seems the the City is often short in the "revenue" department, at least at budget preparation time anyway, and there are many projects, departments, and organizations vying for City dollars in the budget. The only way to decrease the shortage is eliminate other costs or increase revenue, likely to be in the form of taxes.

It also seems that many of the proposals will cost the City money, if adopted.

So then it seems that each of the proposals should be accompanied buy a cost to the City figure before they are up for consideration. Then, the process of selection can happen, looking at both the ramifications of the changes as well as the cost to the City.

Perhaps I haven't been paying close enough attention to the topic or perhaps the Parks and Rec. budget can handle the additional costs. In either case, it is still a good rule of thumb to ask the questions " How much money do we have? and How much will it cost?" before entertaining any changes.

Thank you for your work.

Respectfully,

John Szajkowski

From: john juliussen <jcjuliussen@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2015 8:06 AM
To: Renee Krause
Subject: Homeowner opposed to changes

My name is John JULIUSSEN and I own a home 4692 kachemak drive. I use the beach in front of my house occasionally to launch or pull a small skiff with a small 4-wheeler. I am on my own land when I do this as I own the property to the mean high tide and access the beach from my own property. This policy is not needed in area 1. I have only seen a handful of 4 wheelers on the beach bellow my home and they don't bother anyone. The beach is very rocky with coal seams and impossible for a truck to get around anyway. Nobody except a few home owners use the beach in this area. In other words the policy is trying to correct a policy that does not exist.

My phone number is 907-306-0294

Sent from my iPad

From: Lani Raymond <lani67@alaska.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2015 10:16 AM
To: Renee Krause
Subject: Bishop's Beach Policy Review

TO: Parks and Rec Commission Members
FROM: Lani Raymond
DATE: 5-21-15

Commission Members,

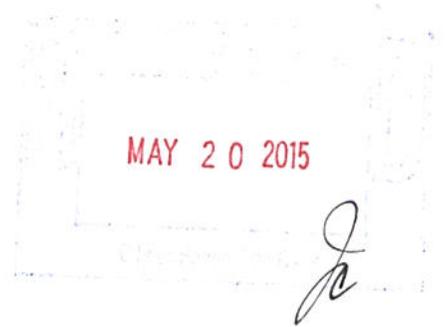
At a time when brevity might be appreciated, I would like to first thank you for all the work that you all have done on this Policy Review.

I am in complete agreement with the Proposed Changes (as of 5-6-15) as stated on the City Website. I am especially happy that the berm area below the Slough will be well protected and allowed to revegetate.

Thank you all.

Lani Raymond
41640 Gladys Ct.
Homer, AK 99603

Roberta Highland
P.O. Box 2460
Homer AK 99603
907-235-8214



RE: Beach Policy

Dear Parks and Rec Commissioners,

Thank you for all your time and effort in rewriting the beach policies.

I want to go on record in support of all the beach policy changes recommended by the Parks and Rec Commission except for the seasonal motorized vehicle use west of Mariner Park. I do suggest motorized permits to the west of Mariner Park for handicapped users, coal gathering, and land owners. I also suggest motorized permits to the west of Bishop's Beach for handicapped users, coal gathering, and land owners.

I think we have reached the point where **public safety** and the **environment** need to take precedence. Sad to say, in my opinion, the motorized vehicles on the beaches are out of control; not all of them, but enough to be a real danger. What a sad state of affairs! It is sad when people are forced to face off with a truck, car, ATV, or dirt bike; and it's also sad for the people who love driving on the beach.

It is only a matter of time before there is another death—then there will be an immediate policy change. Let's be proactive and face the difficult decisions now and make these changes. It will take courage and perseverance.

This situation happens everywhere. The population has increased to where people can no longer behave like they're the only ones here. A group of young people studying the beach situation picked up enough needles and syringes to fill a bucket. Now that is really a sad state of affairs! The drug dealers and users are using the public beaches for this heinous behavior--and the police have not been able to put a stop to it because the "perps" can see them coming. I have heard many users also go to the east of Bishop's Beach because there aren't any houses there. This area is also the most accessible for people to play with their children and pets.

So, I want us to think about **public safety**, in **every** sense of these words. Motorized vehicles and pedestrians have never been a good combination. Drugs and young people are an even worse combination!

I realize this is asking a lot from many people; but that's why these kind of decisions are so difficult.

I also support the written comment titled "HOMER BEACHES—A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP". I also support the comments of Jack Wiles and his group except for the fourth bullet point on page 15 which allows the compromise to continue allowing motorized vehicle usage in Zone 8. As I stated before, this should be permit use only.

I again thank you for your incredible work on beach policy; and I want to reiterate that making **public safety** the number one concern can alleviate much of the distress in making these difficult decisions.

Sincerely,

Roberta Highland

From: Jo Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2015 2:43 PM
To: Renee Krause
Subject: FW: Beaches

For tonight

Jo Johnson

From: William J. Marley [<mailto:wmarley@mac.com>]
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2015 2:19 PM
To: Jo Johnson
Subject: Beaches

WILLIAM J. MARLEY, DDS
Judy A. Marley
183 WEST BAYVIEW AVE.
HOMER, AK 9960
907-235-8987
wmarley@mac.com

May 21, 2015

Homer Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, Homer, Ak

Dear Commission members;

Consideration of behaviors of animals and beings on Homer ocean front beaches:

While consideration has to be given to a growing population and beach utilization one certainly has to recognize that those of us who have made our lives here have not come to Homer, Ak to live in the midst of a plethora of rules and regulations. When, however, the activities, of one or some has a profound effect upon others it has to be recognized and dealt with but albeit with **minimal** laws and **minimal** administration.

As for vehicular traffic, unruly parties, etc. I am willing to accept the deliberations of the Commission. However, if living in Homer, Ak means that I must have my dog on a leash to have it on the beach, I must say that I would find myself **most defiant** of such regulation. Is it even humane that a domesticated animal should be confined to live an entire life on the end of a leash or chain? Certainly, each

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dog owner must be responsible for the behavior of his/her animals.

When it comes to dog feces on the beach, may I please point out that all the sea animals, sea lions, seals, otters, etc. defecate in the ocean. It can only be assumed that dog feces gets washed

away with an average mean high tide. It has be worth pointing out that moose and bears defecate throughout the Homer area with no public concern. Does the City of Homer have jurisdiction over ocean beaches beyond the 18 foot mean high tide line?

As for the dog feces that may be above mean high tides may I propose that the City hire an entry level employee to walk to beach at periodic times and scoop up any fences above the mean high tide of heavily used beach areas. Further, it may be worthy of leadership to provide dog feces bags and disposal containers for those who are voluntarily willing to pick up their dog waste and dispose of it. In fact a voluntary effort may well garner more compliance than any given mandate.

Not only do I care about this issue as a Homer citizen but I also care as being a land owner of considerable bluff/beach area.

Sincerely,

William J. & Judy A. Marley

Kathy Smith
4139 Kachemak Way
Homer, AK 99603

May 20, 2015

To the members of the Homer parks and Recreation Advisory Commission:

I have been a permanent Homer city resident since 1985. I first lived in the Homer area from 1974-1979. I have watched our community grow.

I wish to offer my thoughts about proposed changes to the Beach Policy. The popularity of Homer's beaches has grown immensely since the last policy update in 2007. With the increase of visitors to our beaches, it is obvious that many of those policies no longer work.

I have been dismayed for a long time by the large numbers of vehicles on the berms and beaches. I am fully prepared to accept the ban on motorized vehicles as proposed.

Surely there are other beaches outside the Homer area that can be used by cars, trucks, and recreational vehicles which no longer belong on local beaches so extensively populated by shorebirds and people on foot.

Last Saturday, I walked down to Bishops Beach with my 5 month-old puppy, along the boardwalk and toward the berms on the east side of the beach. It was her first trip. As we walked along a footpath toward the slough, I saw one or two small shorebirds walking up from the slough toward the path. Then I noticed several more. We sat quietly on a log to watch them, then made our way over the berm and onto the beach. I realized I had been in a grassy area where dogs will no longer be permitted when the new Beach Policy takes effect. It's okay, I can agree that it's better that way, although I'm not convinced that in the wintertime this prohibition is necessary.

I agree with the on-leash and poop clean-up policies as proposed. And the no-glass policy. I really hope that the end result of all these changes will be less trash on our beaches.

My only regrets are for those folks who still gather coal, as I used to do when I first lived in Homer. I do hope that any coal-gathering beaches outside the non-motorized-vehicle-area will be identified and used. Much has changed since I first moved here. I believe we must look forward and put policies in place that best benefit Homer. Please support the recommendations of the Beach Policy task force.

Thank you,

Kathy Smith

