

Session 11-02, a Regular Meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair Roberts at 5:32 p.m. on August 21, 2012 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Highland, Roberts, Venuti
ABSENT: Smith
STAFF: Public Works Director Meyer
Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Kevin Walker, non resident, commented that he has been actively involved with the Kachemak Drive Path Committee meetings. He is an avid bicycler who lives out east, rides on Kachemak Drive to the spit, and it's dangerous. The state doesn't appear to be moving on this and thinks the city, with the HART funding. This trail needs to be done, it has been identified in the Homer Non Motorized Transportation and Trails plan. He provided a packet of information to the Committee and pointed out that there are two ways to get up the bluff from the beginning near the spit road. The mud bay trail is there, but it isn't one that high speed bicyclers are going to use to get to town. He noted the alternative option in his information and explained they are asking for funding for surveying because it is a steep side slope for about 100 to 200 feet and engineering will be needed to sort it out. The rest of the trail follows the easements but there are no public access easements, so that is one of the biggest hurdles. A city approved process will make it possible to talk to land owners about the easements. He said he is a retired State of Alaska assistant engineer and is willing to help where he can.

Bumppo Bremicker, city resident, chair of the Kachemak Drive Path Committee and of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, commented they have been working for a couple of years on this. As seen in Kevin's packet they have a plan for the whole thing. What they are concentrating on now is getting the section where the steep hill is right off the spit. It is the most dangerous section. The thought is if they can construct that section it would show progress being made, and City interest. They Committee is looking for TAC support of the whole project, and support for funding for the survey and pre-engineering for that first section. Even if nothing else got done, this first steep section would be helpful. There are lots of ideas for trails around town, but it really takes a group of people working on an idea as they have done with the Kachemak Drive path. The people of Homer voted to have money taken out of their taxes for trails and we could really use a good trail to help connect East End Road trail to the spit trail.

Beth Cumming, city resident and committee member, echoes what has already been said. She urged the TAC to urge the Council to allocate up to \$20,000 from HART funds to do pre-engineering to determine the feasibility of constructing a bicycle pedestrian trail for approximately one third mile, roughly paralleling Kachemak Drive from the spit bicycle trail to the west end at airport 30 day parking. She added they spent a year and a half discussing options, including waiting for the gas line to go along the line or going along the base of the cliff at the top of the beach to the right-of-way. She noted that the

recommendation in the packet may seem confusing to a reader who might think it continues along Mud Bay Trail, but it doesn't.

Lindianne Sarno, city resident and committee member, commented to the desirability and necessity of having a separate path along Kachemak Drive. She is a committed bicyclist and has done so for many years in many different towns and cities. She expressed the importance of getting kids outdoors and out of cars to play. An advantage of a separated path is that the kids can go out, go along the path, and be fairly safe. She grew up wild and free in New York and feels bad for kids who are cooped up in schools and cars, and can't get out and enjoy nature. Another advantage the trail brings is safety for those who commute by bicycle. It is a dangerous road. She lives on Kachemak Drive and has noticed over the last few years a tremendous increase in the number of bicycle riders already on Kachemak Drive, even in the winter.

RECONSIDERATION

No items were scheduled for reconsideration.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting Synopsis of May 15, 2012

The Synopsis was approved by consensus of the Committee.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

A. Kachemak Drive Path – Lynne Burt and Dave Brann

Lynne Burt, a Homer resident for 35 years and on Kachemak Drive for 18 years, is a walker with dogs. She volunteered on the Kachemak Drive Path Committee because of her interest in a safer option of getting along the road. In the committee's efforts to connect East End Road pathway to the Homer spit trail, they looked at narrowing lanes, widening the shoulder, reducing the speed limit, adding more signage, or a separated path. The separated path is what they are hoping for. The committee is requesting up to \$20,000 of HART funds to survey the pathway through the hilled woods area below Kachemak Drive between the Homer spit trail and long term parking area at the airport. It is approximately the first 1/3 mile of Kachemak Drive. They feel it is the most dangerous part of Kachemak Drive as it has the least amount of road shoulder and bad visibility where walkers and bikers can be found daily, all year long. The committee and community need to know if this is at all feasible and a survey with engineering assessments will answer this question. When visiting other states or countries who have planned an area like this for everyone to access within the community, it is looked upon with great admiration. The safety of our citizens, children, animals, and visitors has always been an important aspect of our community. Let us not stop now. This will be something for our city to be proud of.

Dave Brann thanked the TAC for the opportunity to present what the path committee has been working on and to answer questions. He explained the path committee was formed because the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission found this is such a complex issue and that they couldn't take it up along with all their other business. From the start, safety was and continues to be one of their main concerns along the pathway. People walk and ride bikes along there and will continue to do so. The committee reviewed options as Lynne explained, they also did a survey and received comments that

many people want a path, but not on the road. Through much discussion, thought, studying, and homework, they decided on a preferred route and type of trail. Mr. Brann commented that this isn't something that should have to be justified as there are many plans supporting the trail concept, as well as the fed's and state have a bicycle plans, Representative Seaton has introduced a bill related to bicycle trails, Senator Begich supports the complete streets program, as well as the City's adopted plans include trails support. One line in the HART plan says "Where estimated operating costs and outside funding availability are considerations and important criteria, care should be used to ensure that important trails are not eliminated solely using cost as a determinant". Cost is an important factor but should not be a determining factor. The committee looked at adding various signage options but none of them were feasible. In looking at the trail design criteria the committee decided on a level 3 path, semi improved trail, extending it to 8 feet wide separated, compacted gravel path, using D1 or less gravel. He noted that there are ADA accessible trails around the country that are compacted gravel and noted the National Park Service trails near Portage are compacted gravel. They would like to use the utility easements, recognizing that they still have to get land owner permission to use those easements. Being an eternal optimist, he knows this will happen, one way or another, sooner or later. They are looking for help by making it a city project rather than a state project, and approving the expenditure of HART fund for a survey. He went to the aerial photo and reviewed the proposed trail location. He explained they first want to survey from the end of the spit trail to the bottom of the road that goes to the airport access. Up to \$20,000 is the anticipated cost. He also explained that support from the TAC to the Council is support for the whole project as a city project, not a state project.

In response to questioning there was discussion about accessing on the airport land. Mr. Brann noted that will be difficult, but not impossible. They will be talking to airport leasing and if that doesn't work they will continue to go up the ladder. It was suggested by Kevin Walker that if they address it with emphasis on airport access as people who fly into the airport walk into town. It was further suggested that airport leasing would give more consideration when a safety issue is involved, as it is in this case.

Question was raised if the terminus of this first section will end in a place where bicyclists can safely continue on the road. Mr. Brann explained that once you get past this first steep section the road has better site distance and a slightly wider shoulder. He also explained that regardless of how well the trail is built, there will still be people who prefer to ride on the road.

In regard to feedback from property owners Mr. Brann commented there are mixed feelings. Some of the business owners would like to have people off other road, and others are nervous about having the trail too close their homes. Some are reluctant because of the water and sewer project. Until the city takes responsibility for the project, however, they can't begin to address any concerns of the property owners.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOROUGH REPORTS

None

PUBLIC HEARING

There were no public hearings scheduled.

PENDING BUSINESS

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SYNOPSIS
AUGUST 21, 2012

A. Update on Property Acquisition for Waddell Way

This was moved to the next agenda because Public Works Director Meyer was not present to discuss.

B. Update on Main Street and Bypass Progress

This was moved to the next agenda because Public Works Director Meyer was not present to discuss.

C. Update on Lake Street and Pioneer Intersection

Planning Technician Engebretsen advised them that DOT will be holding an open house at Islands and Ocean Visitor Center.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Kachemak Drive Path

Planning Technician Engebretsen reviewed her staff report and explained there are two different actions being requested of the Committee. One is to recommend up to \$20,000 of HART funds for surveying the western most portion of the trail and the other is for Committees support that this becomes a City project and leveraging HART funds to help pay for it.

Ms. Highland commented that throughout this process the project has been called a path in some instances and a trail in others. It is preferred that it be called by the same name for consistency and clarity.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED THE TAC RECOMMENDS CALLING IT THE KACHEMAK DRIVE TRAIL INSTEAD OF PATH.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED THAT THE TAC RECOMMEND TO HOMER CITY COUNCIL TO MAKE THE KACHEMAK DRIVE TRAIL PROJECT A CITY PROJECT INSTEAD OF A STATE PROJECT.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. FY 2012 HART Fund Request for Kachemak Drive Path

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SYNOPSIS
AUGUST 21, 2012

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED TO RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING UP TO \$20,000 OF HART FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SURVEYING THE WESTERN MOST PORTION OF THE KACHEMAK BAY DRIVE TRAIL.

There was discussion to clarify that in the information we there is \$304,000 in the HART fund and that 10% of the HART fund is supposed to be used for trails. This amount would fall under that 10%.

Ms. Highland expressed that the memorandum from the committee to council really discusses safety, and that safety was a huge part of the discussion from the public who commented in support of the project.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

C. 2013 HART Projects

Planning Technician Engebretsen reviewed her memorandum regarding Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission's recommendation. The recommendation includes:

- Kachemak Bay Drive Trail
- Greatland Street Trail Repair
- Woodard Creek Trail within Karen Hornaday Park
- Fairview Trail

VENUTI/HIGHLAND MOVED THAT THE COMMITTEE SUPPORTS THESE RECOMMENDATIONS.

Mrs. Venuti commented that she walks a lot and agrees that these are all areas that need improvement and they are a good use of the money. They aren't all safety issues, but are definitely for the enjoyment of the community.

Ms. Roberts agreed, noting that the need to focus on these trails is very clear as described in the memo.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

D. One Way Streets in Downtown Homer

This is a concept that seems to work well in other communities and could be helpful on Main Street. Ms. Highland said she spoke to Scott Thomas at DOT and when they do something about the Main Street bypass they are going to do Pioneer and Main Street at the same time and thinking of a four way stop.

It was requested that Mrs. Venuti bring back some ideas of what might be an option for one way streets through town and the committee will have it on their next agenda for further discussion.

E. Road Grades and Steep Slopes

This was requested to be included on the next agenda.

F. Capital Improvement Plan 2013-2018

The Committee listed and discussed their top five choices individually and Planning Technician Engebretsen tallied their list as follows:

Main Street Reconstruction/Intersection
Sterling Highway Realignment
Land Acquisition for New Roads
Karen Hornaday Park Improvements
Kachemak Drive Trail

VENUTI/HIGHLAND MOVED TO FORWARD THEIR FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

There were no informational items.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Dave Brann thanked the committee for their support of the Kachemak Drive Trail. This is a giant step and now they will go on to council. Food for thought regarding the rehabilitation of the Sterling Highway, he would like to see a pedestrian underpass where Diamond Creek is to connect the parcel of city property from the Homer Demonstration Forest to Diamond Creek State Park. It would make a loop from the Reber Trail, Demonstration Forest, Diamond Creek park, and Bishops Beach.

Kevin Walker commented that it has been a great meeting and good to get over this hurdle and move on. The rough idea of the path has been identified and it is open to modification as more design information comes available. The way to approach the airport leased land is that this will provide access to the airport facility that services small planes to local villages. The top of the gas line is a great idea, using their permitting and SWAP plan to finish grading it to a path would be a perfect marriage of the two projects. There are other funding sources and the City of Homer can apply for federal monies like the state can. He and Mr. Brann are involved in the Kachemak Bay Water trail and that has become a National Park Service Project and finding all kinds of help that could also benefit the Kachemak Drive project. He hopes to join the committee on the other side of the table, he has been interested in transportation projects for most of his life.

Beth Cumming commented her understanding was there is currently \$200,000 plus, in the HART fund for trails, and there would not be \$300,000 for trails until the end of the year. In relation to path versus trail, when she thinks of a trail she thinks of the hand of man in terms of something engineered and constructed by people. More than that she likes the idea of continuity to call it a trail since we have the

Reber Trail, Poopdeck Trail, ski trails, a state organization called TRAIL, not path. She is glad Roberta brought it up.

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

Planning Technician Engebretsen said she enjoyed coming to the meeting tonight and complemented them on running a fast meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Roberts thanked Mrs. Venuti for bringing the cookies and Planning Technician Engebretsen for participating in their meeting, she brought a lot of good information. She reminded the members if they have something to add to the agenda, contact the Clerk's office. She reminded them if something needing immediate attention they can call a special meeting. She said that John Velsko resigned from the committee and she thanked him for all he did in his time on the committee, he has contributed a great deal and will be missed.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mrs. Venuti thanked the committee for their work tonight. Regarding the CIP list she first looked at it as a Homer citizen and was glad to be reminded to focus more directly on transportation projects as a member of this committee. She hopes a lot more recommendations will come forth.

Ms. Highland thanked the public for coming tonight and the work they have done. That is the way things happen and it is exciting to see. She is glad that Mr. Walker is interested in being on the TAC. In the last minutes they talked about lowering the speed limit on the bypass in an effort to make it safer for Main Street. She talked to Scott Thomas with DOT and he said that it probably wouldn't work as they had trouble getting people to do 35 mph and he feels like Homer has done a really good job because we haven't had a death or serious accidents there, so in that sense people seem to be using the speed limit, but 35 is the lowest anyone would go. He explained how they have double fine areas that have worked, but didn't feel like we would be eligible, as we haven't had enough accidents or any deaths, and doing it everywhere takes away the power. She said they talked about roundabouts and they do cause slow downs which is good, but they don't create gaps in traffic for people to get out. She brought up the concept of take your turn and can't we get people to slow down, but it is all psychology, what human beings will do.

ADJOURN

There being no more business to come before the Committee the meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers.

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____