

Session 11-03, a Regular Meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee was called to order by Acting Chair Smith at 5:36 p.m. on November 20, 2012 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Highland, Smith, Venuti
ABSENT: Roberts, Walker (both excused)
STAFF: Public Works Director Meyer
Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Question was raised regarding Mr. Walker's request to add an agenda item regarding telephonic participation. Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen explained that the body cannot act on an item that has not been properly noticed on their agenda and that she will talk to Chair Roberts about including it on the next agenda.

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting Synopsis of August 21, 2012

There was discussion regarding Mr. Walker's laydown regarding the synopsis changes. Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen explained that she will make the typographical corrections for the final draft, but that the changes proposed to add information after the fact is not appropriate. She added that his points of clarification will be included with the packet, which is maintained as a permanent record.

The amended synopsis was approved by consensus of the Committee.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOROUGH REPORTS

A. Updates from Public Works Director Meyer regarding property acquisition for Waddell Way, Main Street and Bypass Project, and Lake Street and Pioneer Intersection.

Regarding Waddell Way, Public Works Director Meyer explained that the council requested a cost estimate and some recommendations on how to proceed. He said nothing has happened with council's request to date due to other priorities. The next step is council approving HART fund to design the project and acquire the right of way. He said Mr. Waddell has the key piece of property for sale for a price that Mr. Meyer thinks is a little high, but will work to find some time to move it to the next step.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SYNOPSIS
NOVEMBER 20, 2012

Public Works Director Meyer commented that there has been a lot of discussion of what to do at Main Street and the bypass. It is his understanding that the State District Traffic Engineer was successful in getting safety grants totaling \$2.9 million for the improvements at the intersection. The engineer was confident that it will be enough to install a traffic signal, and reasonably confident that it was enough for a roundabout. That would mean the city's \$2 million could be used for other improvements on Main Street, either above or below the intersection. In response to questions about process, Mr. Meyer explained that AKDOT will take the lead on suggestions for the improvements, noting that they must take community input and the City Council can offer feedback. Mr. Smith commented that it will boil down to topography in the area, as a roundabout could cause issues downhill, and he also questions if it will fit. Mr. Meyer reviewed some of the process for determining what will work in the intersection. Mr. Smith added that he spoke to a friend, who works for DOT and is assigned the Homer project, about the committee's recognition that right turn lanes would be beneficial at the intersection.

Public Works Director Meyer commented that DOT is considering a roundabout for Lake Street and Pioneer Avenue. DOT held a public meeting late in the summer and it appears to have progressed to the STIP list which means the intersection will be addressed in the scope of the project. Mr. Smith provided some history on past maintenance work on Lake Street and how it made it to the STIP list.

Lastly, Public Works Director Meyer updated the group on the progress of improvements being done as part of the cruise ship enhancement project. One of the downtown restrooms will be located next to the fire hall and the city purchased property at the bottom of Bartlett for the other. This property is further beneficial as it is the first piece needed to accomplish the Bartlett extension across Pioneer and onto Main Street, as outlined in the Transportation Plan. It is a step forward in implementing another east west corridor.

There was brief discussion regarding modeled extensions and the concept of the rights of way in the town center area. It was noted that the preliminary plat for town center was done, but the process hasn't been completed at the Borough.

Mr. Meyer added that the DOT funds include \$2.5 million to extend the spit trail to the End of the Road Park adding in Coal Point Trail that will branch off between the Coast Guard lot and Icicle Seafoods. There are cruise ship funds to run a trail along the back side of the small boat harbor to the Deep Water Dock, a restroom, and a paved staging area for tourists coming off the cruise ship. The hope is to complete it by the end of next summer. The committee agreed that will be a tremendous asset to anyone that goes to the small boat harbor.

In response to a question raised in Mr. Walker's laydown, Public Works Director Meyer explained that road projects now include pedestrian amenities, whether it is a sidewalk or a separated trail, as determined by the right of way. He referenced the separated path completed in the Sprucewood LID and upcoming improvements at Lake Street as examples.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Road Grades and Steep Slopes

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SYNOPSIS
NOVEMBER 20, 2012

Mr. Smith summarized the steep slope development allowances in the Design Criteria Manual. It outlines that the Public Works Director has the authority to authorize steeper than a 2:1 slope in some cases, like situations where a different slope ratio could leave Public Works with a bad maintenance situation and hinder access of emergency vehicles. Despite required soil assessments, no engineer can ever know what subsurface issues will arise when shaving off a slope, there is the requirement to stabilize an area that has failed with rock. The State has the same allowances. In relation to the laydown comments, Mr. Smith recognized that Mr. Walker lives next to the Canyon Trails subdivision where there were slope failures in spots, and they have gone in and done stabilization with rock.

Public Works Director Meyer added that when a developer presents a plan, it is reviewed to ensure it conforms to the Design Criteria Manual and ensures there are warranty periods in place, so even after the City accepts the improvement, the developer is still has a responsibility to stabilize failures. Cut and fill slopes aren't an issue on flat ground. The issues come up on steep slopes, and 2:1 cut slopes in the Canyon Trails subdivision would have gone on forever. There is a balance between creating the safest possible slope and doing what is cost effective and reasonable on a steep slope.

The committee briefly discussed the information and agreed to include this on the next meeting agenda to allow for Mr. Walker to be involved in the discussion.

B. One Way Streets in Downtown Homer

Mrs. Venuti provided information that included a picture of her proposal to make Main Street one way up from Sterling Highway to Pioneer Avenue, and Heath Street down from Pioneer to Sterling Highway. She commented that she has spent time in towns where one way streets are successful. Her focus was changing these two roads to one way to reduce congestion and hazards at the Sterling/Main Street and the Pioneer/Heath Street intersections, improve traffic flows, eliminate driver anxiety, and reduce unnecessary delays and traffic accidents. Drivers who utilize these intersections are aware of the unnecessary delays and dangerous situations at peak traffic flow periods.

There was discussion that this could create a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. A negative of this proposal is that is contrary to the modeled extension concept as it sends everyone to the arterials. The concept could meet some resistance as one way on Heath Street will inhibit ease of access to locations like the post office, city hall, or the college. The concept works and has been brought forward before in the idea of a one way couplet around town, but there is always resistance to change and begs the question, what drives a community to embrace it and want to move forward. Mr. Meyer further noted the challenge of Main Street being a State road. Mrs. Venuti encouraged the other members to try it. Mr. Smith noted that because the committee is advisory to City Council, they are tasked with advising on issues the Council directs them to address, like the Transportation Plan. A lot of the concepts the committee comes up with get lost, because there isn't a mechanism for them to move their concepts forward at the committee level. Technically the only items on the committee's agenda should be action items directed by the City Council to vet on their behalf. He said he is not trying to be cynical; it has just been his experience in the time he has served on the committee.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Draft Resolution Re: 2013 Meeting Schedule

The committee discussed the meeting schedule.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SYNOPSIS
NOVEMBER 20, 2012

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED TO ADOPT THE TAC MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2013.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Aaron Selbig with KBBI commented that in his five years of doing the news in Homer, this is his first time to sit in on one of the committee's meetings. He said it was very interesting and productive. He is always impressed by the people who work on these committees and appreciates what they do for the city.

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

Public Works Director Meyer commented that there are a lot of capital projects going on now, but none that he can think of as transportation related.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ms. Highland asked if they can add Mr. Walker's agenda item at the next meeting. Deputy City Clerk said she would propose it to Chair Roberts.

There were no further comments.

ADJOURN

There being no more business to come before the Committee the meeting adjourned at 6:49 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: _____