

Session 17-09 Regular Meeting of the Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission was called to order on October 19, 2017 at 5:32 pm by Chair Matt Steffy at the Cowles Council Chambers City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

**PRESENT:** COMMISSIONERS FAIR, STEFFY, SHARP, ROEDL AND HARRALD

**ABSENT:** COMMISSIONERS ASHMUN, LONEY, ARCHIBALD, SALZMANN (EXCUSED)

**STAFF:** DEPUTY CITY PLANNER ENGBRETSSEN  
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Steffy called for a motion to approve the agenda.

HARRALD/SHARP – MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was a no discussion.

VOTE. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA**

#### **VISITORS**

A. Clyde Boyer and Vivian Finlay, Kachemak Advocates of Recycling

Ms. Finlay and Mr. Boyer spoke to the Commission regarding their group and that they are an advocacy group to reduce the waste produced on the Lower Peninsula. Ms. Finlay provided a flyer that has been distributed in the paper, at local businesses and through the Borough Solid Waste department. They encouraged reduce, reuse and recycle. Ms. Finlay spoke on the number of recycling containers placed in public areas by the city. They provided information the efforts the group has made in getting more people and businesses to recycle and reuse. Mr. Boyd noted that they are getting the High School welding class to create receptacles to use for recycling

In response to a question from the commission they provided information on the status of the proposed composting project focused on food waste collected from restaurants and the requirements from the borough made the interested contractors to back out. The idea is not dead just postponed until a contractor is found. This was to be conducted on private land by a landowner who had the equipment and knowledge and access to work the compost materials. The idea was that the property owner would then be able to sell the composted material. The original idea for the pilot project was written up by Dale Banks of Loopy Lupine.

A brief question and answer period ensued with Ms. Finlay and Mr. Boyer offering additional information on recycling, the possibility of the city putting recycling bins in the parks, the value of composted materials and the popularity in the Lower 48 and other cities providing this service to their residents.

## **RECONSIDERATION**

### **ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

All items on the consent agenda are considered routine and non-controversial by the Parks Art Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission and are approved in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless requested by a Commissioner or someone from the public, in which case the item will be moved to the regular agenda and considered in normal sequence.

A. Minutes for the Regular Meeting on September 21, 2017

Chair Steffy requested a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Sharp stated that he was excused from that meeting.

Chair Steffy requested a motion to approve the amended Consent Agenda

HARRALD/SHARP – SO MOVED.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

## **STAFF & COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOROUGH REPORTS**

A. Community Recreation Report – Mike Illg

Commissioner Harrald commented that she appreciated the weekly emails from Mike forwarded to them through the Clerk.

B. Parks Management Report – Angie Otteson (See Pending Business Item B)

C. Julie Engebretsen, Deputy City Planner

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen reviewed her report for the commission.

There was a brief discussion on the stop sign on the top of hill and when winter comes it is going to be pretty slick. There may be some adjustments needed on that in the future.

D. Park Walk through Report – Commissioners

Chair Steffy provided a summary review and that he agreed with the recommendations in the memorandum written by Deputy City Planner Engebretsen.

A discussion ensued on the use of the fields on the east side and the unused field being converted to a dog park was actually the larger field which is the problem is that it is too big. It has been used for practice

though but it was determined that the commission needed to contact Softball Association to see if they would be favorable of using that area for a dog park. Commissioner Sharp volunteered to contact Dr. Bell.

There was a brief discussion on the memorandum on the purchase of adjacent land to the park and it was already noted that it has been submitted to Council. It was an informational item only.

Commissioner Sharp inquired who picked up the recycling bin and garbage at Jack Gist. Deputy City Planner Engebretsen recommended the commissioner speak to Ms. Otteson about that as she should have the information.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **PENDING BUSINESS**

#### **A. Main Street Sidewalk Project**

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen reviewed the request from City Council and the actions of the commission which resulted in a matrix or rubric. She recommended reviewing the matrix and then at the next meeting they can start scoring a few projects and see how the criteria works.

Commissioner Sharp provided a summary on how the matrix was developed and noted that the rubric was taken from a larger municipality in the south and that the accident information was reflected in the safety column but he did not assign points to each criteria for the sake of discussion and input from the commission.

Discussion ensued on the matrix/rubric and covered the following topics:

- traffic counts could be obtained on some of the state roads but that auto ownership population density, population with a disability, and senior density numbers will be a little difficult to obtain;
- There may be a way to offer a short survey that contain some of the information such as bike to work, walk, what routes do you normally use, etc.
- How to determine what a preferred walking route to school would be, noting that there were differing opinions on this subject, staff recommended using the adopted plan, Homer Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, to weight the proposed routes.
- Search for other scoring in other communities and the original information that was used to create this rubric for the next meeting.

Commissioners were requested to add numbers and then email to Deputy City Planner Engebretsen who will compile and create a table for the next meeting. Commissioner Sharp will forward the word document for her use.

There was no further discussion.

Chair Steffy requested a moment to go back on the agenda and requested clarification on the budget request for the sidewalk on the spit for the Water Trail pavilion and fish cleaning tables. Deputy City Planner Engebretsen responded that the request was for \$20,000 but it was the project is estimated to cost only \$12,000 and that is what the City Manager approved and if there are cost overruns there is enough money in reserves to cover that amount.

## B. Camping Fees

Chair Steffy introduced the next item for discussion.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen stated that the information on page 18 was provided by Finance Department last meeting and Ms. Otteson was able to provide the information on page 17.

It was noted by the commission that there were discrepancies in the amounts that were reported by Finance.

Chair Steffy noted that in his quick review of the information provided by Finance and it appeared that there were some statistical ghosts in the numbers. He compared the number as a camping event between 2014 and 2017 only. He proceeded to explain his findings to the commission.

Discussion ensued on exclusion of the shoulder months from the figures since each year will be different as to when they open and close the campgrounds; the figures reported by finance were higher than what Ms. Otteson reported; per unit revenue is lower however overall revenue was higher; if the fees were increased since 2014; the rates are \$20 for RV's and \$13 for tents which also included the sales tax; the commission is interested in finding out if the rise in rates and removing the weekly rates was causing a reduction in revenue and it is apparent that that is not the case here with the numbers reported.

It was agreed by consensus of the commissioners present that it would be prudent to withhold amending the camping rates for 2018 until they have a few years to compare numbers.

Commissioner Roedl inquired about the cost to maintain the campgrounds compared to the revenue they are generating. Deputy City Planner Engebretsen explained that the city does not collect enough revenue to maintain the campgrounds but in actuality it takes minimal materials to maintain it is more of a service provided at Hornaday campground, while the campgrounds on the spit are the definite revenue generators.

Further discussion on the various factors that may affect the outcome of the number of campers this year such as weather, raised rates, and persons staying in their own homes versus camping. It was additionally discussed that the city should charge the Alaska rate and comparing the rates of private RV park's on the Spit and other communities offer shoulder season and peak rates and charge higher rates; differing rates may create more work than is worth it; there was differing opinions on increasing rates versus not, a motion would be needed but is not required at this time.

Carey Meyer, Public Works Director commented on discussion and questions regarding a weekly rate offered an efficiency in labor for collecting the fees, everyone is looking for the deal but there is no statistical information to present on whether it would be worth having a weekly rate. He also provided some information on an enterprise fund versus the general fund and a single event versus a multiple event generating more sales tax revenue for the city.

Responding to a question on approximate percentage of the weekly campers he surmised that it is the loyal visitors that tend to come to Homer wanting to stay a significant period of time; but he does not have any real insight into that number.

Chair Steffy questioned what was the impetus to remove the weekly rate?

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen responded that no other community offers a weekly rate, she cited the cost of maintenance and services provided versus the revenue charged and that the actual rate amounted to approximately \$8 per day since the weekly rate was very low. Ms. Engebretsen noted that city residents pay for a variety of services that are provided and that they in essence should not be subsidizing a visitor's camping experience.

Chair Steffy stated that having information on the weekly visitors versus nightly would be handy and at this time unless one of the other commissioners wanted to propose a motion he would be willing to address this next year.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen noted that City Council will be addressing fees at the upcoming Council meeting so this is the commission's chance to propose changes to the fee schedule.

SHARP/HARRALD – MOVED TO INCREASE CAMPING FEES BY 15% ROUNDED TO THE NEXT WHOLE NUMBER.

Discussion on requesting a reasonable average industry standard rate, increasing by just a few dollars will increase the revenue for the city and may assist in getting some required maintenance completed, will not deter people who like coming to this great city and offering a weekly rate in the shoulder months, April May September, October only to encourage more visitors.

ROEDL/ MOVED TO AMEND TO PROVIDE A WEEKLY RATE FOR THE SHOULDER MONTHS APRIL MAY SEPTEMBER OCTOBER WITHOUT AN INCREASE IN THE BASE RATE IN JUNE JULY AND AUGUST.

Commissioner Harrauld inquired about a friendly amendment and Chair Steffy responded that it should be a separate amendment, exact amendment was inaudible to the Clerk for transcribing.

Chair Steffy requested a second to the motion on the floor.

Motion died for lack of a second.

SHARP/STEFFY MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO INCREASE RATES TO \$15 PER NIGHT FOR TENTS AND \$24 PER NIGHT FOR RECREATIONAL VEHICLES FOR THE 2018 CAMPING SEASON.

Discussion ensued on the rates charged in Seward and Soldotna and that they collect sales taxes on top of those fees and not addressing the request of staff for a weekly rate, performing a wait and see approach on visitors versus revenue for 2018 and the proposed increase reflects a 10% increase in current rates which includes sales taxes.

VOTE. (Amendment) YES. ROEDL, HARRALD, SHARP, STEFFY.

VOTE. NO. FAIR.

Motion carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Memorandum from City Clerk dated October 2, 2017 re: 2018 Meeting Schedule

Chair Steffy read the memorandum into the record and inquired if the commission had any changes to be made to the 2018 meeting schedule as proposed other than the meeting date for October.

Deputy City Clerk Krause noted that the October meeting date was already changed to reflect the Alaska Day holiday that falls on the third Thursday of the month next year in the draft resolution in the packet.

Chair Steffy requested a motion to approve the meeting schedule as amended.

HARRALD/ROEDL – MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2018 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

#### B. Letter to the Editor – Ideas

Commissioner Fair provided a draft Letter to the Editor as a laydown for the commissions review and comment. The topic of his piece is public input on Homer art and culture, Sister City Art Collection curation and the current vacancy. Chair Steffy inquired if there were any comments or revisions from the commissioners present.

Chair Steffy requested a motion to approve the draft.

HARRALD/SHARP MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOURTH QUARTER LETTER TO THE EDITOR PROVIDED BY COMMISSIONER FAIR FOR PUBLICATION.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

#### **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

- A. Commission Annual Calendar 2017
- B. Commissioner Attendance at City Council Meetings 2017

Chair Steffy requested volunteers for the upcoming council meetings.

Commissioner Sharp volunteered for the meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup>  
Commissioner Steffy volunteered for November 27<sup>th</sup>

#### **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

There was no comments from the audience present.

## **COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF**

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen commented, Thanks.

Deputy City Clerk Krause had no comments.

## **COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Roedl asked if anyone knew what the fiberglass tanks at Jack Gist Park were used for; and was wondering if there would be interest by the commission to organize a monthly community park maintenance event to assist in taking care of the much needed maintenance due to the lack of funds. He requested the commission to think about it. This could be included in a letter to the editor too.

Commissioner Harrald commented that there is a lot of good recreation going on at SPARC, the Hockey Rink, and even HERC. She also inquired if there was some way the commission could help HoWL in some way. Ms. Harrald inquired about having visitors that represented the arts community come to speak to them.

Commissioner Fair had no comments.

Commissioner Sharp expressed concern for Ben Walters's road and was wondering how they could get one of those electronic speed signs installed. This Saturday, October 21, 2017 at Jack Gist Park there is a work party to clean up the park for to prepare for the tournament that will be held on the weekend of October 28, 2017. He did not have a specific time for starting this weekend on the clean-up and he was unsure how many were going to come. He also encouraged the commissioners to visit the Pratt museum to see the cool exhibits on proto-typing and he built the proto-type for that exhibit. He liked the monthly park idea and would be willing to work on that this coming summer.

Chair Steffy reported he attended the annual art selection committee for the Library and there were four artist who submitted their work and the committee spent an hour deciding on the art to exhibit and then spent an hour on invasive species and identifying them on the Library property.

He attended the Homer Arts & Culture Association (HACA) meeting and shared that Homer Council on the Arts is bringing the Squirrel Nut Zippers to town and the Jubilee will be in February. The Yurt is ready to go up. This will provide a space for gatherings and events up to 200 seated people, a variable floor plan and future expansion to include restrooms. They are hiring again for an Administrative-Coordinator as the current person is resigning her position to have her first child.

The Pratt Museum is moving into their roots theme, will have a curators closet and 2018 marks the 50 year anniversary; they will also have the exhibit, Steam Punk Dirigibles from Denali and finally the major renovation/construction project is being put on hold and they have decided to do some major renovations which will require the museum to shut down for substantial periods of time. So if anyone knows of any business in town with space that the Pratt could use for micro museums, please have them contact the museum. The Pratt will be bringing back the Gathering where residents of Port Graham and Nanwalek will travel across the water in canoes, typically in August, and there will be a bon fire and educational learning opportunity at Bishops Beach. Next Wednesday, October 25th there will be Food and Music presentation/discussion at the museum.

The Kenai Peninsula Orchestra is having difficulties with coordinating performers across the peninsula for events. They will be doing a link up with Pops as usual. There was a conflict with Jesus Christ Superstar

opening night and the fundraiser for the orchestra since more musicians than expected participated in the play. They are considering focusing more towards youth membership developing into adult performers; they had a good year breaking even; working on more collaborations such as with the Library Speak up project and Chicago; membership numbers are up and increasing the variety of participants with Directors, actors, etc. He did not have Bunnell Gallery report since he was unable to stay for the entire meeting. He did plug for the vacancy on the commission and it is a running theme among all groups was vacancies on each board. Everyone mentioned the difficulty in maintaining a board with most volunteers serving on multiple boards. People tend to sign up for a lot of stuff and have multiple interests. It is referred to as the Homer Condition. He stated that HACA was going to try to meet on a quarterly basis.

Commissioner Harrald requested a written report for the packet so that they have all the dates available in writing. Chair Steffy stated he will try to coordinate with Adele Person who arranges the meetings noting that this meeting was fairly short notice for everyone.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m. The next regular meeting is **SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2017** at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall Cowles Council Chambers 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

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RENEE KRAUSE, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_