



# City of Homer

[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov)

## Office of the City Manager

491 East Pioneer Avenue  
Homer, Alaska 99603

[citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov](mailto:citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov)

(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

### MANAGER'S REPORT

June 23, 2014

**TO:** MAYOR WYTHE / HOMER CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** WALT WREDE

#### UPDATES / FOLLOW-UP

NOTE: Some of these items appeared in the last report. I have updated them and brought them back in case the Council wanted to discuss.

1. Town Center Clearing: The Community and the Police Department continue to struggle with illegal activities that are taking place in makeshift camping areas. One of the biggest problem areas for camping and illegal activity is on City land in the Town Center. One of the City lots, directly behind the laundry, is very densely wooded and it is difficult for the Police to see in there, or to leave their vehicles and walk in there safely. We are proposing to do some clearing in that area. The small, densely packed black spruce would come out. Tall healthy trees would stay but be limbed high enough that the police can see in. Carey is talking to the Corps of Engineers about possible permits due to wetlands and to various local contractors about mechanized clearing vs. hand cutting. We will have cost estimates and maybe an action item at the next meeting. Police Chief Mark Robl is prepared to discuss this problem with you in detail. This is a public safety issue that the Police feel should be a priority.
2. PARC Committee: This Committee is scheduled to meet on June 18 to provide final guidance on the contract with the selected consultant re: the needs assessment. The guidance will include the scope of work, benchmarks, deliverables, timetables, etc. Once I get that information, I will negotiate and execute the contract.
3. Load and Launch Ramp: This agenda contains a resolution which if adopted, would approve an amendment to the Cooperative Agreement between the City and ADF&G regarding repair and replacement work at the boat harbor load and launch ramp. The purpose of the amendment is to clarify and more specifically spell out how Phase II of the project, the construction phase, will work. ADF&G, Sport Fish division has taken responsibility for all of the pre-construction work, engineering, design, permitting, through the bidding process. The City will manage the construction phase. The amended Cooperative Agreement will work like a reimbursable grant to the City. We can get into this in a little more detail at the meeting.
4. Green Dot Program: The City has provided support to the Green Dot Program in several ways. You may have noticed the big green dot outside of City Hall. On June 24<sup>th</sup>, I will meet

with Tara Schmidt to talk about Green Dot Training for City staff. I believe this will be important for all City staff members but I want to concentrate first on staff members that have high contact with the public could be in positions where intervening could be helpful. The Library comes immediately to mind.

5. E-Cigarettes: Apparently, there is quite a bit of discussion going on about e-cigarettes and whether they should be included as part of smoking ban rules in public spaces. I have to admit, I am clueless on this subject and will have to get more information. Library Director Ann Dixon informed me that there is a discussion going on among Library Directors and Library Associations about how to handle this. Several Libraries have already included e-cigarettes as part of their smoking regulations, including Palmer and Juneau. Ann thought it would be wise to get out in front of this because it is only a matter of time before somebody lights up an e-cigarette in the library (or City Hall for that matter). Ann wanted to know if the City's current code on smoking was applicable and enforceable. Tom Klinkner is looking into that. So, this is just a heads-up that you might be hearing more about this later. The LAB will discuss it as a policy matter at the next meeting. If we change the code, or decide that the current code covers it, it would likely apply to all city buildings, not just the library.
6. Safety Training: On Wednesday, June 25, the City will conduct an almost all day safety training for new employees and summer temporaries. We are working hard to create a safe working environment, improve awareness of safety generally, and reduce the City's risk. The City recently formed a safety committee that includes representatives from all departments.
7. HR Position: The advertising period for this position closed on June 15<sup>th</sup>. Interviews will be conducted the week of June 23. We hope to have that position filled. In the meantime, Andrea Petersen is still on the payroll and helping us from Reno. Andrea Browning is filling in and helping also, where appropriate.
8. Natural Gas Distribution Project: You have probably noticed that the contractors are making good progress on phase two, the bluff area. It is possible that construction of the distribution system could be completed by early August. They will still be working on tie-ins, restoration work, clean-up, and service lines during that period. Only one easement remains to be obtained on Kachemak Drive and we are hopeful work can begin there soon. I think the contractors are doing an excellent job and most of the feedback I hear from property owners is very positive about what they are doing. Enstar reports that they have about 1,500 service lines either installed or applied for and around 900 meters that are "spinning." At the July 28 meeting, I hope to have a progress report for you. This will include a look at the actual build-out, the status of the project budget, preliminary assessment roll adjustments, and information about the assessments. The report will also include a recommended course of action with respect to assessments for condominium buildings.
9. Mercer Meeting: On June 17<sup>th</sup>, John Li and I met with Mercer Company representatives to discuss the status of the Health Insurance Plan. They provided us with a comprehensive set of statistics which were very informative. I won't go into great detail here but so far, it looks like the changes made to the program are resulting in significant cost savings for the City. We went over the solicitation of bids from the private sector and the type of information that would be most helpful to the Council when Jeff Paxton is here in August.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Community Recreation Program Report
2. Memorandum 14-099 Citizens Academy Report





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## Administration

491 East Pioneer Avenue  
Homer, Alaska 99603

(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

## Memorandum 14-099

TO: Mayor Wythe and Homer City Council  
FROM: Katie Koester, Community and Economic Development Coordinator  
THROUGH: Walt Wrede, City Manager  
DATE: June 16, 2014  
SUBJECT: Final Report of Inaugural 2014 Homer Citizens Academy

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By all accounts the first City of Homer Citizens Academy was a great success; staff got to reflect on the accomplishments of their departments and the participants learned a great deal about how the city functions and came away with a new appreciation for city staff and services. And I dare say, we even had fun doing it!

The Academy was organized into 6 once weekly 2.5 hour long evening meetings from 5:30-8pm on Thursdays from February 20 through March 27, 2014. An additional tour only evening was added on April 3 to give participants a chance to tour the water treatment plant, fire and police stations.

### **2014 Citizens Academy Schedule:**

February 20, 2014: Office of the City Manager, Office of the City Clerk, City Attorney

February 27, 2014: Homer Port and Harbor

March 6, 2014: Homer Public Library, Personnel, Information Technology

March 13, 2014: Public Works

March 20, 2014: Homer Volunteer Fire Department, Homer Police Department

March 27, 2014: Planning, Community Recreation, Finance

April 3, 2014: Tour of Water Treatment Plant, Police Station and Fire Station

Each participant was given a binder on the first day of class and departments added materials to it every week. Most departments prepared a power point that was included in the binder. Whenever possible, the sessions include tours of City facilities. The Port and Harbor tour was especially popular. At the end of the course participants were given information on how they could be involved in local government (boards, commission and Council) including applications forms for City commissions and a list of current vacancies.

### **Profile of Participants:**

14 participants

12 certificated (attended 5 of the 6 classes)

2 were City of Homer staff

1 Council member

2 were non-residents

**Cost:**

The Academy came in over \$1,000 under budget. The largest expense was food. I believe it is absolutely necessary to feed people if you are expecting to hold their attention for almost 3 hours over the dinner time frame. Simple fair like soup or sandwiches was purchased from local vendors. A \$3,000 budget would be sufficient for staff to put on the Academy and have room for small incidentals.

**Budget (\$4,000)**

Advertising (newspapers): \$900

Supplies: \$213

Food/snacks: \$1,446.83

Bus rental: \$203.13

Total Cost: \$2,762.96

**Evaluations:**

At the end of each class participants were asked to fill out an evaluation giving feedback on the quality of the speakers, content, tours/demonstrations and an overall rating.

The average overall rating for all 6 classes was 4.85 out of 5. Some of the notable positive comments were:

-“If everyone liked their job as much as all the people we heard from the world would be a better place.”

-“Very informative”

-“Happy to see City employees so willing to add to their work load to inform us of the policies and procedures.”

-“I can tell that each department will provide a great description of what they do. Thank you.”

The evaluations offered constructive comments too, such as suggestions on how to improve a power point, organize the packet or hand out name tags. This was all valuable information for Academy organizers as the process was fine-tuned throughout the course. Each evaluation was shared with the staff that presented that day. Participants also filled out a final evaluation. It was great to see the positive comments from people who thought it was a good use of their time. The average final evaluation score was 4.9. A summary of the final evaluation form and participants comments is attached.

Staff that presented were also given an evaluation form with suggestions for Academy organizers on how to improve next time. One of the biggest challenges was time. The class often ran over and some departments felt like there was not enough time to adequately explain what they do. The participant’s reaction was mixed: some though more time was needed; others felt like it was a lot of information to absorb and more time would affect retention of information.

**Next Time:**

There was lots of good feedback to incorporate into future Citizen Academies. Based on recommendations, I would make it a 7-8 week course and give Police and Fire more time and add a section on City Council. I would also expand the explanation of how to become involved with local government.



## City of Homer Citizens Academy Final Evaluation Form

### SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

#### Overall Rating

1=Poor; 5=Excellent

**Most departments feel like they did not have enough time. Including the extra tour and nights that went over, the course was almost 20 hours of instruction. Do you think the official course should be expanded from 6 to 8 21/2 hour classes to allow for more in-depth coverage?**

Yes (9) No (3) No response (2)

Comments:

- It's a tossup. It was hard to commit to 6 weeks.
- Every one of my evaluations voice the extra time needed to really take everything from each presentation. It would be nice for some departments to have a whole night to themselves.
- Those citizens who are interested enough to attend 6 classes (plus a separate tour) would also attend 8 classes. I'd avoid offering classes in the summer- that probably goes without saying.
- It is fun; tours are the best part
- Each department does not need equal time. I would not expand City Clerk, Finance or Planning presentations.
- Go from 6 to 7, see how that works
- Not necessarily. As time would be better spent for individual's specific interests that others might not care about.
- More time to educate the Academy member what the City does
- Just right amount of time. They did a great job and anyone that wanted to stayed late.

**Is there an alternate format you think would have been better or increased participation (for example, biweekly, intensive over 1 weekend or 1 week, monthly)?**

- Once a week worked well.
- An intensive one or two weekends might be good – but I'm reminded of the adage: the mind can only absorb as much as the butt can stand.
- I could see this six week course being replaced by two weekend presentations at 8 hours each. The worry is the cost of additional personnel hours.
- I really enjoyed the 1x1 week format. It would not have been able to attend courses over a concentrated week of classes.
- If you expand it I would make it monthly and I would loop in the business community. We should have a business round table with the biggest industries and employees.

- I like the format; including dinner is brilliant (didn't expect that the first night).
- I liked the compact comprehensive presentations
- No, once a week is good – not too much to digest
- Once a week is perfect
- I like the 1x a week format.
- Thursday evenings for 6 weeks fit my schedule perfectly. 5:30 is a good start time. I could easily go another half hour or so to allow more time to complete presentations. I would not favor a compressed schedule on a weekend: I don't have the brain or sit capacity. Every week gives good continuity, which would be lost on biweekly schedule. This was just right.

**Overall Rating: 4.9**

Suggestions for improving next time:

- Food from Vidas Thai
- Integrate all relevant input from this year's Academy
- I think it would be ok to tell participants to brown bag it. The food was wonderful and appreciated after a long day, but it felt wrong to be eating on the taxpayers.
- Very happy by the knowledge I've walked away with. Still have several questions – but each department has made it well know the doors are always open. Thank you for this opportunity.
- The Academy was AWESOME! It would be a benefit if City Council members were required to attend the academy- and I've heard a lot of Academy participants say the same thing.
- I highly recommend the Citizens Academy the way it is!
- I would include tours of Fire/Police/ Also loop in the business community and Health Services. In other words I would expand the Citizens Academy beyond the City Departments into other areas of Homer i.e. Chamber, major employers and health services.
- Handouts should cover slide show at least; more if necessary but otherwise one feels a need to take notes.
- For the time involved the information was invaluable.
- Have departments scope time to do presentations before setting class time allocation.
- As wonderful as I predicted and expected – I am so pleased.
- Was all relevant material – maybe more “local” examples/pictures – I liked how planning used KPC pictures to make her point about drainage.
- This was a great experience. I have followed city functions for a long time and still learned a lot from these presentations. This is an excellent overview of local government that would be a great course for the college or high school to sponsor.





# CITY OF HOMER

Community Recreation  
 600 E. Fairview Avenue  
 Homer, Alaska 99603

Telephone (907) 235-6090  
 Fax (907) 235-8933  
 Web Site  
[www.homercommunityrecreation.com](http://www.homercommunityrecreation.com)

Memo

To: Walt Wrede, City Manager  
 From: Mike Illg, Community Recreation Coordinator  
 Date: 6/17/2014  
 Re: City of Homer Community Recreation Report

The City of Homer Community Recreation program continues to be very popular service for our community members. Our activities through a partnership with the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District are located at Homer High School, Homer Middle School, West Homer Elementary and the city owned HERC building. Our mission statement is:

*“The City of Homer Community Recreation will promote community involvement and life-long learning through educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages. This will be accomplished through maximizing usage of all community facilities and resources, while utilizing, expanding and uniting local business and school resources and expertise. Our program shall be designed to recognize cultural diversity and to address social and community concerns.”*

## Statistics

Year	Events	Programs	Part. 0-19	20 & up	Total	Visits	Revenue	Volunteers	Vol. Hours	Vol. Value
2011	6	116	1,295	1,567	2,862	15,021	\$30,158	76	2,632	\$56,272
2012	5	96	1,258	1,765	3,023	18,000	\$29,264	84	2,358	\$51,781
2013	5	91	1,575	1,719	3,294	13,957	\$33,227	75	2,925	\$64,233

In 2011, there was **2,632** donated volunteer hours, in 2012, **2,358** hours and in 2013, **2,925** hours for a total of **7,915** donated volunteer hours over the last three years. This equates to a monetary value of **\$173,813 (\$29.96/hour\*)**.

Recreation Coordinator supervises **47 individual volunteers** who often volunteer for multiple activities and **27 contracted instructors**.

\*Source: [http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer\\_time.html](http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html)

2013-14 Classes & Events			
SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	Winter
SPEC. EVENT	SPEC. EVENT	SPEC. EVENT	SPEC. EVENT
Wrestling Tournament	Spit Run	Ski Swap	Telluride Film Fest (2)
Safe Kids Fair/Bike Rodeo		Hunter Safety	Ski Swap
PRESCHOOL		PRESCHOOL	PRESCHOOL
PlayGroup		PlayGroup	PlayGroup
YOUTH & TEEN	YOUTH & TEEN	YOUTH & TEEN	YOUTH & TEEN
Popeye Wrestling	Girl's Basketball	Gymnastics Young Beg.	Playgroup
Bruin Youth Basketball	Youth Wrestling	Gym. Young Beg. Equ.	Youth Kayaking
Youth Karate	Youth Basketball	Gym. Beg. T&V	Youth Karate
Young Beg. Tumbling	Zumba Kids	Gym. Inter. T&V	Popeye Wrestling
Beginner Tumbling	Zumba Jr.	Gym.Beg. Equ.	ARTS & CRAFTS
Beginner II Tumbling	Tumbling	Gym. Advance	Lost Wax Casting
Intermediate Tumbling	Gymnastics	Playgroup	Silversmith 1
Advanced Tumbling	Gymn. Equipment	Youth Kayaking	Inter. Silversmith
Beginner Equipment	Youth Karate	Youth Karate	
Advanced Equipment	MIXED AGES	Youth BB Camp	RECREATION
Youth Soccer	Fencing	Bruin BB	Dodgeball
	Weight Room		Pickleball
RECREATION	Adult Karate	ARTS & CRAFTS	Volleyball League
Pickleball Mon.	Pick Up Basketball	Lost Wax Casting	Women's BB League
Pickleball Wed.	Morning BB	Silversmith 1	Fencing
Pickleball Fri.	Wed. Volleyball	Inter. Silversmith	Climbing
Ping Pong	Ping Pong		Tuesday Basketball
Wednesday Basketball	Tango Dance		Thursday Basketball
Tuesday Basketball	Pick Up Soccer	RECREATION	BB Sponsorship
Thursday Basketball	Pickleball Mon.	Pickleball Mon.	BB League
Women's Soccer	Pickleball Wed.	Pickleball Wed.	Sunday Soccer
Sunday Soccer	Pickleball Fri.	Pickleball Fri.	Wednesday Soccer
Wednesday Soccer		Dodgeball	Women's Soccer
Friday Soccer		Pickleball	Beginner Volleyball
Beginner Volleyball		Volleyball League	Advanced Volleyball
Advanced Volleyball		Fencing	Pickleball Mon.
Ball Room Dance		Climbing	Pickleball Wed.
Bellydance 1		Tuesday Basketball	Pickleball Fri.
Bellydance 2		Thursday Basketball	DANCE
Climbing		BB Sponsorship	Ball Room Dance
Fencing		BB League	Bellydance 1
		Sunday Soccer	Bellydance 2
		Wednesday Soccer	
HEALTH & FITNESS			HEALTH & FITNESS
Weight Room		Women's Soccer	Weight Room
Karate		Beginner Volleyball	Karate
HOME & SAFETY		Advanced Volleyball	Pilates
Hunter Ed		Women's BB League	Tai Chi
Spanish		DANCE	
Online Classes		Tango	

	Bellydance 1	<b>HOME &amp; SAFETY</b>
	Ball Room Dance	Spanish
		Refurbish Class
	<b>HEALTH &amp; FITNESS</b>	Online Classes
	Weight Room	
	Karate	
	Pilates	
	Tai Chi	
	<b>HOME &amp; SAFETY</b>	
	Spanish	
	Online Classes	

Growing programs Every year we are seeing an increase in participation with existing programs and the request for new activities.

- Popeye Youth wrestling (90+)
- Pickle Ball (30+)
- Bruins Youth Basketball (40+)
- Pick Up Basketball (at least 20 participants each night) 3 times a week

NEW Activities

- Co-Ed Volleyball (over 60 participants) for participants ages 16 and older.
- Women’s Basketball League (participants 16 and up) (40 participants)
- Zumba Kids & Zumba Kids Jr (summer classes)
- Dodge Ball
- Ball Room dancing
- Contra Dancing

I will report that there have been numerous request for classes and activities from community members, potential volunteers and instructors but we simply do not have the time and space to meet these requests. Another indicator of increase participation is the revenue collected so far. As of June 17, 2014, CR has collected **\$20,700** in class fees compared to \$15,000 in 2013 and \$12,000 in 2012.

School Climate

I am very pleased to report that there has been excellent support and communication from local school administration and staff for the Community Recreation program. This makes a huge difference in trying to operate and schedule programs around school district activities. Because school district activities have precedent over CR activities, there are times when our programs are cancelled or moved. I am also working with the school district in regards to assisting with scheduling local field activity during the summer months.

### Artificial turf

The presence of artificial turf in our community will expand the recreation and wellness opportunities for visitors and local alike. While it is a borough field, there are expectations to have many activities on the field beyond school district activities, including organized CR activities. I will and have been working closely with the school and borough staff to assist with facilitating use. The presence of the artificial field will allow for activities beyond the typical summer months usage and allow for additional events within the shoulder seasons providing a boost to the local economy with visiting teams making their way to Homer.

### Alaska Recreation & Parks Association (ARPA) 2015 Conference

I am excited to announce that the Alaska Recreation & Parks Association (ARPA) Conference will be held in Homer in the fall of 2015. The Alaska Recreation & Parks Association is the state chapter of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and has over 250 plus members of parks and recreation professionals from different agencies throughout the state. The five major branches of this organization are: aquatics, citizen's board, parks maintenance, recreation services, therapeutic & adaptive recreation and wild lands. Parks and recreation services play a significant role throughout Alaska's tourism industry and this will be an opportunity to showcase Homer's parks and recreation infrastructure and services while providing educational and informational sessions to the participants. We will be requesting the City's support and participation as we continue to plan for this exciting event.

### Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Needs Assessment

This important needs assessment will ideally provide adequate information and feedback from the community in regards to parks, arts, recreation and culture in the Homer community. I believe this will be an important document not only for the Homer residents utilizing local services but will also help the greater Homer area plan for the future relating to quality of life, economic development and tourism.

HERC Building

The demand for using the HERC gym is extremely strong and apparent as CR had to turn away activities requested by community members. Here is a typical schedule:

GYM	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
10:30-12PM	Playgroup				Playgroup		
12-1PM	Pickle Ball					Open Gym	
2-4PM		Youth BB					Youth BB
3:30-5PM	Youth Wrestling		Youth Wrestling	Youth Wrestling	Youth Wrestling		
5:30-8PM	Pickleball	Women's BB	Pickleball		Pickleball		

All of these activities simply would not take place if the HERC gym was not available. While some of these activities have been in the schools, many have been bumped from the schools moving the activities to the HERC. There is also a significant amount of participants at the local skateboard park and basketball court located in the HERC property. These passive recreational opportunities are difficult to estimate how many people are using them but I would guess 10-20 throughout the day.

**HERC Gym Stats**

**Jan. 2013 to present**

Activity	When	Participants	Visits	Revenue
<b>Playgroup</b>	Sept-Apr Year	107	853	\$909
<b>Pickle Ball</b>	Round	60	2608	\$4,194
<b>Youth Basketball</b>	Feb-Mar	58	1329	\$637
<b>Youth Wrestling</b>	Feb-Apr	92	4416	\$1,418
<b>Women's Basketball</b>	Mar-May	25	325	\$1,000
<b>Total:</b>		<b>342</b>	<b>9531</b>	<b>\$8,158</b>

There are many proven studies that proves municipal recreational services provide many important and beneficial results including; increasing property values, attracting businesses to a community, reducing crime, extend life expectancy, improve quality of life, reduce childhood obesity (see stats below), strengthen neighborhoods and sense of community and attracting new residents to a community. While our community enjoys and offers many outdoor recreational opportunities during the warmer summer months, the Community Recreation program strives to fulfill the crucial need of indoor recreational opportunities during the colder months, especially considering our state has the highest rates of depression and suicide in the United States.

While I understand there are current discussions with potential alternate uses of the HERC building/property, I highly recommend that this building/property be designated for parks and recreation purposes considering its current use, historical use, proximity to local schools and downtown foot traffic.

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services shares that obesity continues to be a serious health concern in Alaska. In 2011, 65% of adults were overweight or obese and the state has high rates of childhood and youth obesity. Overweight and obesity are alarming because both conditions increase the risk for a number of health problems, including chronic diseases, which can lead to reduced quality of life, premature death, and substantial healthcare - and productivity-related costs.

- 26% of Alaskan high school students are overweight or obese; 12% are classified as obese (2013)
- 45% of Alaskan high school students drink one or more soda or sugary drink each day (2013).
- 52% of Alaskan high school students watch TV, videos, or use a computer for non-academic reasons for three or more hours of each day (2013).
- 79% of Alaskan high school students do not meet the physical activity recommendation of 60 minutes every day (2013).
- 75% of Alaskan adults do not meet the aerobic and muscle strengthening physical activity recommendation (2011)
- 74% of Alaskan adults watch TV, videos, DVDS or use a computer outside of work for more than 2 hours every day (2011)
- 42% of Alaskan adults drink at least one sugar sweetened beverage soda a day (2011)

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Obesity/default.aspx>