



City of Homer

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MANAGER'S REPORT

September 8, 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. Tsunami Warning System: As most of you know, we had another false alarm this past week which caused quite a bit of disruption and anxiety for a short period of time. Police Dispatch, the Port and Harbor Office and City Hall spent a fair amount of time fielding phone calls and helping to get the information out that it was a false alarm. Homer, Seward, Seldovia and Nanwalek were affected. NOAA reports that it was a computer glitch. What was supposed to be a test message came across that way on the weather radios. Unfortunately, it came across as a real warning on the sirens. Chief Painter, Chief Robl, and Port and Harbor Director Bryan Hawkins have all been communicating with the Borough Office of Emergency Management about this incident. One positive outcome was that the manually activated "all clear" message worked.
2. Public Safety Building Open House: There is an open house this Wednesday, September 10th, at 6 PM here at City Hall. The purpose of the open house is to give the public an opportunity to learn more about the proposed new public safety building. Emphasis will be placed on the deficiencies of the two existing buildings and the space needs analysis. Attached is a flyer announcing the event. We encourage the public to come, get informed, and get involved in the discussion during the early stages of planning.
3. Public Safety Building Committee Requests: At the last Council meeting, Committee Chair Ken Castner stated that it would be really helpful to the Committee going forward if the Council could give it guidance on two specific issues: 1) Is the Council "locked in" on the HERC property as the location for the public safety building? Does the Committee have the green light to evaluate additional sites or would it be wasting time and energy by doing so? 2) Is the Council open to the idea of having a private company build the building and entering into a lease agreement? On the first question, the City Clerks researched the record and no resolution specifically naming the HERC site as the location for the building could be found. There are numerous memorandums and project descriptions which mention this site as a preferred location. There are many reasons why the Council initially

identified this as a likely location. Those reasons included location, parcel size, terrain, access, ownership, proximity to utilities, already developed infrastructure, a local match for outside funding, etc. However, the Council has not specifically or unequivocally identified this site as the location for the building. I think the idea was to wait for a recommendation from the Committee and the Consultants. I agree that it would be helpful to let the Committee know where the Council is on this.

On the second question, this is an option the Council has not discussed with respect to the public safety building. Some of you will recall that it was part of the discussion when the new city hall in Town Center was being considered. The Council at that time decided that it was more in the long term public interest to own the building and finance it with public dollars than it would be to lease. In this case, there are clearly advantages and disadvantages to leasing.

Much depends upon how the lease is structured. For example, if the City owned the building and the ground under it at the end of the lease term, leasing might be worth considering. There are many variables that would have to be taken into consideration. Who pays for building maintenance and repair? Those types of considerations would be addressed through the proposal and lease negotiation process. Following is a quick snapshot of some advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages

- The financing package could come together quicker.
- Initial investment made by the private sector and not the taxpayers
- The City does not incur long term debt, in the conventional sense.
- HVFD and HPD could occupy the building quicker.

Disadvantages

- The City may have less control over location
- The City may be making lease payments for many years instead of loan payments on a building it owns.
- Leasing might take away the City's ability to leverage other public funds.
- Homer taxpayers could end up paying the full cost of the building.
- A large, probably outside investor, or group of investors, would need to be involved, and they would be looking to recoup their investment and turn a profit. That is not a bad thing. We just need to be cognizant of who is paying for it.

That is a very brief outline of some of the considerations. Again, I agree with Ken that it is important for the Council to rule this option in or out at some point soon. If the Council wants to pursue the lease option, the strategy will be important. For example, if Council wants to design the building itself and select the location, it may have a little time. Then you are simply telling investors you want them to build this building at this location and if

they do so, you will lease it from them. If you want to solicit proposals for a building with basic space needs only specified, we should think about doing that sooner.

4. CUP 13-12 Remand: CUP 13-12, the one having to do with a proposed communications tower, was remanded from the Board of Adjustment back to the Planning Commission. City Planner Rick Abboud requested that the Council be informed that the permit applicant, Kodiak Microwave System, LLC has withdrawn its application. Therefore, no further action is planned or scheduled related to this remand.
5. Strategic Planning: Attached is a brief update on the October 25 Strategic Planning session. Katie will be available to discuss this with you at the meeting if there are comments or questions.
6. Kachemak City Sewer Agreement and Fee Schedule Changes: This agenda contains Resolution 14-008 (sewer agreement) and Resolution 14-088 (Fee Schedule amendments) under Pending Business. They were postponed at the last meeting in order to give the Kachemak City Council time to review the agreement. It turns out that Kachemak City was not able to schedule a meeting until Wednesday, September 10th. So, I will be asking you to postpone these two resolutions again, until September 22. In the meantime, I am working with Holly on some of the amendments requested by Councilmember Burgess.
7. Ordinance 14-45: Ordinance 14-45 is the ordinance which addresses appeals to the Board of Adjustment. This ordinance appears under pending business instead of under public hearings and second reading, as you might expect. The reason for that is we were reminded that this ordinance amends Title 21 and therefore, must be reviewed by the Planning Commission. So, we placed this ordinance under Pending Business and will request that Council postpone it until the PC can review it. They will do so at the next available meeting.
8. DOT/PF Scoping Meeting / MP 157-169 / Anchor Point to Baycrest Hill: DOT/PF will be holding public scoping meetings on September 15 and 16 to gather public input on the Sterling Highway MP 157-169 (Anchor Point to Baycrest Hill) project. (AKSAS#58106). Anticipated work includes reconstructing the roadway, realigning horizontal and vertical curves, adding passing and climbing lanes, improving intersections, replacing culverts, constructing a bridge over the North Fork Anchor River, replacing the bridge over the South Fork Anchor River, increasing shoulder width, and clearing vegetation. A copy of the flyer announcing the meetings is attached.
9. Hospice of Homer Open House: Attached is an invitation from Hospice of Homer to the Mayor and Council to attend the open house at their new facility on Wednesday, Oct. 15, from 5 to 7 PM. As always, please notify the Clerk if you plan to attend so we can put out a public notice if necessary.
10. Karen Hornaday Park Fire Circle Project: Attached is a copy of a letter from the Homer Foundation that was written to Public Works Director Carey Meyer. A fire circle is an important component of the Karen Hornaday Park Improvement Plan. This park has benefitted frequently from collaborative community effort and the fire circle is just another example. Many thanks to the Rotary Club, the Homer Foundation, and the Homer Playground project for their support.

11. Kachemak Bay Research Reserve: Things are looking up and appear to be moving in a good direction concerning the Research Reserve. You will recall that State Funding and support was in jeopardy this spring and the Council adopted a Resolution of support and authorized the staff and the City Lobbyist to work on the issue with the legislature. I have been representing the City at Reserve Community Council meetings and there will be another one this coming week. At this point, it looks like the Reserve will partnering with and possibly become part of the University of Alaska, Anchorage. This is potentially a very positive development on several levels.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Public Safety Building Open House Flyer
2. Library Director's Report
3. Memorandum 14-137 from Community & Economic Development Coordinator, Re: Plan Selection for Strategic Implementation Planning
4. Flyer / Sterling Highway Anchor Point to Baycrest Project
5. Hospice of Homer / Invitation to Open House
6. Karen Hornaday Park Fire Circle Project