



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Clerk

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Homer, Alaska 99603


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Memorandum Agenda Changes/Supplemental Packet

TO: MAYOR WYTHE AND HOMER CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JO JOHNSON, MMC, CITY CLERK 

DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2014

SUBJECT: AGENDA CHANGES AND SUPPLEMENTAL PACKET

CONSENT AGENDA

Ordinance 14-51, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Appropriating Funds for the Calendar Year 2015 for the General Fund, the Water-Sewer Fund, the Port/Harbor Fund, Debt Funds, and Capital Reserve Funds (Conditional Expenditures).
City Manager.

Written public comments

Page 3

Resolution 14-110, A Resolution of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Designating the Homer Education and Recreation Complex (HERC) Site as the Location for the Proposed New Homer Public Safety Building. Mayor.

Written public comments

Page 5

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager's Report of October 27, 2014

Page 21

Memorandum 14-170 from Deputy City Planner, Re: PARC Needs Assessment Page 23

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ordinance 14-49, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending Homer City Code 21.03.040, Definitions; Homer City Code 21.12.030, 21.14.030, 21.16.030, 21.18.030,

21.24.030, 21.26.020, 21.26.030, 21.28.030, 21.30.030, and 21.32.030, Conditional Uses and Structures; and Homer City Code and Permitted Uses and Structures, to Define the Terms Helipad and Hospital, to Delete Heliport as a Conditional Use in the Rural Residential, Urban Residential, Central Business District, General Commercial 1, Marine Commercial and Open Space – Recreation Zoning Districts; to Delete Heliport as a Permitted Use in the General Commercial 2 District, to Add Helipad as a Conditional Use Accessory to a Hospital in the Residential Office Zoning District and as a Conditional Use in the General Commercial 2 and Marine Industrial Zoning Districts, and to Add Heliport as a Conditional Use in the General Commercial 2 District. Planning.

Written public comments

Page 25

RECOMMENDATION:

Voice consensus to changes under Agenda Approval.

Fiscal Note: N/A



Our Mission: To support our membership through cooperative economic development and community service.

Monday, October 27, 2014

City Manager
City of Homer
491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, AK 99603

Dear Walt,

The Homer Chamber of Commerce thanks you, the Mayor, and the City Council for the \$51,000 in the 2014 City budget to assist the Chamber in its continued marketing efforts on behalf of Homer. I also appreciate working with you and the Council to produce a three-year Marketing Agreement that takes us through this coming year and 2016.

We respectfully request that you continue to support the Chamber's effort to market our fair city with an appropriation for 2015. As we said on Oct. 13th when we presented our Annual Report to the Council, we ask that the contract amount be increased to \$65,000 so we can work on the new initiatives we spoke about, and make Homer's reach greater on a number of different levels.

I am grateful for your continued confidence in the Chamber to market Homer effectively and enthusiastically.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Lavrakas".

Jim Lavrakas
Executive Director
Homer Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center
201 Sterling Highway
Homer, AK 99603

Cc: Katie Koester, Community and Economic Development Coordinator



This petition has collected
71 signatures
using the online tools at iPetitions.com

Printed on 2014-10-24

Protect the only Recreational Site in Homer! Keep the designated use of the Old Middle School Site for school and community purposes!

About this petition

We, the City of Homer residents and surrounding community members, petition the City of Homer City Council and the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly members to maintain and dedicate the property (Parcel number 17510070) known as the HERC (Homer Education & Recreation Complex), formerly Boys & Girls Club or the Old Middle School for Recreational, Cultural and Educational purposes as the intended and preferred use for greater benefit of the community. The facilities, classroom space, gymnasium, green space, skateboard park and basketball court are important and essential to the well being of the community and desired to be preserved, upgraded and used for current and future activities for community members of all ages.

Signatures

1. Name: Kate Crowley on 2014-09-21 18:41:58
Comments:

2. Name: Miranda Weiss on 2014-10-02 05:28:33
Comments: I use the HERC building almost weekly in winter with my small kids. We need that space—it's the only indoor recreation area of its kind in Homer.

3. Name: Ken Goldman on 2014-10-02 05:31:51
Comments:

4. Name: Melanie Dufour on 2014-10-02 05:37:07
Comments:

5. Name: scott simmons on 2014-10-02 05:59:13
Comments: rumor is a fitness center and half basketball court are included in the \$20+million public safety building . Reserved for department personnel . If true , only thing I think is sociopathic

6. Name: Jeanne Parker on 2014-10-02 06:02:05
Comments:

7. Name: Leah on 2014-10-02 06:02:45
Comments: While I understand the need for a new city complex, I think the recreational space for our youth is even more important.

8. Name: Ember Jackinsky on 2014-10-02 11:34:15
Comments:

9. Name: Britt Milne on 2014-10-02 13:42:57
Comments:

10. Name: Sonja Franciscone on 2014-10-02 13:45:43
Comments:

11. Name: Shelly Laukitis on 2014-10-02 15:26:10
Comments:

12. Name: Donna Beran on 2014-10-02 15:43:36
Comments:

13. Name: Jean Hughes on 2014-10-02 18:48:36

Comments:

-
14. Name: Deb Cox on 2014-10-02 19:27:57
Comments:
-
15. Name: Amy Alderfer on 2014-10-02 19:29:09
Comments:
-
16. Name: Theresa Smircich on 2014-10-02 19:39:17
Comments:
-
17. Name: Shay Lowney on 2014-10-02 20:18:56
Comments:
-
18. Name: Jay Pearson on 2014-10-02 20:36:09
Comments:
-
19. Name: Karen Shelby on 2014-10-02 20:45:26
Comments:
-
20. Name: Jim Stearns on 2014-10-02 20:57:03
Comments: Desperately need a place to keep kids off the street
-
21. Name: Vanesa fefelov on 2014-10-02 21:53:11
Comments:
-
22. Name: Tara Schmidt on 2014-10-03 06:20:22
Comments: The Herc building is a mess. But that does not mean we should entirely scrap a lot that is a resource for children. The mural, the skate park... when I first drove into Homer, I saw that and thought "This is a town that really prioritizes children. There are other solutions to upgrading the building than converting it into a jail. The people in Homer are resourceful, tenacious, and creative; if you keep the building around we will revitalize it.
-
23. Name: Darcy Mueller on 2014-10-03 06:39:30
Comments:
-
24. Name: Elizabeth Bolling on 2014-10-03 06:40:37
Comments:
-
25. Name: Joe Hoanin on 2014-10-03 07:40:23
Comments:
-

26. Name: Jake on 2014-10-03 10:25:12
Comments:
-
27. Name: Allison Lentz on 2014-10-03 15:30:47
Comments:
-
28. Name: Sierra Smith on 2014-10-03 19:22:20
Comments:
-
29. Name: Myra Ryan on 2014-10-03 21:03:51
Comments:
-
30. Name: Andrea Van Dinther on 2014-10-03 21:51:48
Comments: Please keep the designated use of the middle school in place as a recreational site.
-
31. Name: Jaime Roth on 2014-10-03 22:29:15
Comments:
-
32. Name: Candy Morris on 2014-10-03 22:49:15
Comments:
-
33. Name: Janet Rumble on 2014-10-04 00:16:56
Comments:
-
34. Name: Kesha Etwiler on 2014-10-04 00:26:46
Comments:
-
35. Name: Laura Brooks on 2014-10-04 04:53:48
Comments:
-
36. Name: Kim Perkins on 2014-10-04 05:07:11
Comments:
-
37. Name: Nicky Pinsky on 2014-10-04 13:05:04
Comments:
-
38. Name: Tayler Beacham on 2014-10-05 02:42:16
Comments: Keep it open!! We need it!!
-
39. Name: Chris Etwiler on 2014-10-05 16:13:50
Comments: Keep it OPEN!!!!!!

-
40. Name: Zelda Collett-Paule on 2014-10-05 22:03:30
Comments:
-
41. Name: Evan Anderson on 2014-10-06 20:32:19
Comments:
-
42. Name: Sallie Dodd Butters on 2014-10-06 20:37:43
Comments: Keep the only Recreational Site in Homer! Keep the designated use of the Old Middle School Site for school and community purposes!
-
43. Name: barbara kennedy on 2014-10-06 21:43:31
Comments:
-
44. Name: Rob Lund on 2014-10-06 22:14:28
Comments:
-
45. Name: Lani Raymond on 2014-10-06 23:39:36
Comments: There is a great need for this building to be used and not demolished.
-
46. Name: Jim Lavrakas on 2014-10-07 02:03:53
Comments: If not the building, at least the site should be considered for a recreation facility.
-
47. Name: Toby Wheeler on 2014-10-07 02:22:08
Comments:
-
48. Name: Nina Faust on 2014-10-07 04:01:08
Comments: This was originally a school site. If Homer grows, there may be a need to expand school facilities next to the current Homer Middle School. Good land for schools that appropriately sited next to existing school buildings, away from conflicting uses, should be protected for future use. The KPB Assembly was wise to put this deed restriction on the property. It should remain as intended.
-
49. Name: Jack Wiles on 2014-10-07 04:02:43
Comments: If not here then when and where - Homer step up to its image of a quality of life - recreation services are what makes a community great.
-
50. Name: Carolyn Choate on 2014-10-07 05:38:33
Comments:
-
51. Name: PeggyEllen Kleinleder on 2014-10-07 06:10:30
Comments:

-
52. Name: Denice and Roger Clyne on 2014-10-07 06:26:26
Comments: I agree with the petitioner and other signees! Save the HERC for Recreation!
-
53. Name: Philip Eherenman on 2014-10-07 07:22:10
Comments: Please keep the HERC building designated for recreational and community purposes! Thank you!!
-
54. Name: Jeremy Master on 2014-10-07 07:31:32
Comments:
-
55. Name: Colleen Powers on 2014-10-07 08:07:05
Comments: This building was designated for recreation and education and should remain that way. The City needs to listen to the community instead of making decisions in their own vacuum and hiring firms to create data that goes along with what they want to do. I taught as a sub in the Homer Middle School there, participated in dances in the gym, attended classes and had educational meetings in the building, worked with the Boys & Girls Club, and got married in the gym, so I am passionately for the continued community recreation use and totally against it being destroyed and replaced with the new safety conglomerate. I think it's a bad decision to have the police station the first thing visitors see when they drive into town. It would be the ultimate irony: Bulldoze the recreation center/after school prevention program and build a bigger jail.
-
56. Name: Amy Rattenbury on 2014-10-07 16:02:14
Comments: Homer needs a dedicated recreation site for our community, we are the ONLY municipality of our size in Alaska that does not have a community recreation center. Spread the word, it's not too late to let the council and City of Homer know that we need safe, fun recreational opportunities to keep our kids and elders active as well as ourselves!
-
57. Name: Brett Glidden on 2014-10-07 17:01:03
Comments:
-
58. Name: Andrea Stineff on 2014-10-07 18:39:12
Comments:
-
59. Name: Christy Russ on 2014-10-07 19:17:06
Comments: In a climate where it's difficult to use outdoor recreation sites for 7-9 months out of the year, Homer has a strong need for an indoor recreational facility that the whole community could use. It may not be the HERC building but the Parks and Rec Needs Assessment should be allowed to be completed before that site is turned into a Public Safety Building or sold or leveraged in order to do so.
-
60. Name: Barbara Wyatt on 2014-10-08 14:35:38
Comments:

-
61. Name: EVA STOVALL on 2014-10-09 17:57:28
Comments:
-
62. Name: Sophie Morin on 2014-10-09 23:28:45
Comments:
-
63. Name: Susan Amundson on 2014-10-10 03:10:26
Comments:
-
64. Name: Lolita Brache on 2014-10-10 17:27:18
Comments:
-
65. Name: Milli Martin on 2014-10-11 15:58:29
Comments: I urge the Assembly to vote NO on Ordinance 2014, until there is more support for this from the greater Homer community.
-
66. Name: Megan Bigelow on 2014-10-12 02:56:55
Comments:
-
67. Name: Steve Hughes on 2014-10-12 17:31:38
Comments: I favor keeping the HERC site. Is it necessary to have the fire dept. and police station on the same property? How about moving the police dept. to city owned land by the dog pound and keeping the fire station where it is with the ability to expand into the vacated police propert.
-
68. Name: Patricia Boone on 2014-10-15 05:31:24
Comments:
-
69. Name: Monica Anderson on 2014-10-21 04:18:59
Comments:
-
70. Name: rebekah theriot on 2014-10-21 05:43:35
Comments:
-
71. Name: Lisa Asselin M. on 2014-10-22 00:01:20
Comments:
-

Jo Johnson

From: Sandra Cronland <scronland@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2014 9:44 AM
To: Department Clerk
Subject: HERC

Dear City of Homer Council Members,

Thank you for your consideration and RE-consideration of the fate of the HERC facility and its continuous use for recreational purposes. The HERC gym and adjacent multi-purpose room has provided community members with thousands of hours of recreational opportunities throughout the year. Having this recreational facility makes a huge difference in building and maintaining a healthy lifestyle here in Homer. Thank you for your consideration.

Sandy Cronland
399-7678

--
Namaste
Sandy

Sandy Cronland and Billy Day
Twin Creeks Trailhead Lodge
65195 Nearly Level Ave
Homer, Ak 99603
www.twincreekstrailhead.com

Jo Johnson

From: William Bloom <akbillbloom@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2014 9:46 AM
To: Department Clerk
Subject: Homer Education and Recreation Center

Hello City Council of Homer,

I just wanted to remind people that HERC stands for Homer Education and Recreation Center.

Doesn't it seem odd that we would tear down a recreation center and build a jail?

Thanks, Bill Bloom

Jo Johnson

From: Holly Van Pelt <hvpmak@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 26, 2014 9:34 PM
To: Department Clerk
Subject: Recreation and HERC site

Hello City of Homer Council Members,

I am writing to express my concern over the developing process to select a building site for the proposed police and fire station. The committee that was tasked with studying and developing a recommendation for a suitable site was given a restrictive set of parameters to which they had to adhere. In doing so it allowed for only one site to be considered: the HERC site. I ask that this single possible choice be expanded in number by liberalizing the criteria that a site must adhere to. Many Homer citizens have made similar suggestions as well.

Another concern that I have is the possibility of the recreational HERC site be rendered unusable and the gym be demolished before it is certain that local support and funding will be solidly in hand to allow a new fire and police station to be built. I am also concerned that it a far distant target to guarantee funding for a replacement recreational facility. I ask that the Council members make a greater effort to avoid sacrificing one community asset to achieve another. I feel that we need the recreational opportunities that we already have as well as agree with the need for better facilities for community fire and safety.

I read in the newspapers today that the continued drop in the price of oil is going to mean even greater decreases in state oil income and ever larger budget deficits. It concerns me greatly that I do not hear from city council members any talk of adopting a more conservative fiscal attitude. How many times can we expect to go before the legislature with our hand out for money to build these public safety facilities and then come again with our hand out asking for more money to build a replacement recreational facilities?

Please reconsider this course of action and know that the community values its access to a safe, effective place to exercise.

Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts and again, thank you for the time you give to us in your city council duties.

Holly Van Pelt
City of Homer resident
907-299-0695

Jo Johnson

From: doug <dugdodd@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 25, 2014 7:22 AM
To: Department Clerk
Subject: HERC

Please find a way to keep the HERC gym. Yes, I know it costs money, but once lost it will never be replaced.

Doug Dodd
PO Box 381
Homer 99603

Jo Johnson

From: Jeanne Parker <jeannemena@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2014 1:05 AM
To: Department Clerk
Subject: HERC site
Attachments: letter to homer city council.docx

To the Homer City Council,

I cannot attend tonight's meeting because I am teaching a Community Recreation Gymnastics class. My afterschool Beginning Gymnastics class is currently being held at the HERC building and is full with 18 children and a waiting list. My Intermediate and Advanced classes are held at the High School Mat room in the evenings only, and are also full. These classes are cancelled from time to time with a two week (hopefully) notice due to High School scheduling conflicts.

I have spoken to the Council and the Public Safety Committee that is currently advising the City Council, about my concerns over the speed and one-track method that is being used to select a site for a new Public Safety Building.

I strongly oppose adoption of the resolution to choose the site where the current HERC building is located. Without the support of the public, bringing this proposal to the legislature to ask for money to move forward with this project will be counterproductive. One of the reasons for not supporting the choice of this site is due to the need for community recreational facilities outside of the public schools. Currently the HERC building is filling some of these needs, and a new recreational facility is a far off and not easy to accomplish dream.

I am very concerned that only one site has been chosen for consideration to be used for a new Public Safety Building. A rubric for assessing sites was established. Being over 4 acres was worth 5 points out of 100 but all other sites were eliminated, and not evaluated at all, due to being less than 4 acres. I do not understand why the rubric was not used for all sites, as there was at least one other very feasible site that came close to 4 acres (3.6). There were also lease options that were on the table until the City Council presented and passed a resolution in one meeting, stating that the site for the future Public Safety Building must be owned by the City of Homer.

I am pleased to see that the conversation about recreation in Homer, and its importance to the health and safety of our community, is beginning to see the light of day. I would like to speak to the misinformation being spread by people calling the HERC facility "derelict" and "un-safe". When the subject of asbestos is brought up, it needs to be understood that the asbestos in the HERC building has been encapsulated and is safe. The hazard (and expense) to the public comes when the asbestos is disturbed, as it would be if the facility were to be torn down. Older buildings can be safely used, especially when there is no other option available in the near future.

I would like to refer the council members to the information on the site for the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Home/Asbestos-In-The-Home/>. This site covers information about asbestos in homes or buildings, and recommends encapsulation rather than removal of asbestos. Here is a quote from that site:

"THE BEST THING TO DO WITH ASBESTOS MATERIAL IN GOOD CONDITION IS TO LEAVE IT ALONE! Disturbing it may create a health hazard where none existed before. Read this before you have any asbestos material inspected, removed, or repaired."

Where is the flexibility needed to address the inadequacies that face our police and fire department without pitting our citizens against public safety if they are for recreation? How expensive and unsafe would it be to dismantle the present facility? Why is the City Council willing to make a decision to dismantle this facility without waiting for the results of the recreational needs assessment? Why is a shared site for a new Public Safety Building the only option being looked at, if there is only one site that fits the acreage requirements? Why is the process being funneled towards this site and this site only, with little regard to the people bringing their concerns up about the site being chosen? Where is the Democratic Process?

There are so many questions and concerns not being addressed. I am asking the City of Homer to please slow down and come up with answers before moving on with choosing a site for this project. The results from the Recreational needs assessment will be coming out in April, which will provide everyone with a lot more information about the recreational needs of the Homer area. I believe that recreation and public safety are two pieces of the same equation. It would be better to move slowly and have a plan that is based on good information than to go quickly and leave out important pieces that we will regret in the future.

I am speaking as a concerned citizen and an advocate for a healthy community,

Jeanne Parker

--

"I ask myself, is it just a wild flight of imagination to conceive of a world without war...but someone must try..." Julia Grace Wales

Spring catalogue and gymnastics schedule at <https://sites.google.com/site/jeannesyurt/>

Jo Johnson

From: Wilfred C Files <will@wfiles.us>
Sent: Friday, October 24, 2014 9:08 PM
To: Department Clerk
Subject: HERC

Hello City of Homer Council Members,

There has been considerable discussion of the HERC building, as well as the need for an expansion of the Fire/Public Safety facilities.

I have been amazed at the amount of use in both the HERC gym and the adjacent room. It seems a shame to eliminate these two areas before there are even plans for any other indoor space for recreation, or other educational needs. It would be a huge loss to lose this area for the health and welfare of the citizens of our communities on the Southern Kenai Peninsula.

It is totally understandable that Public Safety must be a priority also. It would seem to make sense to utilize the current Borough Maintenance land, and to make whatever upgrades are necessary to that total land area. This area has not shown up on the most recent proposals for location, but it seems that it is central to the entire southern Peninsula and would make good sense for quick access to the most homes and people. It should not be too difficult to relocate the Borough operations. Although slightly under 3 acres, I believe that space would work.

Please reconsider your intent to demolish the HERC facility, and preserve it for educational and/or recreational purposes.

I am a resident of Kachemak City, but a frequent user of City of Homer infrastructure, including stores, for which I gladly pay sales tax. I also contribute much volunteer time to organizations in and around the City of Homer. I appreciate the quality of life with which we are blessed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Will

Will Files
299-2990



City of Homer

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MANAGER'S REPORT

October 27, 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. MAPP Request for Support: Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) is applying for a \$200,000 Federal HRSA grant to support their work on family issues in Homer. The City Council passed Resolution 12-085 in 2012 in support of the previous HRSA grant application which was funded and was used for strategic planning. MAPP has requested a resolution of support for this grant application as well. Unfortunately, a communication malfunction prevented a resolution from making it on this agenda and the application deadline will have passed by the next time the Council meets on November 24. Therefore, I will go ahead and write a letter of support on behalf of the Council and the City, unless there are objections from Council members.
2. PARC Needs Assessment Update: At the last meeting, Matt Steffy, the PARC Chair fielded some questions regarding the PARC initial needs assessment survey. After the meeting, I realized that the Council had not been briefed on the full assessment strategy and the thinking behind it. I asked Julie to write a memo summarizing the research methodology for the Council. That memorandum is attached. I have scheduled a PARC visitor presentation for the meeting on November 24. The purpose of that presentation is to provide an update on how the Needs Assessment is progressing so far. Updates on the community meetings will be included. Also, several Council members have asked recently how arts and culture got added into this assessment when the original intent of the Council was parks and recreation. This was explained to the Council at a presentation early on by Matt Steffy but you may not recall. This issue can also be addressed non November 24. I understand that a PARC representative may also be present at this meeting to make some comments on this topic.
3. Harbor Electric Upgrades: As some of you may be aware, the electrical upgrades installed in the harbor had some unintended consequences and the harbor staff have been scrambling to find a solution. Attached is a memorandum from the Deputy harbormaster

to vessel owners explaining that the state has granted a temporary grace period for implementing GFI protection and the requirements of the electrical code.

4. Budget Memorandums: The budget is scheduled to be introduced by ordinance at this meeting, October 27. Resolutions on the fee schedule and the Port and Harbor tariff are attached to it. A budget briefing and discussion is scheduled for both the 4 PM Special Meeting and the 5 PM Committee of the Whole. After the ordinance is introduced, it becomes the Council's budget and can be amended as Council deems appropriate. As always, we should have more current revenue information later in November.
5. Benefits Consultant RFP: This agenda contains a resolution sponsored by Council Member Burgess which calls for an RFP for benefits consultant services. In most circumstances, I would be totally in agreement with this. Our current contract with Mercer has been for three years. Seeking proposals would be a good idea if we thought we needed these services again in 2015. However, if the Council agrees to move to a fully insured private plan, we may not need a consultant at all. And if we do need one, it would be for a significantly reduced fee and scope of work. This is what we recommend. Given that the contract would be smaller, we have an already established relationship with Mercer, Mercer is familiar with the City, its benefits, and its employees, and we could use help with the transition, we recommend a smaller contract, for six months or a year, and that we stay with Mercer. In my view, they have provided excellent service.
6. Natural Gas: We are working with Enstar to finalize the total construction cost, checking the preliminary assessment roll, and other activities. Council can expect a report on the Natural Gas Special Assessment District at the next meeting on November 24.
7. AML / AMMA: I will be attending the AML and Alaska Municipal Managers meetings in Anchorage the week of November 17. I do not require a vehicle or lodging while in Anchorage. I will pay the registration fees myself since I am soon leaving City service. I think there is still value to the City in having me attend.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Memorandum 14-170, re: PARC Needs Assessment Strategy
2. Communication to vessel owners re: GFI protection



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Planning

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Planning@ci.homer.ak.us

(p) 907-235-3106

(f) 907-235-3118

Memorandum 14-170

TO: Mayor Wythe and Homer City Council
THROUGH: Walt Wrede, City Manager
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Deputy City Planner
DATE: October 27, 2014
SUBJECT: PARC Needs Assessment

Recently, a few more questions about the needs assessment have come up; what about the HERC building, and why are we assessing art and culture. The purpose of this memo is to address them as time allows. A full project update will be presented to Council at the November 24th meeting.

The HERC and the Needs Assessment

With the decisions about the new Public Safety Building, there is also a discussion about the HERC building. These discussions will continue as options are explored on that site. The Needs Assessment is not going to answer all our questions about the HERC building, nor should it. The Assessment WILL provide our community and decision makers with information, from which to make these future decisions about the HERC.

The consultants wrote a little bit about the HERC:

“The needs assessment provides an opportunity for us as a community to step back from individual projects and look at the universe of PARC programs and facilities in the Homer area. This allows us to see where participation has been shifting among programs and facilities, and where the potential lies for new ways in how we coordinate our PARC amenities. It is relatively easy – and useful – to focus attention on a physical building as a future home for our community’s dream programs. The prospect of a physical space, helps us to imagine and define in very real, concrete terms what we hope to achieve. However, there may be other alternative spaces that could work as well or even better than a proposed new facility for the programming we are trying to maintain. These types of opportunities will be explored through the needs assessment, and will lead to better facility management down the road, whether for new or existing facilities.”

Art and Culture as Part of the Needs Assessment

(With input from Kate Crowley, ReCreat Rec)

Funding for the needs assessment was awarded after the budget discussions last year. The Pratt was on the chopping block and the City was expressing the need to address the constant lack of funding for what they referred to as "extras". With the inclusion of the Arts and Culture community in the funding discussion, it seemed relevant to try and problem solve the lack of municipal funding from year to year. Also, the research and comparisons of Recreation Departments in similar sized cities are not just Parks and Recreation departments anymore...they include Arts and Culture. Reliable municipal funding for such programs helps to secure other sources of funding and can cancel out duplicity of asking and giving to such programs.

Walt Wrede

To: Walt Wrede
Subject: FW: Homer Harbor Shore Power Update

From: Matt Clarke <MClarke@ci.homer.ak.us>
Date: October 15, 2014 at 11:22:32 AM AKDT
Cc: Bryan Hawkins <BHawkins@ci.homer.ak.us>
Subject: **Homer Harbor Shore Power Update**

Attention Vessel Owners and Operators:

The Homer Harbor has temporarily disabled the GFI protection on the new shore power electricity in the mooring area known as system 5 (accessible by ramp 8). This is the dock utilized by crabbers, tenders, and freight vessels.

The state of Alaska recently granted the Port of Homer a **grace period through August 15, 2015**, to disable the GFI protection and allow for our customers whose ships' electrical systems are not compatible with a GFI protected electricity, the time to plan and budget for the work necessary to retrofit their electrical systems in order to become GFI compatible. The state recognized the urgency of the situation, that being, even if all of our affected vessel owners were ready to proceed, the source of materials and professional expertise are limited in our community, and the work could simply not be completed before winter sets in.

The bottom line is, we have completed our shore power electricity system upgrade per the state of Alaska electrical code requirements, effectively tripling the number of services available, and our fleet currently has the access to the shore power it needs.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Regards,

Matt Clarke
Deputy Harbormaster
Port of Homer, Alaska
(907) 235-3160

TO: Homer town counsel

FROM: Duane Howe
41640 Gladys Court
Homer, AK 99603

Date: October 26, 2014

Subject: It is proposed that Heliports and Helipads will be allowed a Conditional Use Permit in General Commercial 2 along Kachemak Drive, and that Helipads will be allowed a Conditional Use Permit in Marine Industrial on the Spit.

Reasons for additional numbers of helicopters to land and take off along Kachemak Drive is not given, therefore passing an ordinance to allow these helicopter landings makes no sense. Helicopters are already allowed on the airport where they already obtain fuel, so why would one need any other locations to do the same things within just a mile or two? Helicopters are very noisy as are all the airplanes that use the airport, which decreases the property values of all of the private residences in that area. It makes no sense to allow for the increased amount of traffic and noise for those landowners to tolerate.

The use of helicopters on the spit is not explained either, but whatever the reason might be it is not likely to prevent the helicopters from beginning and ending at the airport like the others. The presence of large numbers of shorebirds on the spit is a good reason not to allow the use of helicopters there, especially in the spring months. But there are shorebirds along with several other species present on or near the spit nearly ten months of the year. The portions of the spit labeled conservation cannot be separated from the non-conservation areas to allow the presence of helicopters near one and not the other, which makes it difficult to use helicopters across the spit without affecting all of the various portions.

The Homer area has become home for a large number of eagles since they were artificially fed on the spit over winter for many years. This was a result of human activity. The use of helicopters is another form of human activity. The large number of predatory eagles has lead to an annual loss of some prey hird species. The presence of the airport also has an effect on hirds of various species during the year, and the effects are always negative. The airport is being tolerated because it provides more advantages than disadvantage for the people overall. The addition of helicopters in more of the area than they presently use would just he another problem for the birds. Many helicopters are already flying out of the airport every day. We cannot keep affecting wildlife in negative ways without decreasing their numbers even more than we already are in too many ways throughout their ranges across their world. There has to be a limit. I think this limit is close to being met here, at least with all the eagles, airplanes and helicopters.

I must ask that these requests for ordinances be denied.

Thank you.

Jo Johnson

From: Dale Chorman <dalechorman@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 24, 2014 12:33 PM
To: Jo Johnson
Subject: Helicopters

Please do not allow commercial helicopters on the spit...to much impact with sound and hard on birds!

Sent from my iPad

Jo Johnson

From: Tami Reiser <tkreiser@gci.net>
Sent: Friday, October 24, 2014 8:26 PM
To: Department Clerk
Subject: Helicopter use

To the Honorable Mayor and Councilmen and Councilwomen of Homer;

I want to add my concern and objections to allowing helipads and heliports to Kachemak Drive and to the Homer Spit.

I have lived in Homer almost 20 years and am newly retired. This summer I spent a considerable amount of time on the spit and around Beluga Lake. I was amazed at the amount of birds and wildlife I observed, and amazed at the number of tourists that I met. I noticed that while the floatplane activity had no effect on the various birds in and around the lake, any helicopter activity stirred them up, causing most to take flight. I witnessed a helicopter practicing picking up huge loads of water on different days, disturbing the shorebirds that were in the grassy area at the east end of the lake. The helicopter was not near them when it picked up the water, but disturbed them as it flew over. With the critical habitat on the spit I am fearful that allowing helicopter landings out there will disturb and/or destroy nesting birds and resident birds. This in turn hurts the economy of Homer, as this area is well-known as a birding hotspot. Many of the tourists I met were here specifically to 'bird.'

We have an airport and there is plenty of space there for helicopters. If there are tourists or residents who would like to charter a flight across the bay, the helicopter company merely needs to do as the fishing charters do...set up an office and advertise on the spit, or around town, and then transport their clients to the helipad at the airport. In addition, in case of an accident, emergency responders would have easy access in case of an emergency, as would clean-up crews in case of environmental problems.

As a resident of this city I strongly object to helicopters taking off and landing anywhere other than the airport. I live right next to the hospital and I know exactly how much noise and wind (and the duration of both) a helicopter causes. While I have no objection to the helipad at the hospital I see no reason for helicopters to be based anywhere other than the airport.

Thank you for your time and service,
Tamara Reiser
4251 Hohe St
Homer, AK
907235-3934

Jo Johnson

From: Susan McLane <macsmith869@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 24, 2014 10:32 AM
To: Jo Johnson
Subject: Helicopters

City Council and Mayor: Please reject the proposals to allow heliport and helicopter landings on the Homer Spit. The noise and disturbance from the wind generated is detrimental to wildlife (especially birdlife) and very annoying to people. The airport is certainly close enough to accommodate helicopter traffic and is the proper place for this traffic. Industrial work on the Spit is essential but not that which disrupts wildlife as much as helicopter traffic. I was involved in the Shorebird census last spring and it was obvious that flyovers by helicopters is very disruptive and future increase of this traffic as well as the close proximity if the Spit is used as a base will be very detrimental to bird life, not only migrating populations but also to the residential nesting birds. Please consider the effect on wildlife and citizens who use the Spit for recreation as well as work and turn down these proposals. Thank you for your time. Hal Smith MD,
Susan McLane

Jo Johnson

From: Seaside Adventure <seasideadventure@earthlink.net>
Sent: Friday, October 24, 2014 10:45 AM
To: Jo Johnson
Subject: Heliports

I want to get on record for strongly opposing heliports and helipads anywhere in Homer but at the airport and the hospital. These existing locations are all that's needed for a small community like Homer. Helicopter traffic is extremely noisy, and would cause a significant disturbance for residents and visitors alike, and the community as a whole would suffer from this nuisance for the benefit of a handful of helicopter users, who already have convenient access at the centrally located airport. If you have any experience with helicopters flying over or land nearby, you know how the noise is so loud, that it drowns out any conversation or even a potential emergency alert. Do you really think our visitors want to walk on the Spit, watch eagles and otters and have a helicopter land close by? The few users of helicopters only have to drive a few minutes to go to the airport from anywhere in Homer.

Thank you,

Dorla Harness
PO Box 3066
Homer AK 99603

Jo Johnson

From: michael Bavers <mbavers@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 22, 2014 3:17 PM
To: Jo Johnson
Cc: kbayconservation@gmail.com
Subject: heliports

Homer City Clerk

I wish to go on record as being strongly and unalterably opposed to any heliports in Homer other than the Homer Airport and the one currently at the hospital.

Helicopters are annoyingly noisy and seriously degrade the quality of life of those of us who enjoy our peace and quiet.

There is no need for additional landing areas for these aircraft.

michael bavarsky
east end road
Homer

Jo Johnson

From: Susie Baxter <smbaxter12@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2014 6:06 AM
To: Jo Johnson
Subject: Helipad on the Spit

To Whom It May Concern,

I, as a citizen of Homer of 12 years, oppose a Helipad on the spit. I believe the airport is sufficient for our small community. Having a Heliport would add too much disruptive activity and the noise would be more of a disturbance and a distraction for the already busy summer spit visitors. I also believe that a Helipad would disturb the shorebird population that return yearly to nest.

Sincerely,
Susie Baxter
smbaxter12@gmail.com

Jo Johnson

From: Nina Faust <aknina51@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 22, 2014 5:04 PM
To: Jo Johnson
Subject: Helipads--Please distribute to City Council Members

P.O. Box 2994
Homer, AK 99603

October 22, 2014

Homer City Council
City of Homer
Homer AK 99603

Dear Council Members:

I am opposed to heliports in areas of Homer other than the airport and the hospital. I do not support allowing helipads in the Bridge Creek area. Even though Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) will be required, I object to the additional noise helicopter take offs and landings would bring to parts of town that are now relatively quiet, the increased hazards to surrounding properties in case of an accident, potential reduction in property values nearby residences may suffer, and finally, the lack of certainty for property owners as to whether or not their properties may have a heliport nearby.

Helicopters are a contentious issue. Other communities have grappled with this problem. One common complaint about helicopter businesses, particularly flightseeing, is noise. I can imagine the frustrations property owners who currently enjoy relative peace and quiet but are adjacent to areas that were zoned commercial by the city will have if a helipad is granted a heliport CUP nearby. I believe the city is better served by keeping this noisy and potentially dangerous activity in the airport area where there are already emergency response vehicles in case of a crash or fire.

If the business requesting a CUP is a flightseeing business, the noise from many take offs and landings will be a huge annoyance to all neighborhoods surrounding the helipad. Conflicts will increase as Homer grows.

Bringing helicopter flights to other parts of the community that were not meant to be a flight zone for frequent helicopter landings is an unreasonable use to impose on those that would have to live with it. These helipads could conflict with and impact nearby Conservation Areas set aside for bird habitat. Also, the FAA would not be controlling the take offs and landings at heliports, an added concern. The airport is in a convenient location, so it would be sensible for companies needing helicopter support to be sited there.

Let's not mix this Incompatible use right into the midst of our community. We are truly fortunate not to have this noisy industry plunked down in commercial zones where there are already people living in nearby neighborhoods who have invested in their homes. Granting a CUP for a helicopter-based business surrounded by the rest of the community weighs more heavily toward that one person or business and does not adequately consider the huge investment by all the rest of the surrounding property owners.

Let's keep Homer a place of quiet beauty by not allowing helicopter traffic into the rest of Homer. Keep helicopters confined to the airport.

Sincerely,

Nina Faust

Jo Johnson

From: Louis Dupree <captlou3@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2014 9:32 AM
To: Jo Johnson
Subject: Helicopters

Dear City Clerk

I want to strongly oppose the use of helicopters on the Homer Spit. I am a part time water taxi driver and I believe the only place for helicopters is at the airport.

I use to be captain of a large boat that had a helicopter pad on the boat, so I am very aware of the danger and noise that they cause.

Please do not them land on the spit.

thank you
Louis Dupree
Homer

Jo Johnson

From: Wendy <aksk8wmn@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2014 10:58 AM
To: Jo Johnson
Subject: proposed heliports/helicopter activities in Homer

We are writing to express our opposition to additional heliports/helicopter activity in places other than the Homer airport or the hospital. Helicopter operations are extremely noisy and disturb the peace that Homer residents (and visitors) desire. Helicopter operations can also be dangerous such that the risk of an accident anywhere other than the airport poses unnecessary hazards to visitors and residents. Given that the airport is at most 10 minutes away from any location in Homer or the Spit, it serves the public interest to restrict helicopter activities to the airport which is designed to handle such operations. Helicopter landings at the hospital may present a slightly different case in which a quick emergency response may outweigh potential impacts to residents- but these should be rare instances.

In conclusion, consolidating helicopter operations noise and risks to the airport serves the public interest whereas spreading it throughout commercial and residential areas for the convenience of a few businesses does not.

Sincerely,
Wendy and Paul Anderson
59250 Ohlson Mtn Rd

Sent from my iPad

Jo Johnson

From: Wendy <aksk8wmn@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2014 10:58 AM
To: Jo Johnson
Subject: proposed heliports/helicopter activities in Homer

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In conclusion, consolidating helicopter operations noise and risks to the airport serves the public interest whereas spreading it throughout commercial and residential areas for the convenience of a few businesses does not.

Sincerely,
Wendy and Paul Anderson
59250 Ohlson Mtn Rd

Sent from my iPad

Jo Johnson

From: Lani Raymond <lanir67@alaska.net>
Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2014 11:54 AM
To: Jo Johnson
Subject: Letter for the City Council Meeting: 10-27-14
Attachments: Commnets on Heliport.docx

(Please distribute a copy of this letter to the members of the City Council.
Thank you.)

Hello.

On behalf of the Kachemak Bay Birders group, I'm attaching comments that we submitted when this topic last arose in May 2013.

Although this attached letter specifically references Conditional Permit Application #13-07, the points made in the letter are relevant to the current proposal to allow helipads with a CUP in General Commercial 2 along Kachemak Drive, Marine Industrial on the spit, and as an accessory to the South Peninsula Hospital in the Residential Office Zoning District.

We would appreciate inclusion of this letter in the comments provided to the City Council.

Thank you!

- Jason Sodergren for Kachemak Bay Birders (chair)
jason@taiga.com
907-399-2330



<http://kachemakbaybirders.org/>

May 29, 2013

Homer Advisory Planning Commission
491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

Dear Commission Members:

Kachemak Bay Birders, a Homer-based birding club, wishes to comment on the Conditional Use Permit Application 13-07 from Eric Lee to establish a heliport on the Homer Spit. Based on our knowledge of birds in the Homer Spit area, we believe that a heliport meant for general aviation (which is what is being proposed) poses a very high risk to both people and birds. In addition, we know from our observations on the Homer Spit that low flying helicopter traffic is more disruptive to migrating birds than planes, often causing evasive flight.

Not all species of birds pose significant risk to aircraft but large, gliding birds definitely do. Gulls and eagles, which routinely glide up and down the spit at low elevation while foraging, will be particularly risky to helicopters that are landing and taking off on the spit. This situation is totally dismissed by the applicant when he says; "The helicopter creates no more of a hazard than the many aircraft that fly transit the spit to get to and from both the Homer Airport." The aircraft he refers to are not flying at the same elevation as these birds. Not being aware of these subtle differences seems to us to increase the potential for a helicopter/bird collision.

For the past five years the Kachemak Bay Birders has been monitoring the spring shorebird migration on the Homer Spit. Our protocol asks the observer to note any disturbances to shorebirds. From these observations we know that helicopters are more disruptive than planes because their flight pattern approaches flocks of birds feeding and resting in the intertidal area. Only planes taking off are noisy and their flight pattern and noise is away from, not directed to the birds. Numerous scientific studies (available upon request) have documented the disproportional impact of helicopters on migratory birds, compared to fixed-winged aircraft. Again, the applicant over generalizes and does not seem to be aware of what is or is not a risk or disturbance.

We are concerned that the disturbance of a helicopter pad on the spit to migratory shorebirds might reduce the value of Homer as a destination for eco-tourists and birdwatchers, especially during the shorebird festival. Other communities in the region (e.g. Kenai, Seward, Cordova, Yakutat) are beginning to cash in on their migratory birds to attract visitors, sometimes in direct competition to our popular Homer events. Increased helicopter traffic on the spit would devalue

Homer as a destination for human and avian visitors alike, resulting in very tangible negative impacts for the Homer business community.

Unfortunately, the FAA does not oversee development of heliports for general aviation use. The FAA says in its Part 139 Airport Certification document that “it is not in the public interest to certificate heliports at this time and has exempted operators of heliports from complying with Part 139 requirements... Heliports typically are used by general aviation operators and serve very few air carrier operations....Congress has not given FAA the authority to certificate facilities serving general aviation operations.” This means that the burden and knowledge needed to avoid the risks and liabilities associated with this Conditional Use Permit Application now rest with the Homer Advisory Planning Commission. We urge that unless you feel absolutely certain that there will be no risk or nuisance resulting from the proposed heliport that you take the rational precautionary approach and deny the Conditional Use Permit 13-07.

Also, we note that denying this permit application does not preclude offering helicopter services in the Kachemak Bay area. Helicopter service will still be available at the Homer Airport. Though travel of an extra mile or two from a cruise ship may not be as convenient, the extra convenience of a heliport in the middle of the spit is not at all worth the risk and nuisance to the public and birds.

We thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George Matz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

George Matz, Chair

Jo Johnson

From: Lani Raymond <lani67@alaska.net>
Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2014 11:50 AM
To: Jo Johnson
Subject: Letter for the City Council

Would you please give a copy this letter to each member of the City Council for the meeting on the 27th. Thank you.

41640 Gladys Ct
Homer, AK 99603

October 22, 2014
(Revised, originally submitted: 5-30-13)

Homer City Council
City of Homer
Homer, AK 99603

Dear City Council:

The City should not allow helicopters to land and take off from the Spit. There are numerous reasons for this:

The most obvious reason is that **it does not have to be done**. The alternative of having people transported a very short distance in 5-10 minutes to the airport where there are safe, appropriate aviation facilities already in place.

There are too many birds, some of them large, which would be dangerous for takeoffs/landings. These birds do not deserve to be killed off by the FAA just so helicopters can safely land there. The airport is the safe, logical place for this activity.

Noise from helicopters is annoying to everyone (except the people in the helicopter perhaps). Why do we want to degrade the Spit in this manner? Business people who have housing facilities, the large hotel at Land's End, the Condo owners will be greatly affected as this noise would increase from year to year. Tourists and locals who come to the spit to eat a meal or shop, people who walk the beaches and anyone who enjoys spending time on the Spit for relaxation or exercise will be adversely affected.

The City plan for the Spit states that the natural beauty and quality of the Spit were to be preserved. How can the interests of one, tiny infinitesimal sliver of the population be more important than all the people who come to enjoy our Spit? Especially if this tiny sliver will

greatly decrease the value and enjoyment for all others? And most especially since the airport, an existing, appropriate facility, is only minutes away!!

When the City considers what to allow out there, it should consider if **by allowing one particular activity, others—and in this case many other activities—are going to be seriously degraded?** The value to us all, locals and tourists, out on the Spit of being able to walk on our beaches and trails and enjoy the beauty of this area are priceless. The helicopters can use the airport!

Lani Raymond

Jo Johnson

From: Lani Raymond <lani67@alaska.net>
Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2014 11:38 AM
To: Jo Johnson
Subject: Letter for the City Council

Would you please give a copy this letter to each member of the City Council for the meeting on the 27th. Thank you.

41640 Gladys Ct
Homer, AK 99603

October 22, 2014

Homer City Council
City of Homer
Homer, AK 99603

Dear City Council:

I am opposed to helicopter facilities in additional areas of Homer, that is, in any other area besides the hospital and the airport. Permission should not be given for any additional facilities on the Spit or on Kachemak Drive.

I believe additional helicopter sites in Homer would have a major impact:

Increased noise over the town, especially bad in adjacent neighborhoods and below the flight path for takeoffs and landings. Research has shown that helicopters are much more disruptive to people and wildlife than fixed-wing plane flight noise.

Increased danger to neighborhood residents and property and to small planes in the vicinity. Away from the airport, there would be no flight control.

Decreased property values surrounding each facility and the threat to future neighborhood development of not knowing where/when these might be built.

Decreased desirability of Homer as a tourist destination. Homer would eventually become a very noisy place to visit especially out on the spit.

Potential negative effect on and disturbance of migratory birds and wildlife in these areas.

With the exception of necessary hospital traffic, helicopter traffic should be confined to the airport because there is adequate safety and communication equipment and trained personnel there in case of an accident or fire. There would always be a traffic control official

on duty. The noise would not affect all those other areas of town. The airport is centrally located—close to the spit and Kachemak Drive.

Homer is such a beautiful, special place. A treasure to be cherished. Allowing helicopters in those other areas would have a major negative impact on Homer and would not be a wise thing to do.

Lani Raymond