



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Manager

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Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Melissa Jacobsen, City Clerk/Acting City Manager
DATE: October 6, 2021
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for October 11, 2021 Council Meeting

Safeway Development

Earth is moving next to Safeway and across the highway by the Aspen Hotel. Planning has received several phone calls from citizens wondering what is happening! Safeway has two projects: one is a small store addition on the east side, and the other is a parking lot expansion on the west side. The store addition will not create any new customer space; it's all refrigeration and storage space to support store operations. You may have also noticed the paint and facelift to the front of the building. The existing store parking lot will also receive some landscaping upgrades. The parking lot expansion to the west towards Poopdeck will include a few spaces for RVs and vehicles with boat trailers.



Meanwhile out at the Harbor

The mobile offshore drilling unit Randolph Yost arrived in Kachemak Bay Sunday morning to the surprise of the hillside residents. The Randolph Yost was showing up for a date with the Heavy lift ship Falcon in a carefully coordinated event. The Tugs Michelle Foss and Anna T were brought in to tow the rig down from its last work site in the upper Inlet where it met up with, and was loaded onto, the deck of the Falcon Monday. Loading onto a heavy lift ship is a slow and fascinating process which involves ballasting the lift ship's deck down below the surface of the ocean lower than the draft of the vessel being loaded. The tugs then carefully maneuver the floating Rig into position, centered over the lift ship's submerged deck, and the lift ship pumps the ballast out and ever so slowly lifts the Yost out of the water as it

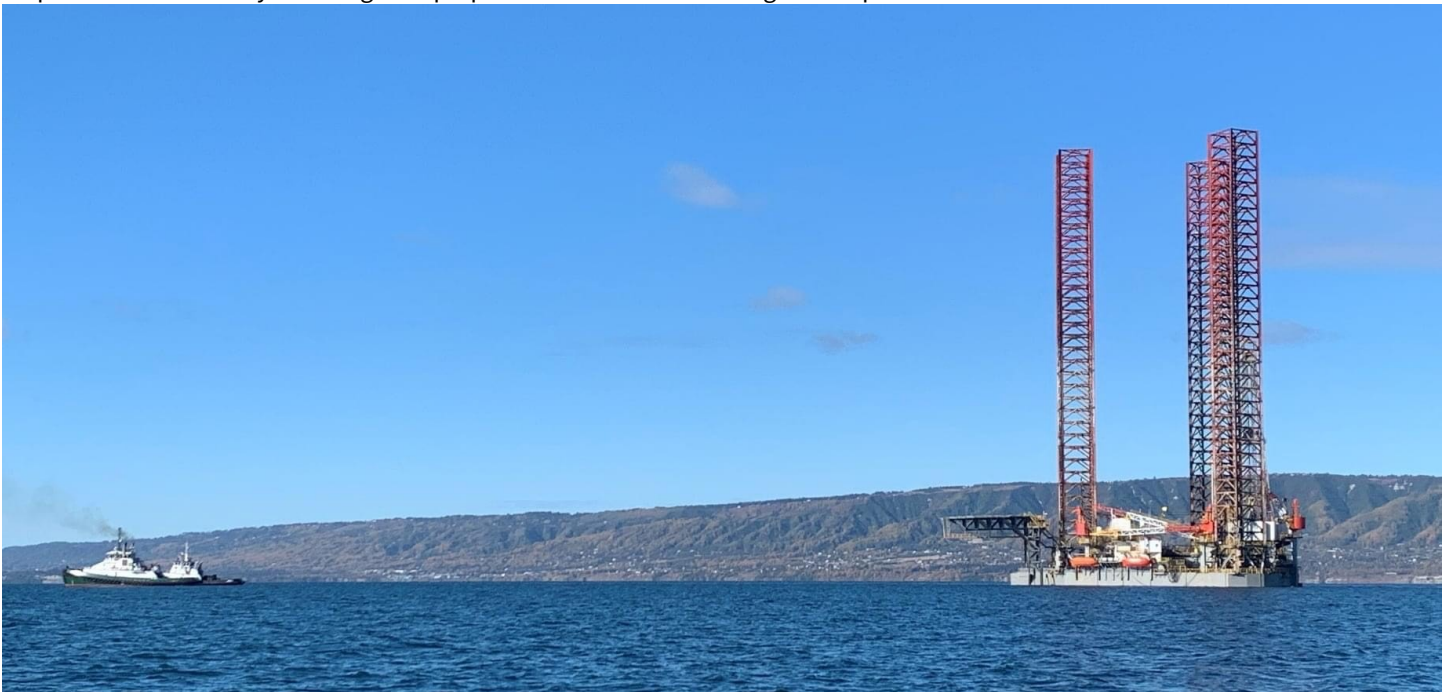
raises itself from underneath. The tugs utilized the Port while there were in the area and although the deep water dock had a reservation date for the Randolph Yost it was only as a backup plan in case a ship was delayed in arriving or for some other unforeseen development. We are happy to say it wasn't needed as the vessel load-out went off as planned.



Jack-up drill rig Randolph Youst with its 400' legs fully elevated



Ship decks intentionally submerged in preparation to load the drill rig Randolph Youst



Tugs Michelle Foss and Anna T towing the Randolph Youst

Over at the Library

After several months of searching, we have hired a new Youth Services Librarian! Cinda Nofziger has worked in libraries for many years, most recently in Michigan, and has family ties to Homer. Her tentative start date is Nov. 1. Susan Jeffres has assumed some duties in children's programming, including running the Leap into Science program over the next six months. I expect her to work closely with Cinda in the youth services area, especially once we can resume full-scale programs. Kevin completed security training and a background check, which permits him to take on more sophisticated technology work at the City level. We bid farewell to Savanna Bradley, whose last day of work is Oct. 1. Savanna has gone far beyond the expectations for a summer temporary worker and left an enduring mark on

the library. Work is progressing on the memorial bench for Duffy Murnane, which is scheduled to be placed on the south side of the library, overlooking Hazel Ave., towards the end of October. The bench features sculpted figures commemorating the missing and lost. It also includes a glowing torch that will be wired into the library's electrical system. The Friends of the Homer Library book-and-plant sale was a resounding success, a welcome touch of pre-COVID normality. All the plants sold out by noon on Saturday, and most of the books sold as well. The scale was smaller than in a normal year, but much bigger than 2020. Kudos to all the volunteers who showed up early and stayed late, sorted and organized, and moved tons of materials around!

Down the hall in IT

Problems with the sound quality in the council chambers have been mostly solved, though occasional hiccups will still occur. For now, all audio will be run through the dial-in setup. ProComm Alaska carried out extensive work in Homer from Sept. 7-14 and again Sept. 28-Oct. 2. This project upgrades and standardizes radio communications across the City. Phase I of the project to replace the departmental servers has begun. The City placed orders for replacing the equipment at City Hall on Sept. 29, with a hoped-for arrival date around the end of December. Phase II, which involves replacing servers at other departments across the City, will move forward after more discussion with Council.

Across the State

You may recall back in May, Peter Torkelson, Executive Director of the Redistricting Board presented to Council on the redistricting process and schedule. Mr. Torkelson has advised that the Board has adopted proposed maps and is coming to Homer for an Open House on October 13 from 5-7pm at the Best Western/Bidarka Inn. Stop by to ask questions and provide comments. They'll be bringing lots of maps!

And last but not least, Elections

Election Day was October 5th and the two weeks leading up to it were very busy in the Clerk's office with absentee voting for the City and Borough Elections. Rachel stayed busy assisting absentee in person voters at the window, averaging 30 voters per day for the first 10 days. Renee provided backup for Rachel and also led the by-mail process for the 146 absentee by mail requests, getting those ballots out and verified upon their return. Melissa processed electronic ballots, and provided backup to the frontline team. The day before the election it was all hands on deck in the Clerk's Office as 108 absentee in person voters made their way to City Hall to cast their ballots. Election Day saw a steady stream of voters at all the precincts. As of the writing of this report, we're busy preparing for election certification that's scheduled for Friday, October 8th. This was our first year working in collaboration with the Kenai Peninsula Borough Clerk's office and also serving as the KPB Regional Hub for elections, and overall things went really well. The new election equipment was a huge improvement over the 30 year old machines we've been struggling with for the last few years, and it was great having the light and easy to set up accessible voting units on site. Once elections are wrapped up and certified, we'll be meeting with the Borough Clerk's office for an election debrief where we'll highlight the successes and talk about ways to improve for next year. We had great teams of precinct workers this year and we appreciate their service to the community. Anyone interested in serving as a poll worker can contact the City Clerk's office for more information.

Attachment:

Memorandum 21-174 Re: KPB Tax Foreclosure on Kachemak Drive Lots



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Memorandum 21-174

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
THROUGH: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Deputy City Planner & Special Projects Coordinator
DATE: October 7, 2021
SUBJECT: Kachemak Drive Lots

Background

Council may recall that the Borough has two tax foreclosure properties on Kachemak Drive. In August, Council had the opportunity to retain the lands for a public purpose. The two properties available to the city had combined special assessments of nearly \$73,000, and the Council determined the City did not wish to retain the lots. The information from the City Manager's Report of August 4, 2021, is included below.

Current Situation

Staff was contacted in October by the Borough, to double check that the city understood that due to the foreclosure process, **all** assessments would be voided. The city would never receive any payments, because the foreclosure process 'wipes clean' any liens against the property. The combined water, sewer and natural gas assessments are nearly \$73,000 total for the two lots. At this point, staff contacted the City Attorney on what options the City has.

In discussions with the City Attorney, an analysis of the City's approach to delinquent special assessments is important. Preliminary steps in this regard are underway and should include an analysis of City code, AS 29.45. (Municipal Taxation) and AS 29 46 (Special Assessments).

A potential approach is for the Kenai Borough to include delinquent special assessments in its tax foreclosure process. Another approach is for the City to foreclose on delinquent special assessments which follows the same process as the collection of delinquent property tax. Some municipalities combine the collection of delinquent property and special assessments in the same judicial foreclosure action.

Both of the options above require a court filing. The Borough still owns the properties, and the Assembly is scheduled to make a decision to dispose of the lands at the end of October. The City could choose to retain the lands. This would allow the City pursue legal options to collect the special assessments and avoid involving either the Borough or a future private land owner in those proceedings.

Recommendations:

1. Request the Kenai Peninsula Borough to convey these lands to the City for a public purpose.
2. As time allows, continue to work with the attorney on any court filings needed to collect payment on these assessments, without the Kenia Peninsula Borough as the intermediary.

8/4/2021 City Manager's Report Except, and minutes:

The Kenai Peninsula Borough is offering tax foreclosed properties to cities, if the lands can be used for a public purpose. There are two lots within Homer City limits that are available, located on Kachemak Drive. The City would be responsible for back property taxes and fees of approximately \$3,000. The two lots are fairly wet and have unpaid water, sewer and natural gas assessments of approximately \$73,000 (\$36,000 per lot). These lots are about half an acre in size, with tax assessed values of about \$8,700.

The value for the city is that the northern lot (28-A) is part of a road connection shown in the Transportation Plan that would serve the area for an expanded boatyard and mixed use industrial area. This lot does have a road easement already, but it's possible that additional right of way will be necessary. The southern lot (28-D) has less value for the city, although mitigation or storm water management could be a use. Staff will further research whether a roadway is practical on the northern lot. If it is, staff intends to notify the Borough that the City would like to acquire the northern lot only for public roadway purposes, and will bring an ordinance to the City Council for the Borough's back taxes and fees. If Council would like to go a different direction or discuss the opportunity further, the issue can be placed on the next agenda. Formal response is due to the Borough by August 30th.

Minutes excerpt: Councilmembers Venuti, Aderhold, and Lord commented in response to the Borough tax foreclosed properties in the City and that they don't see any value in requesting conveyance of those properties.

Legal Descriptions:

17909003

T 6S R 13W SEC 14 SEWARD MERIDIAN HM 0630311 SUBDIVISION OF LOT 27 & 28 SEC 14 T6S R13W LOT 28A

17909004

T 6S R 13W SEC 14 SEWARD MERIDIAN HM 0630311 SUBDIVISION OF LOT 27 & 28 SEC 14 T6S R13W LOT 28D

