



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Manager

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

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(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager
DATE: September 4, 2024
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for September 9, 2024 Council Meeting

Meetings with the State Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Team

On September 5, Kim Barenburg, the State Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Manager and Rick Dembroski, the State Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program Manager were in Homer for a site visit primarily related to the Raw Water Transmission Line replacement project. They were joined by the FEMA Region 10 HMGP project manager as well. As a reminder, the project utilizes \$2.1M of State and Federal HMGP funds to replace the pipeline that conveys water from the pump house near the Bridge Creek Reservoir to the water treatment plant. The existing transmission line is old cast iron pipe, which has cracked numerous times and is vulnerable to earthquake damage.

During the visit, the HMGP team met with Finance, Administration and Public Works staff to:

- review the City's first round of grant reporting documents (which were rated 'awesome') and answer questions about the next phase of the project, issuing bid documents and contracting for construction services;
- visit the project site, spending time at the reservoir, the pump house and water treatment plant learning about the City's drinking water supply system; and
- invite the City to submit a Change of Scope request to possibly include funding for the fiber optic line installation in the project



The HMGP team also informed staff that they are tracking the Building Code project grant application through the FEMA review process and spent time reviewing projects in the City's All-Hazard Mitigation Plan to identify FEMA funding opportunities. We greatly appreciate the positive relationship the City has had with the State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and with FEMA to help the City mitigate hazards and be more prepared for managing disasters. Thank you!

The Douglas Denman makes a port call to Homer

We want to extend a warm welcome to the *USCG Douglas Denman*! The *Douglas Denman*, moored next to the *USCG Cutter Aspen*, is part of the fleet of Sentinel class cutters built to replace the 110' island class cutters and are being phased in across the state as they come out of the ship yard.

Currently home ported in Ketchikan, the *Douglas Denman* will eventually find her home in Sitka. The *Douglas Denman* has 22 crew on board and is only here for three days for provisioning and shore leave. Port & Harbor staff looked at several mooring options for the ship which included having them come into the harbor and raft out from the *Naushon*, moor at the Deep Water Dock or raft out from the *Cutter Aspen*. The crew choose to first use the deep water dock for refueling then to shift over to the *Aspen* so that they could use the *Aspen's* gangway to get on and off the dock for shore leave.



Cuts in State Programs Funding Libraries

On August 16, the State Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums announced major cuts to the Public Libraries Assistance (PLA) grants. The FY24 grants came to \$7,000 per library, while the FY25 amount is set at \$1,829. Homer Public Library will have to cut back on ordering new materials and delay updates to certain sections, but we'll survive. The smaller libraries around us are in serious trouble. Separately, the amount allocated to the State Library Electronic Doorway (SLED) was cut from \$500,000 to \$369,514. SLED provides 60 of the 68 databases available to patrons through our library website, so the cuts will have significant impacts on our patrons. Several small databases (LearningExpress, Auto Repair Source, Hobbies and Crafts Source, Home Improvement Source and Small Engine Repair Source) will disappear shortly. If no further funds can be obtained, the next resources on the chopping block are BrainPOP and HeritageQuest.

Hickerson Memorial Cemetery

The City has recently received public comments from residents regarding maintenance conditions at the Hickerson Memorial Cemetery. Generally, the cemetery is maintained, however challenges arise from gravesites that families and friends have decorated with oversized monuments, rocks, benches, small fences, and other materials that impede the mowing and upkeep. An informational memo with photos from the Public Works Director is attached to this report. Homer City Code 19.04.090 Monuments, allows for flat or upright memorial markers on cemetery plots, but no other monuments or plantings are allowed without permission from the City. The Cemetery Policy Manual addresses the

City's right to remove decorations from cemetery sites and dispose of them as deemed appropriate, however with limited staffing, this type of enforcement and cleanup is difficult to accomplish, and has the potential to result in other types of complaints. Conversations will continue at the staff level on how to address the concerns that have been raised.

Election Information

City and Borough elections are right around the corner! Election day is Tuesday, October 1st. Absentee Voting opens on September 16th and will be available Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Cowles Council Chambers through Monday, September 30th. The State and Federal General Election is Tuesday, November 5th. As of this report the voter registration deadline has passed for the local elections, and there is still time to update your information for the General Election in November. Voter registration is available online at <https://elections.alaska.gov> or at the City Clerk's office and the Homer Public Library. Please contact the Division of Elections at 866-948-8683 or email at electionsr1@alaska.gov if you have questions about voter registration.

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Susie Inglis stepped into the role of Special Projects Assistant in early September. Working part-time, Susie will be supporting Special Projects & Communications Coordinator Carroll. With her diverse background in the arts, film, and political science, Susie is a valuable addition to our team.

Attachments:

- Memorandum from Public Works Director re: Hickerson Memorial Cemetery
- City of Homer Job listings at <https://cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs/>
- September Anniversaries
- Job Listings
- Worksession, Visitor Calendars



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- Worksession, Visitor Calendars



MEMORANDUM

To: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager
From: Daniel Kort, Public Works Director
Date: May 28, 2024
Subject: Hickerson Memorial Cemetery

Background:

The memorials left at the Hickerson Memorial Cemetery (Cemetery) have been an ongoing and persistent issue that inhibits the City staff and the City's contractor from properly mowing and maintaining the grounds of the Cemetery. On August 17, 2024, the Public Works Department received a letter from a local resident speaking about the lack of maintenance at the Cemetery. And at the August 26, 2024 City Council Meeting, another resident voiced the same concerns.

Public Works Department staff went out to further investigate the claims made and to try to come up with a logical solution to the issue.

Discussion:

The Public Works Department has a long history surrounding difficulties surrounding maintenance at the Hickerson Memorial Cemetery. The findings from this investigation are as follows.

Backfilling Cemetery Plots

The City has been working with a local person who hand digs and backfills grave sites. This person has no means of carting away the excess soil displaced by the casket, and therefore has been mounding the soil over the grave site for a lack of any other options.

Over time, this grave site will begin to grow grass/weeds and the mounded surface is not maintainable.

Cemetery Plot Boarders



In many instances, first generation relatives and friends of the deceased create improvements to these grave sites by placing wood boarders or rocks around them as shown in the following photo.



This second example is a complex of 4 grave sites (all with boarders) that has fallen into disrepair or neglect because the family and friends no longer maintain the sites. The City does not have the capacity to maintain these other than to mow around the perimeter.

The last example of a boarder is a combination boarder and homemade headstone that has fallen into neglect and disrepair.



Cemetery Plot Decorations

Numerous grave sites are adorned with decorations which means the maintenance becomes the responsibility of the descendants of the deceased. The City does their best to mow around these sites. Examples of decorations are presented in the following photo's.







Cemetery Plot Plantings

There are several locations where flower gardens, alders, or spruce trees have been planted to honor their friends or family. This is another situation where City staff and contractors are challenged to work around these objects. The following are examples of these plantings.



Cemetery Plot Rock Gardens

There are a number of rock gardens over grave sites. Some are still maintained by family, while others are neglected and barely visible. Below are example photos of these sites.





Cemetery Memorial Benches

Benches appear to be a recent addition to some grave sites. There were none observed that have fallen into disrepair yet, however these obstacles prevent normal maintenance. The following are photo examples of benches.





Recommendation:

The Public Works Department recommends evaluating whether the City Council and administration would like to take a stronger stance towards enforcing existing rules in regards to Cemetery Plot decorations, monuments, etc.

[Documents](#) [Job Openings](#) [Helpful Links](#)

Current Job Listings

[Jobs \(/jobs/\)](/jobs/) [Login \(/account/login.php\)](/account/login.php)

Below is a list of the current openings with our company. Click on the job title to learn more about the opening.

Search Jobs

[Hide Filters](#) [Clear All](#)

<input type="text" value="Search Jobs"/>	City <input type="text"/>	State <input type="text"/>
Employment Type <input type="text"/>	Department <input type="text"/>	Sort By <input type="text"/>

Number of Jobs: 3

Building Maintenance Tech I or II (<https://cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs/3470589>)

[Apply Now](#) (<https://cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs/3470589>)

Building Maintenance | Homer, AK, USA | Full Time | \$22.26 - \$28.63 per hour
Posted: Aug 20, 2024 Closing Date: Sep 17, 2024

Part-Time Community Development Associate (<https://cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs/3476585>)

[Apply Now](#) (<https://cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs/3476585>)

Planning | Homer, AK, USA | Part Time | \$27.33 - \$31.41 per hour
Posted: Aug 26, 2024 Closing Date: Until Filled

Treatment Plant Operator I or II (<https://cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs/3476751>)

[Apply Now](#) (<https://cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs/3476751>)

Water & Sewer | Homer, AK, USA | Full Time | \$22.38 - \$27.53 per hour
Posted: Aug 26, 2024 Closing Date: Sep 22, 2024

Sign Up For Job Alerts!

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TO: MAYOR CASTNER AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: Andrea Browning
DATE: September 9, 2024
SUBJECT: September Employee Anniversaries

I would like to take the time to thank the following employees for the dedication, commitment and service they have provided the City and taxpayers of Homer over the years.

Aaron Glidden	Port	20	Years
Ryan Browning	Police	14	Years
Tracie Whitaker	Police	10	Years
Lisa Linegar	Police	9	Years
Charles Benson	Police	3	Years
Jessica McGuire	Finance	2	Years
Dawn Brooks	Library	1	Year
Chad Felice	Public Works	1	Year

Council Meeting Dates	Visitor
<i>Monday, August 12</i>	<i>J & H Consulting City Lobbyists Derotha Ferraro/Ryan Smith</i>
<i>Monday, August 26</i>	
<i>Monday, September 9</i>	<i>Kachemak Bay Recovery Connection Head Japanese Consul, Mr. Kiyohiko Hamada</i>
<i>Monday, September 23</i>	<i>1. CARTS Presentation – Jodi Stuart, Board President Jessica Schultz, Executive Director 2. Shelly Wade Agnew Beck Update Comp Plan Rewrite</i>
<i>Monday, October 14</i>	<i>Kenai Peninsula Youth Website Project Update – Ginny Espenshade</i>
<i>Monday, October 28</i>	
<i>Monday, November 12</i>	
<i>Monday, November 25</i>	<i>Brad Anderson, Chamber of Commerce Annual Report</i>

WORK SESSION

AGENDA CALENDAR 2024

Council Meeting Dates	Work Session Topic
Monday, January 8	<i>Exempt Employee Wage Scale</i>
Monday, January 15 Off-cycle	<i>Joint Session with Parks Art Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission</i>
Monday, January 22	<i>Homer Harbor Expansion Baseline Conditions Report Overview – Ronny McPherson & KC Kent HDR</i>
Monday, February 12	
Monday, February 26	<i>Ord 23-61 Amending HCC Title 5 to add Chapter 5.48 Short Term Rentals</i>
Monday, March 11	
Monday, March 18 Off-cycle	<i>Joint Session with ADA Advisory Board Rescheduled to August</i>
Tuesday, March 26	<i>3:00 start Comp Plan Meeting with Agnew:Beck and Planning Commission (tentative)</i>
Monday, April 8	<i>Longevity Pay/City Manager Transition</i>
Monday, April 15 Off-cycle	<i>Joint Session with Port & Harbor Advisory Commission</i>
Monday, April 22	<i>Water & Sewer Rate Model</i>
Monday, May 13	<i>Health Care Renewal Mid-Biennium Budget Adjustments (if time allows)</i>
Monday, May 20 Off-cycle	<i>Joint session with Library Advisory Board</i>
Tuesday, May 28	<i>Mid Biennium Budget Amendments Water Sewer Rates</i>
Monday, June 10	<i>HCC Chapter 11, vegetation in the ROW</i>
Monday, June 17 Off-cycle	<i>Joint session with Economic Development Advisory Commission Rescheduled to October</i>
Monday, June 24	
Monday, July 22	<i>Tentative e-session @4pm</i>

Council Meeting Dates	Work Session Topic
Monday, August 12	<i>E-session: Cyber Security Risk Assessment Review</i>
Monday, August 19 Off-Cycle	<i>Joint Session with ADA Advisory Board</i>
Monday, August 26	<i>Capital Improvement Plan & Legislative Requests</i>
Monday, September 9	<i>Vessel Haul Out/Camping Land Allocation Rescheduled</i>
Monday, September 16 Off-cycle	<i>Joint Worksession with Economic Development Advisory Commission Rescheduled</i>
Monday, September 23	<i>End of Year Financial Worksession</i>
Monday, October 14	
Monday, October 21	<i>Joint Worksession with Planning Commission To be Rescheduled in Early 2025</i>
Tuesday, October 21	<i>Comp Plan Event, Islands & Ocean Visitor Center</i>
Monday, October 28	<i>Future Use of Pier One Area Land Allocation Plan</i>
Tuesday, November 12	
Monday, November 18	<i>Joint Worksession with Economic Development Advisory Commission</i>
Monday, November 25	



Public Workshop 2

The Kenai Peninsula Borough, along with the Cities of Homer, Kenai, Seldovia, Seward, and Soldotna, is developing the first ever Safe Streets and Roads for All Comprehensive Action Plan, funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Feedback from all users of our transportation routes is vital - we want to hear from you!

Please join the team at one of the upcoming public workshops, and visit the plan website at <https://kpb.us/safestreets> to learn more.

- **September 10, 2024;** 5-7 PM, Seward Library, 239 6th Ave, Seward - Community Room
- **September 11, 2024;** 5-7 PM, Challenger Center, 9711 Kenai Spur Hwy, Kenai - North Star Classroom
- **September 12, 2024;** 5-7 PM, Kachemak Bay Campus, 533 E Pioneer Ave, Homer - Pioneer Room 201/202
Virtual; TBD



<https://kpb.us/safestreets>