



City of Homer

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Office of the City Manager

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Memorandum

TO: Mayor Lord and Homer City Council

FROM: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager

DATE: March 18, 2026

SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for March 23, 2026 Council Meeting

New Police Chief Sworn In

On March 19th Officer Michael Scanlon was sworn in as Homer's Police Chief, and it was Chief Robl's last day of official service to the City. Chief Robl has served the Homer Police Department well over his 42 years with the department. Chief Scanlon brings his vast experience of police work into his new role with 28 years of experience with the Bellingham, Washington Police Department before moving to Homer in 2023. Chief Scanlon will be out and about in the community and if you get the chance to meet him, be sure to say hello. I think you'll agree that he will continue to lead our Police Department in a positive way.

Comprehensive Plan Adopted

On March 17th the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly unanimously approved the adoption of the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan. I would like to thank everyone who participated in the process to create an inspiring vision for Homer's future. In next steps, City staff will be updating the City website, printing hard copies, and updating relevant forms and applications.

Raw Water Transmission Main Replacement Project - Construction to Begin

I'm pleased to report that construction is set to begin April 1 on the Raw Water Transmission Main Replacement project. This \$2.2 million FEMA-funded project replaces approximately 4,000 linear feet of 50-year old, earthquake-vulnerable cast iron pipe that carries water from the pump house at Bridge Creek Reservoir to the water treatment plant with seismically resilient HDPE pipe. The project also includes installing fiber optic line to upgrade the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) communications system that provides real-time monitoring and remote control of the facilities and their processes. South Central Construction will install the new main using an open-trench method parallel to the existing main. The old main will remain in service until the new main is operational. Customers should not experience water service disruptions during construction. The City will provide timely updates should any changes to the construction plan occur.

This project was made possible through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which helps communities reduce long-term risks to public infrastructure from natural disasters. These funds became available after a federal disaster declaration was approved for the November 30, 2018 earthquake in Alaska, so this marks a significant milestone after years of planning and award obligation negotiations with FEMA. We are excited to see this critical infrastructure project finally move toward the finish line. I extend thanks to our staff members and staff at the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management who have worked

diligently over the years to bring this project to fruition, as well as our agency partners at FEMA who made the project possible. Construction is expected to be completed by October 2026.

HERC Cleanup - Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) Public Comment Period Opens March 27th

The City, working in partnership with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, recently completed a draft Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) for the Homer Education and Recreation Complex (HERC). The ABCA provides information about hazardous materials (HBM) at the property and evaluates cleanup alternatives. The goal is to choose a remediation option to address HBM and support future redevelopment of this brownfield property.

DEC was in town February 12th for a community meeting to discuss results of their HBM survey and soil analysis and to provide an overview of the report's cleanup alternatives. Now, the City is seeking public comment on the ABCA draft before it is finalized. A 30-day public comment period will open March 27, 2026 and close at 5 pm April 24, 2026. Staff will be providing public notice through local media outlets, the City website <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/> and social media [@cityofhomerak](https://twitter.com/cityofhomerak), fliers, etc. A digital copy of the ABCA is available at <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/brownfields/assessment-cleanup/dbac-projects/homer-herc-abca/>. Printed copies will be available at City Hall and Homer Public Library by March 27th. DEC will collect public comments through its Public Notices web portal and by email and will respond to pertinent comments collected during the public comment period. The finalized ABCA will be posted on DEC's Brownfields web page and on the City of Homer's HERC webpage.

We appreciate working with DEC through their DEC Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup (DBAC) program to complete this planning and look forward to continuing our productive relationship once a cleanup alternative is selected.

City Surplus Sale is Open

Back in January, I let you know that we would be transitioning to Public Surplus for the City's surplus sales. The first Surplus sale auctions are going live on Wednesday, March 18th and will run for three weeks through Wednesday, April 8th. Visit <https://publicsurplus.com/sms/list/current?orgid=60507> to see the City's active listings and learn more."

HERC Gym Floor Progress Report

The contractors who are refinishing the HERC gym floor are wrapping up repairing and sanding the gym floor wood. Next steps include adding the first coat of finish, then painting lines (on Thursday) and finally installing the final multi coatings over the weekend. Once all that is completed the floor needs at least a week to dry and cure. Public Works has been providing additional heat to help keep the gym warm and dry for the curing process. It looks like we're on track to re-open on the scheduled March 30th if all goes well and will get messaging out if any delays come up.



City Hall Heat

Just a quick heads-up if you're planning a visit to City Hall—be sure to bundle up. The building may feel a bit chilly right now, as one of our two boilers is out of service due to a failed part. Our Building Maintenance team has been working to locate a replacement, which has been challenging given the boiler's age and the fact that the part is no longer in production. The good news is that the part has been sourced, repairs are expected to remain within budget and will move forward as soon as the part arrives. Looking ahead, it would be wise to begin planning for a full boiler replacement in the coming years to avoid future disruptions.

Tax Foreclosure Purchase

Council authorized Ordinance 26-14, appropriating funds to purchase a tax-foreclosure property at the south end of Mattox Road. Before the City could complete the transaction, the prior owner paid the delinquent taxes and will regain title. Although this is rare in staff's experience, the prior owner retains a right of redemption for a significant portion of the foreclosure process, and it can take up to ten years to obtain clear title.

City Initiated Special Assessment District

City Administration has a working group consisting of staff from Planning, Public Works, the Port (as needed), and myself. The group meets weekly to discuss department projects and private development activity that may impact City infrastructure and operations. One issue recently highlighted is the approximately 360-foot section of East Fairview Avenue that had been blocked by boulders for several years. See the dotted line section in the photo below. These boulders were recently removed to allow a property owner access to their lot for home construction. Since then, two different property owners along this stretch have contacted Public Works with questions about improving the road to enhance access to their properties. They were informed about the Special Assessment District (SAD) process; however, no applicants have pursued forming a SAD.

Through our internal discussions, staff sees benefits to the City in constructing this portion of Fairview Avenue as a gravel road built to City standards. Completing this connection between East Fairview Avenue and Kachemak Way would provide a safer and more functional roadway network. It would create an opportunity to install stop signs at the intersection, establishing an all-way stop and improving pedestrian safety for those crossing Kachemak Way. Additionally, constructing the road would support more efficient winter and summer maintenance operations. Incomplete road segments are labor-intensive, difficult for equipment to maneuver, and ultimately more costly for the City to maintain. Building out this roadway section would improve access, safety, and long-term maintenance efficiency. For these reasons, I will be working with staff on a resolution to bring to Council requesting initiation of a SAD for Council's consideration.



Attachment:
HERC Cleanup - ABCA Public Comment Period Flyer



-- PUBLIC NOTICE --



**The City of Homer and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
solicit public comments on the draft
Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives report
for the Homer Education and Recreation Complex (HERC)**

Public Notice

The City of Homer and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation invite members of the public to provide comments on a Draft Analysis of Brownfield Alternatives (ABCA) report for the Homer Education and Recreation Complex (HERC) property located at 450 Sterling Highway in Homer, Alaska (parcel number 17510070). The Draft ABCA report was prepared by BGES, contractors procured by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. It provides information about hazardous building materials present at the property and evaluates cleanup options to address HBM and support future redevelopment of this brownfield property.

**The Public Comment period on the Draft ABCA is open
from March 27 until 5:00 pm April 24, 2026.**

- The public can review the ABCA at DEC's HERC ABCA webpage: <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/brownfields/assessment-cleanup/dbac-projects/homer-herc-abca/> or in hard copy at the following locations:
- Homer Public Library, 500 Hazel Avenue, Homer Alaska
- City Clerk's Office, Homer City Hall, 491 E Pioneer Avenue, Homer Alaska



Property Information

The HERC site is approximately 4.3 acres and has two buildings. HERC 2 is the smaller building and was abandoned after it was deemed unsafe. HERC 1 is the larger building and is still in use. The gymnasium and activity room on the lower level are currently host Community Recreation activities and programs; the upper-level hosts office space, surplus storage, equipment storage and workshop space for the Public Works Department. These buildings were constructed in the 1950's. Typical building materials from the construction era, including asbestos, lead-based paint, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), are present in the buildings and require remediation.

Submit Public Comment

The public may submit comments in writing from March 27 to 5:00 p.m. on April 24, 2026 as outlined below.

- Via DEC's HERC ABCA webpage • At <https://dec.alaska.gov/commish/public-comments?nodeId=43000>
- Or by email to Flannery.ballard@alaska.gov.

DEC will respond to pertinent comments collected during the public comment period for the ABCA using public notice/comment system.