

VOL. I - ISSUE VII | MARCH 2022

# CITY OF HOMER

Monthly Newsletter from the office of the City Manager

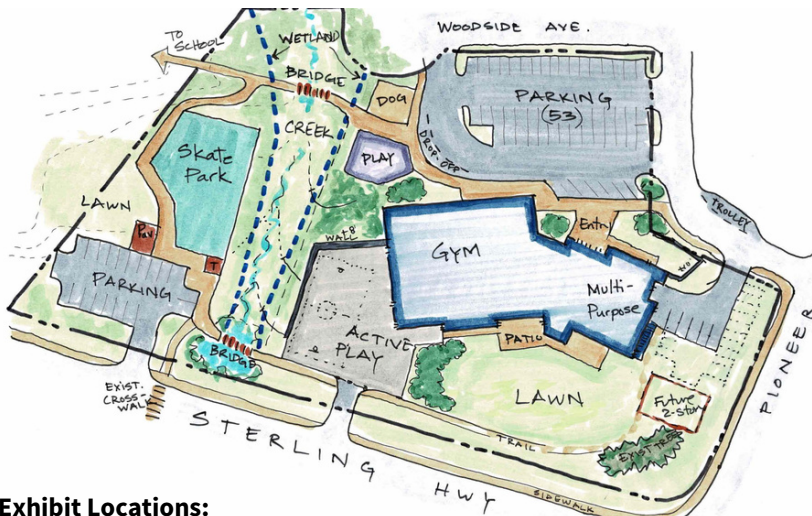


## Greetings from City Hall

### Visualizing a New Site Plan

Stantec presented the conceptual plans for a proposed new multi-purpose community center to City Council on Monday, February 28th.

The unveiling kicks off a month for public comment and community conversations. At the end of April, City Council will review public comments received, explore funding opportunities to continue design work and the potential timing of next steps in the planning process. See the Exhibit and Events schedule below or go to: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/citymanager/visualize-new-multi-purpose-community-center-0>



#### Exhibit Locations:

March 4-18: Pratt Museum

Month of March : HERC, Homer Library,  
Homer High School Commons

#### Events Schedule:

March 4: First Friday at the Pratt Museum, 4-6pm

March 10: Drop In with Parks & Recreation at the Pratt Museum, 2-4pm

March 12: Drop In at the Pratt Museum, 2-4pm

#### Public Meetings in City Council Chambers: (Zoom and In-person)

March 17: Park, Arts, Recreation & Culture Worksession, 4:30pm

April 12: Economic Development Advisory Commission meeting, 5pm

April 25: Council review of public comments.

## WHAT'S NEW?

- Library News
- Community Corner
- Fire Department
- Parks & Community Recreation
- Public Safety Notes
- Public Works
- Police Department
- Port & Harbor
- Meet the Staff
- City of Homer Roster
- Municipal Art Collection
- Stay Connected with City Council
- Join Our Team

We hope you'll discover something new today as we share the latest information and ways you can tap into what's going on at City Hall and in the Homer community.

Check us out on Facebook



City Hall - @cityofhomerak

Parks & Recreation - @homerparksandrec

Homer Public Library - @homerpubliclibrary

Homer Police - @homerpolice

Fire Department - @HomerVolFireDept.

Share this link with your friends, so they can get the newsletter too - <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/citymanager/monthly-email-newsletter>

*"where the land ends and the sea begins"*

# LIBRARY NEWS

## Lunch with a Council Member

March 9th at 12:00 p.m.

Join us for lunch with City Councilmember Shelly Erickson. This is a great opportunity to learn more about city council, ask questions and share ideas. Join us in person in the library meeting room or virtually over Zoom. Click [HERE](#) for Zoom link instructions.

## 2022 Lit Lineup

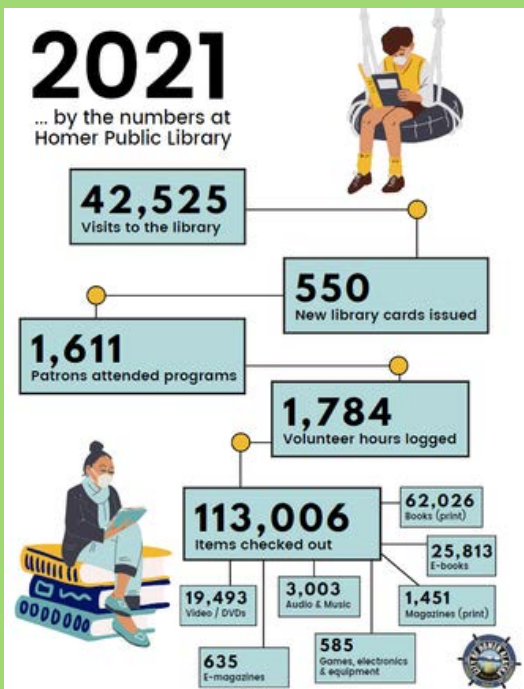
Read books and win prizes!

This community-wide initiative to read 15 books throughout the year. Each book you've read (and reported) from the list, enters you into a monthly drawing for a prize. If you read all 15 by the end of the year you will be eligible for the grand prize drawing.



## The HPL is a busy place!

The chart below is an overview from the 2021 Library Annual Report. An impressive number of transactions are handled and visits made to the library every day. Items checked out is an average of 9,471 per month alone! Thank you to our patrons, staff and volunteers for all their hard work.



## Homer Public Library

500 Hazel Street

907-235-3180

[circ@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:circ@ci.homer.ak.us)

[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library)

# Community Corner

What's happening around the City of Homer

## 28th Annual Winter King Salmon Tournament April 9, 2022

The Homer Winter King Salmon Tournament is the premier fishing tournament of Alaska. Every Spring, Homer welcomes anglers to take to the waters of Kachemak Bay in search of King Salmon.

The one-day tournament awards tens of thousands of dollars in prize money to the largest kings caught. Festivities happen at the weigh-in stations near the Homer Port & Harbor's Deep Water Dock, located at 4667 Freight Dock Road, after fishing lines are pulled. Lots of fun and excitement for everyone!

[Click here to register](#), email [wkt@homerak.org](mailto:wkt@homerak.org), or call the Homer Chamber of Commerce at 907-235-7740.



## Homer's Former Dais Finds New Life in Seldovia

In August of 2021, the City Council approved donating the dais, formerly in Council Chambers, to the City of Seldovia. We held the dais in storage at the HERC until Seldovia was able to make the arrangements to ship it across the bay. The dais is now in use for in-person meetings at Seldovia City Hall.





## Winter AML Conference and Lobbying Trip to Juneau

During the week of February 14th, the City Manager was joined by Special Project Coordinator Jenny Carroll, Mayor Castner, and Councilmembers Lord, Erickson, and Davis to attend the Alaska Municipal League's winter legislative conference in Juneau. Harbormaster Bryan Hawkins was also in Juneau with the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators. While in Juneau, City representatives engaged in quite a bit of lobbying on behalf of the City of Homer. City lobbyists, J&H Consulting, set up meetings with many legislators, Rear Admiral Moore, and the State Commissioner of Transportation & Public Facilities. The feedback we received in Juneau was positive and we made a strong case for funding the State's share of the large vessel harbor expansion project's new start general investigation study.



Left: Jenny Carroll, Rear Admiral Moore, Bryan Hawkins, Rob Dumouchel; Top: Rachel Lord, Representative Sarah Vance, Jason Davis, Shelly Erickson, Bryan Hawkins; Bottom: Shelly Erickson, Commissioner Anderson, Bryan Hawkins, Jenny Carroll, Deputy Commissioner Rob Carpenter

## Fire Department

Tuesday night EMS trainings are always interesting and fun. February's training was no exception when we did radio communications 'with a twist.' Teams traded off with the "bomb," a virtual bomb that has to be diffused in a timely manner while a second crew was available by radio with the resources manual to support the diffusion team. This gave the group a whole new perspective on the challenges that dispatchers and Incident Commanders may face when trying to support on-scene response activities and needs. While we experienced several virtual explosions and had a high virtual casualty rate during the exercise, learning and communication practice was had by all.



The Tuesday night EMS training group.



Rope rescue training captures patient recovery challenges.

HVFD's latest EMT-1 class is going strong with 11 candidates enrolled. Current volunteers have been a huge support to the new recruits by passing on their knowledge to the new group. We have been enjoying the bustle of new people learning the ropes - literally - with us here at the HVFD.

Speaking of ropes, the Rope Rescue group is holding regular trainings to stay fresh and build skills that will be useful in tight spots. Volunteers have been spending hours ensuring that, should they be needed, their skills in technical rescue will be outstanding.

# PARKS & COMMUNITY RECREATION

## FREE - Sports Gear Lending Program!

The Sports Gear Library is a **FREE** program available to the public. If you have a library card, you can use it to check out the sports gear too. We now have Cornhole!

Donated items that are clean, safe and in working condition that could be utilized by community members are welcomed. Please contact **Mike Illg** at [millg@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:millg@ci.homer.ak.us) or call **907-399-6090**. Go to [cityofhomer-ak.gov/recreation/sports-gear-lending-program](http://cityofhomer-ak.gov/recreation/sports-gear-lending-program) to see the list of available equipment.

This program is made possible by the joint effort between Community Recreation and the Homer Public Library.



## Ongoing Community Recreation Programs

The City of Homer offers terrific indoor programs at the HERC Gym and Activity Room, Homer High School and Homer Middle School. Bookmark <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/recreation/weekly-schedule> to plan to participate in the latest programs such as pick up basketball, pickleball, volley ball, youth yoga and so much more!



### IMPORTANT DATES

**Monday, February 28, 2022 thru  
Sunday, March 13, 2022:**

Pre-register and check your eligibility in advance of the application period.

To get notified by email when pre-registration opens.

**March 14, 2022:**

Application period opens

**Monday, April 4, 2022 at 11:59 p.m.**

**AKST:** Application period closes

A poster for "Community Kids" activities. The background shows several colorful parrots perched on a tree branch. The text reads: "C\*O\*M\*M\*U\*N\*I\*T\*Y K\*I\*D\*S. SPBHS &amp; Community Recreation Present: Activities For Youth aged 6-12. SPRING BREAK— March 4th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th &amp; 11th. At the HERC Building. From 12pm until 3:30pm. Attendance is Limited. Contact Rudy at (907)-235-9248. For Details or to Sign Up." Logos for South Peninsula Behavioral Health Services, Inc. and the City of Homer Alaska are at the bottom.

## AHFC Launches Homeowner/Mortgage Assistance Program

Are you an Alaska homeowner experiencing financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic? You are not alone, and there may be assistance available.

Alaska Housing Homeowner Assistance may be able to help you with your mortgage payments, property taxes and utilities, insurance premiums and homeowner association dues. This assistance program is administered by Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) and funded by the U.S. Treasury as part of the America Rescue Plan Act of 2021. It is designed to help homeowners avoid mortgage delinquencies and foreclosures. Approved payments will be distributed by AHFC and its partners directly to Mortgage Servicers and utility companies.

Go to [AlaskaHousingRelief.org](http://AlaskaHousingRelief.org) for important updates about pre-registration, how to check your eligibility, and the application period.



# PUBLIC SAFETY NOTES



## Self-Testing at Home

Self-tests for COVID-19 give rapid results and can be taken anywhere.

**FEEL SICK?**  
Check Your Symptoms  
Quarantine & Isolate  
Testing & Masks

**FREE COVID Test Kits**  
available at the  
Homer Library

## NEED A MASK UPGRADE?



**N95 masks are available**  
at the Homer Library

Now is a great time to get up-to-date on your COVID-19 vaccine. A recent study by DHSS showed that unvaccinated Alaskans are 9.2 times more likely to be hospitalized due to COVID-19 than Alaskans who are up to date on COVID-19 vaccination, and 2.6 times more likely to be hospitalized due to COVID-19 than Alaskans who completed the primary vaccination series but are not up to date.

The SPH COVID-19 Test & Vaccine Clinic at 4201 Bartlett Street offers free vaccines and boosters. Please note the following schedule changes at the clinic:

Beginning March 1, the SPH Test and Vaccine Clinic will be offering adult vaccines only on Sundays and Mondays from 9 am to 5 pm. Walk-ins are welcome! Pediatric vaccine appointments (for children ages 5-11 years) can still be made for Wednesdays and Saturdays by going to <https://www.sphosp.org/covid-19-information/> or by calling 907-235-0235.

Testing at the clinic is still available seven days a week from 9 am to 6 pm. SPH offers free testing to anyone who is symptomatic, traveling, is having a planned procedure or who has been exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case. Test results are typically available in one to two days and are available only on the SPH Patient Portal.

If you are not eligible for testing at the SPH clinic, you can use a home test kit. Free kits are available at the Homer Public Library.

## TsunamiReady Certification Award

The City of Homer recently renewed its status as a TsunamiReady Community. TsunamiReady is a voluntary community recognition program administered by NOAA and the National Weather Service. The goal of the program is to improve public safety before, during and after tsunami emergencies. The award recognizes that Homer meets a standard level of response capability, participates in public awareness and education about tsunami hazards and is engaged in improving community pre-planning for tsunami emergencies. Meeting TsunamiReady standards also makes the City of Homer eligible for additional ISO community rating system points, which provides discounts on flood insurance.



As part of the City's ongoing efforts to improve tsunami preparedness and response, we will be hosting Elena Suliemani from UAF's Geophysical Institute and Logan Stolpe, the Geologic Hazards Mitigation Coordinator at the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management on Monday, Feb 28th. Their visit includes meeting with City and Borough staff to review tsunami evacuation lines and procedures and finalize a Homer tsunami brochure design. Afterwards, they will share recommendations with Council at a 4 pm worksession.

While in Homer, Elena and Logan will also be presenting tsunami information at local schools and at a public lecture hosted by Homer Public Library on Tuesday, March 1 at 2pm.

# Public Works

## Where'd it go? What happens when we flush.

Most of us don't think about what happens after we flush the toilet or pull the drain plug in the sink....until they back up. So where does everything go?

Household plumbing is connected to an underground sewer collection system that conveys waste to the City's Wastewater Facility for treatment. This system consists of pipes, manholes and lift stations. Pipe sizes vary depending on the amount of flow its expected to receive during the busiest time of the day and year. Manholes are used by operators to inspect and maintain the piping in the system.

The most cost effective way to convey waste is by what is known as gravity flow. Everything flows downhill, almost. Some parts of the system are too far away from the treatment facility to flow by gravity. Lift stations are large underground tanks that collect waste and then use pumps to lift waste to a pipe at a higher elevation to start the gravity flow again. Some parts of the system require as many as three lift stations to accomplish this task. Lift stations also require regular maintenance by City collections system operators.

Sewer mains, pipes, also require regular cleaning. 'Jetters' are used to clean by pumping high pressure water into the pipe to scour and flush material downstream. Material large enough to plug a pump or cause damage in the lift station is captured in a manhole. An operator then has to enter the manhole and remove the material by hand.



### Here is a list of things that should never be flushed down the toilet:

#### **"Rags"**

Paper towels  
Baby wipes  
Flushable wipes  
Tissue  
Condoms  
Feminine products  
Dental floss  
Cotton swabs  
Diapers  
Cigarette butts  
Hair  
Band-aids

#### **"Fat Burgs"**

Cooking oil  
Grease  
Coffee grounds  
Tea leaves  
Cat litter  
  
*\*Can bind together and create a blockage in pipes and pumps.*

#### **Hazardous**

Bleach  
Paint  
Chemicals  
Flammable liquids  
Medications  
Used needles  
Razor blades  
  
*\*Can be hazardous to the environment and to the treatment process itself.*

*\*Can get twisted up and plug pumps.*

#### **Where can I dispose of hazardous waste?**

KPB Transfer Station and Landfill  
Homer Police Department

Bleach, hazardous or flammable chemicals and paint can create a dangerous environment in manholes, lift stations and the treatment facility. They also can cause problems with the treatment process itself. Medications and used needles or razor blades can pass through the treatment facility and enter the environment, which pose a serious health risk to operator.

The list could go on and on!

So, whether you're on the City's sewer system or septic tank, know that all of these items can wreak havoc in your household plumbing. Please be aware of what you are flushing down the drain/toilet. A good rule of thumb is to only toilet paper down the drain. When in doubt, put it in the trash can.

The operators appreciate your help in maintaining the sewer system at peak performance to benefit everyone. Plus, it helps keep costs down, too.

## Career Day at Homer Middle School

Students at Homer Middle School had the opportunity to practice their interview skills with local business leaders and organizations during Career Day on February 15th. To learn about various careers they might be interested in, students conducted "mock" interviews with more than 40 community members and business owners.

The exercise helped students develop communication skills, professional attire and poise, and writing skills. Interviewers asked standard questions of everyone and also tailored additional questions pertinent to the professional interests of the candidate being interviewed. This is a great way for youth to learn more about possible careers, to discover something they are passionate about and provide inspiration for their own career paths.



Mayor Ken Castner talking with two interviewers.



Public Works Superintendent Mike Zelinski (left) and Fire Chief Mark Kirko (right) interviewing with students.



Police Chief Mark Robl sharing with students.

## If I was mayor essay contest

Alaska Municipal League and the Alaska Conference of Mayors are proud to announce the 2022 "If I Were Mayor..." Essay Contest for high school students around the state. The contest is designed to engage young Alaskans in the issues of their municipal government and encourage them to creatively voice their opinions. \$150 prizes will be awarded to one winner selected from each of AML's director districts. One of the district winners will be determined the grand prize winner of an additional \$1,000 award. Essays must be between 500-750 words long and can be submitted online at <https://www.akml.org/conferences-events/mayorcontest/> and must be received no later than 4:00 PM on Friday, April 1, 2022. Winners will be announced on the AML website on Friday, April 22.

## Police Department

### National Rx Take Back Day April 30, 10am - 2pm

For over ten years, the HPD has participated in the DEA National Drug Take Back Day. Last year, over 11 tons of medications were collected from the Pacific Northwest states (Alaska, Washington, Oregon and Idaho) alone.

The Take Back program aims to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs, while also educating the general public about the potential for abuse of medications. We encourage all families, friends and neighbors to participate.

At the Homer Police Department, everyday is Take Back Day. There is a permanent collection box in the front entrance lobby.





# Port & Harbor

## Boom Cylinder Repair on Crane #3

The eight public use offload cranes at the Ice Plant dock stay busy all year round. Two of the cranes have a five-ton capacity and six are 2.5 ton capacity. They work hard; and maintenance and repair on these large cranes is no small task. Last month, Ice Plant Operators and Port Maintenance joined forces to replace a malfunctioning boom cylinder on the number three crane.

The three hour job started by properly supporting the crane boom before removal of the hydraulic hoses and cylinder. A forklift with a platform was then used to support the cylinder; and a man lift was used as a platform for the technician to drive the pins out. The cylinder was lowered firmly onto the platform and set aside. All went well.

All hoses and fittings were inspected and placed on the new cylinder. Installation and testing went smoothly. The crane was then put back in service just in time for another fish offload. Great job crew!



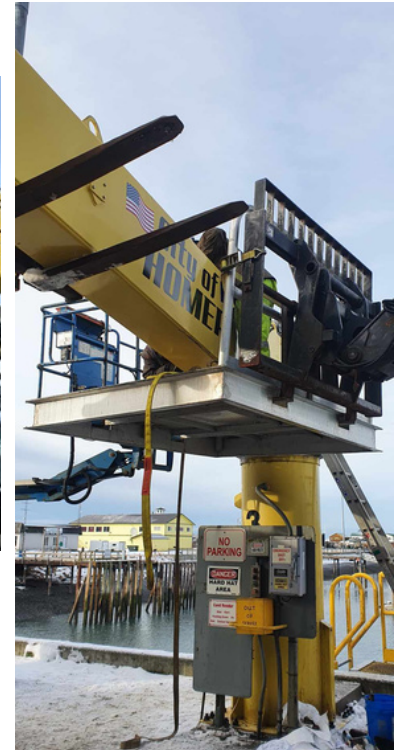
Replacement cylinder on the platform ready for installation.



Jedidia Gautier, (yellow pants) and James Young in ball cap making repairs.



Don Huffnagle, Ice Plant, on the man lift.



Forklift supporting the yellow crane boom beside the silver man lift.



Forklift getting in place to support the crane boom for the repair.

## It's a Good Time to Purchase Annual Parking Passes

With Winter get-away travel and Spring Break ahead, now is a good time to purchase your annual long-term parking pass ahead of the rush. Both the Airport and the Port of Homer charge fees to use City parking areas. You can avoid fines by having a parking pass in these areas.

**Airport:** Annual Long-Term Parking Passes are \$500. You can call 907-235-8121 to pay over the phone or come into City Hall to pay in person and pick up your pass. These passes can be used on two license plates per permit.

**Port:** The Harbormaster's Office on Freight Dock Road issues Annual and Monthly Long Term Parking Passes for vehicles and trailers parked in the port for more than seven consecutive days. Daily use permit areas are also available from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. Contact the Harbormaster's Office at 907-235-3160.





# WAYFINDING & STREETScape PLAN ADOPTED

City Council adopted the Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan through Resolution 22-016 at the February 28 Council Meeting. The Economic Development Advisory Commission (EDC) championed the project with Corvus Design for the last several months. The Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan is included in the 2018 Homer Comprehensive Plan.

This Plan provides a cohesive design framework for directional signage and future public improvements such as banners, plantings and street furniture along Pioneer Avenue and other pedestrian corridors, including connections to the Homer Spit.



The above image is a sample of the sign renderings Corvus Design presented. The attractive signage will help identify landmarks, pathways and trails for people to more easily navigate their way around Homer.



Congratulations to the Planning Department and the EDC on their hard work in moving this project forward. Look for new developments in this area in the coming months.

To find out more about Wayfinding and Streetscapes, click [HERE](#).



## Meet the Staff

This section is to highlight staff achievements, promotions, retirements, departures and new hires to the City's workforce.

### Meet Tomasz Sulzynski

The City's Information Technology (IT) division is, as you can imagine, a complex web of operating systems that keeps the City functioning on multiple levels. From desk top computers, to public safety dispatch, library functions, and security to internet and plant operations, the IT division is integrated into every facet of City operations. The talented IT team keeps the City running like a well-oiled machine.



*Tomasz Sulzynski* has been part of the IT division since 2008. His job is diverse in many aspects of technology and provides a new challenge every day. Tomasz sets up new systems, fixes problems and is a great support to our entire staff - often at a moment's notice.

Tomasz is originally from Szczecin, Poland and immigrated to California with his family in 1982. He has been in Homer since 2001 and appreciates the sense of community here. saying, "you can always run into someone you know when you're out and about."



During the summer, you will probably catch Tomasz catching a wave while kite surfing off Mariner Park beach with his dog chasing him along the shore (photo below). He also enjoys motorcycle camping (Mendenhall Glacier, (top photo) and is famous for his costumes, especially at Halloween, (middle photo).



# City of Homer Roster

Rob Dumouchel, City Manager  
Melissa Jacobsen, MMC, City Clerk  
Andrea Browning, Personnel Director  
Rick Abboud, City Planner  
Mark Robl, Chief of Police  
Mark Kirko, Fire Chief  
Bryan Hawkins, Port Director/Harbormaster  
Elizabeth Walton, Finance Director  
Jan Keiser, Public Works Director  
Dave Berry, Library and IT Director  
Nick Poolos, Info. Technology Manager  
Mike Illg, Community Recreation Manager

**Mayor** - Ken Castner (2022)

## City Council

Donna Aderhold (2024)  
Jason Davis (2022)  
Shelley Erickson (2024)  
Storm P. Hansen-Cavasos (2022)  
Rachel Lord (2023)  
Caroline Venuti (2023)

## Commissions & Boards

Planning Commission  
Economic Development Advisory Commission  
Library Advisory Board  
Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission  
Port and Harbor Advisory Commission

## Standing Committees

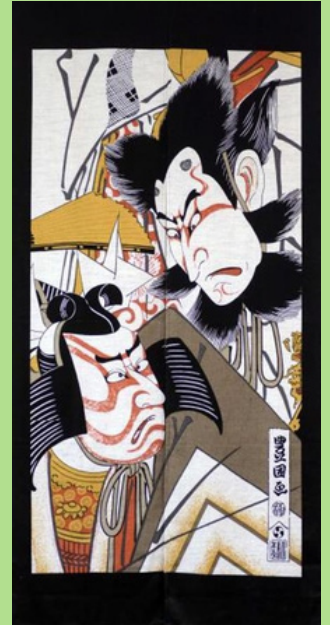
ADA Compliance Committee

# HOMER MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION

Next time you're in City Hall, ask to see the Sister City collection from Teshio, Japan. Several items gifted to the City of Homer in 1989 are on display in the conference room at City Hall. These are a few highlights.



'Japanese Warrior on Horseback' is a silk printed wall hanging located on the west wall.



'Warriors' is a cloth printed wall hanging located on the east wall.



Japanese warrior ceremonial helmet.

**Learn more about the municipal art collection at:**

<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/prac/city-homer-municipal-art-collection>

## STAY CONNECTED WITH CITY COUNCIL

Go to: [cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/stay-connected-city-council](http://cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/stay-connected-city-council). Here you will find instructions on how to listen, provide testimony and participate in the meetings via Zoom.

## Upcoming Meetings



### March

2nd - 5:30 pm	Planning Commission Worksession
6:30 pm	Planning Commission Regular Meeting
8th - 6:00 pm	Economic Development Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
14th - 5:00 pm	City Council Meeting of the Whole
6:00 pm	City Council Regular Meeting
15th - 5:30 pm	Library Advisory Board Regular Meeting
16th - 5:30 pm	Planning Commission Worksession
6:30 pm	Planning Commission Regular Meeting
17th - 4:30 pm	Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Worksession
5:30 pm	Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
23rd - 5:00 pm	Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
29th - 5:00 pm	City Council Committee of the Whole
6:00 pm	City Council Regular Meeting

## JOIN OUR TEAM

The City of Homer has current Job Openings. Sign up for Job Alerts or Apply Online at [cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs](http://cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs)

## CURRENT JOB LISTINGS

- Accounting Technician IV
- Firefighter/EMT-Basic (EMT-1) or Firefighter/EMT Advanced (EMT II or EMT III)
- Public Safety Dispatcher I, Full-time
- Community Jail Officer, Part-time

## City of Homer

491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska 99603  
907-235-8121

[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov)