VOL. II - ISSUE V | FEBRUARY 2023 CITY OF HOMER

Monthly Newsletter from the office of the City Manager

Celebration of Lifelong Learning

Every year, the Friends of Homer Library recognize two library patrons who have shown dedication to personal growth and sharing knowledge with others. Nominations open in winter and this year featured two independent nominations for *Samantha Cunningham*, our Adult Lifelong Learner. We also saw strong support for *Thea Person*, the Youth Lifelong Learner. Those who know these two people will recognize their conscious striving towards self-improvement and service to the community.



Samantha Cunningham

Thea Person

Join the Friends of the Library for the annual Celebration of Lifelong Learning. Tickets can be purchased at the front desk of the library and by contacting members of the Friends board. The evening will recognize the lifelong learners and will also feature live music, a demonstration of Live Action Role Playing, a silent auction and the trivia tree.

More information about the Celebration of Lifelong Learning can be found at the Friends of the Library website,

https://friendsofthehomerpubliclibrary.wildapricot.org/page-18251.

Celebration of Lifelong Learning Homer Public Library 500 Hazel Street February 25, 2023 | 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

WHAT'S NEW?

- Library Events
- Community Corner
- Community Recreation
- Economic Development
- Fire Department
- Planning Department
- Police Department
- Port & Harbor
- Public Safety Notes
- Public Works
- Meet the Staff
- 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 - <u>https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/citymanager/monthly-email-newsletter</u>

where the land ends and the sea begins

LIBRARY EVENTS

Accordion-Book Box Workshop

February 4 & 9

4:30 - 5:30pm

Join us for an afternoon of crafts and learn how to make an accordion-book box with Alice Porter.

Virtual Author Talks



Zoom in and listen to your favorite authors talk about their latest books.

February 9:Back in a Spell, Lana Harper - 3:00 p.m.February 16:Tastes Like War, Grace M. Cho - 9:00 a.m.February 28:The House of Eve, Sadeqa Johnson - Noon

2nd Sunday Shakespeare

February 12: *Taming of the Shrew*, 1:00 p.m. March 12: *Measure for Measure* April 9: *Pericles* May 14: *Henry VIII*



Friends of the Homer Library, in partnership with Pier One Theatre and Kachemak Bay Campus, invite you to participate in an online reading of a play by William Shakespeare. **Zoom instructions found here.**

Lunch with a Council Member

February 14

Noon - 1pm

Join us for a Valentine's Day conversation with Council Member *Caroline Venuti*. Bring your questions and topics for discussion and enjoy lunch over Zoom. <u>Follow instructions here.</u>



PUZZLE-RAMA!

February 11

10am - 6pm

Like puzzles? Join us for a festive community event for all ages. Featuring a variety of puzzles around the library, including the Children's Library.







Homer Public Library 500 Hazel Street - (907) 235-3180 <u>circ@ci.homer.ak.us</u> www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library



National Love Your Library Month

February is National Love Your Library Month and the Friends of the Library will be conducting prize drawings each week, so drop by the Homer Public Library to enter your name.

Library Advisory Board Upholds Decision

On January 17, the Homer Library Advisory Board (LAB) unanimously voted to uphold a decision to keep 55 books in the children's section of the public library. The decision follows a month-long debate over the future children and young adult titles that largely feature LGBTQ themes.

In October, Library Director Dave Berry denied a request for books to be removed from the children's and young adult sections of the library. An appeal was made to the board in November. The list of books being contested were read by the seven member advisory board, which led to their ultimate decision to keep the books in place. Further exploration of how to handle contested titles will be reviewed at the LAB's next meeting on February 21st.

Emergency Crews Respond to Boat Fire

Homer Police Department and Homer Volunteer Fire Department alongside fire services from across the Kenai Peninsula service area responded to a call in the Northern Enterprises Boatyard Thursday, January 19. They arrived to find the R/V *Qualifier 105* fully engulfed, which spread a cloud of black smoke over the area. Flames were extinguished, but the research vessel sustained extensive damage. The cause of the fire is yet to be determined. The *Qualifier*, operated by Support Vessels of Alaska, is a research vessel that typically creates hydrographic surveys, charts for NOAA and contract work for other government agencies.



Community Recreation

Check out these fun and exciting featured programs. To see the entire program list, go to <u>https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec</u>

Yoga with Joanna

Ashtanga inspired yoga helps increase strength and flexibility drawing from the primary series and works to unite the body, mind and breath. Class is limited to 15 participants. Call Joanna at 907-756-8985 or email jmgreene@live.com to reserve your spot.

When: Tuesdays, February 7-28, 5:30-6:30pm Where: HERC Activity Room Fee: \$10 per class/per person payable to instructor

Inlet Wind Community Band

Back this Spring! We're excited to welcome back Director Eric Simondsen and Assistant Director Mary Simondsen who will lead the concert band with a select program of pieces that are exciting to play. Geared toward adults with previous band experience who know how to read music and advanced high school students by invitation or with director approval. Our first concert is scheduled for April 22.

When: Rehearsals Monday evenings 6:30-8:30pm Where: Homer High School Band Room Fee: \$35

To sign up, download the form and to find out more deatils, go to <u>https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec/community-inlet-wind-band</u>

Homer Winter Carnival Event FREE Family Dodgeball

Come play a little friendly dodge ball! As part of the Annual Homer Winter Carnival festivities, this family-friendly game for participants ages 6 and older are invited to come play dodgeball!

When: February 11, 12-2pm Where: HERC Gym Fee: FREE

Jewelry Making with Art Koeninger

Sign up now for these great jewelry making classes with Homer artist Art Koeninger. Space is limited, so reserve your space today! Call Art at 907-235-1014 or email akoeninger@me.com. Cost per class is \$150, (\$90 for students repeating the same class) + cost of materials. To read more: <u>https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec/jewelry-makingclasses-spring-2023</u>

March 4 & 5: Introduction to Silversmithing March 24 - 26: Lost Wax Casting April 1 & 2: Intermediate Silversmithing





Economic Development

KPEDD Industry Outlook Forum

Mayor *Ken Caster* (top) and City Manager *Rob Dumouchel* joined local business owner *Kathryn Ault* of Inlet Charters and Homer of Chamber of Commerce Executive Director *Brad Anderson* (far right) at the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District on January 5th for the annual Industry Outlook Forum. Economic Development Commission Chair *Karin Marks* (far left) moderated a session on transportation, childcare, retaining/retention of a local workforce and housing- all hot topics in our community. The event rotates annually between cities on the peninsula to explore relevant issues effecting our communities.

Old Town Neighborhood Conversation on Future Road Improvements - Part 2 February 7, 5-7pm Bunnell Street Art Gallery

If you live, work or own a business in the Old Town district, please join us to continue the conversation about road improvements on Ohlson Lane and Bunnell Avenue to South Main Street. We value your input on this project as plans continue to evolve with the City's transportation plan. We hope to see you there.

- Presentation at 5:15 p.m.
- Refreshments will be served



Mayor Ken Castner at the KPEDD Forum.



Panel members discuss hot topics in the community.

Community Photos Needed

We are looking for photos from the community to illustrate the need for improvements to sidewalks and trails. If you're out and about, please snap a photo of people walking on sidewalks, or on the road where there is no sidewalk, waves hitting the road on the Spit and anywhere you see that could use improvement. Submit your pics to **jengebretsen@ci.homer.ak.us**



Fire Department



Winter Training Exercises

January was extra exciting at the Fire Station with training exercises, 'double-tone' calls and recruitment. Traditionally the winter months are when we sink our teeth into training exercises. Deputy Chief Kahles had staff going every which way, training to search for and then rescue a victim. What you can't tell is that the Firefighters have "blackout" shields in their helmets, so they follow the hose back out with their (very heavy) victim while 'blindfolded'. This technique trains firefighters how to rely on their hose, each other, and their skills when conditions are too smoky for any visibility during rescue.

Keeping Up With Call Volume

The HVFD has seen run volume grow through the roof, with an average of 2.75 calls daily. The number of "double tones," (i.e., two calls overlapping each other) have risen too, keeping everyone on their toes. The call at Homer Boatyard on January 19 saw a turnout of 14 providers from Homer with Mutual Aid response from KESA and WESA. We were grateful for the assistance to cover the 100 foot boat. In a critical event like that, it's always good to have plenty of help on scene in addition to the staff needed to ensure 911 is still on duty for other calls.

Recruitment News

Newly graduated EMS students are responding to calls along with last spring's more seasoned EMTs. We now have 13 more providers to take care of our community.

Deputy Chief Kahles will be adding to our numbers with the **Firefighter 1 class starting up February 13th**. Already, we have a great crew ready to get started, including both brandnew providers, students from Homer High School, and inhouse active volunteers looking to up their game. There's always room for more though!

Firefighter course set to start 2/13

Spring Firefighter I Class starts soon and there's still time to sign up! The course runs from February 13 through April 29. and meets conveniently on Monday and Wednesday evenings, and Saturdays. Completion of the course is required to obtain FF1/EMT1 certification. **Train local - Serve local!**

- Mondays & Wednesdays, 6-10pm
- Saturdays, 9am-5pm

To sign up and get more information, please contact **HVFD Deputy Chief Joe Kahles** at 907-299-5618 or Email *jkahles@ci.homer.ak.us*



Volunteer Fire Calls for 2022 – 785!

The Volunteer Fire Department exceeded projections for 2022 and responded to 785 calls. The chart below shows what that growth looks like over the last seven years.

As our community grows, so does the need for public safety services. A volunteer fire department like HVFD relies on valuable community members to be trained and available to respond to emergency calls. *Thank you volunteers!*



Planning Department



Flood Map and Protection Information

The City of Homer regulates development on coastline properties to mitigate risk and comply with FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The City's Planning Department has the following information available to help explain the NFIP.

- Determine whether a property is in or out of the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) as shown on the current Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). The current maps became effective on October 20, 2016.
- Provide additional flood insurance information for any address, such as the community number, FIRM zone, panel number and suffix, date of the current FIRM, and the base flood elevation.
- Obtain handouts explaining the mandatory flood insurance purchase requirement for property owners who need a federally backed mortgage or loan.
- More information on existing elevation certificates for new and substantially improved structures that have been built in a SFHA since 1999.
- Review mapping data for area wetlands, coastal erosion, and tsunami inundation zones. City Planning can provide lotspecific maps and information regarding development in these sensitive areas including best management practices and regulation requirements.
- Obtain information about areas that provide natural floodplain functions such as Beluga Slough, Louie's Lagoon, and the Homer Airport Critical Habitat Area.

Community members interested in developing a site located in a mapped flood area should be sure to contact the City Planning department to determine what permits are needed at 907-235-3106 or **planning@ci.homer.ak.us**.

More information can be found on the City's Flood Maps, Permits and Flood Protection Information webpage: <u>https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/planning/flood-maps-</u> permits-and-flood-protection-information.



LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

SEVERE WEATHER



Alaska is no stranger to extreme weather including thunderstorms, lightning, hail, heavy and drifting snow, freezing rain/ice storms, extreme cold and high winds. No wonder folks fly south for the winter!

Winter storm events involve precipitation like snow, sleet or freezing rain and can be accompanied by high winds, cold temperatures, and a storm surge. Storms in our area can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to blizzard conditions with blinding winddriven snow that can last several days. Homer has a more temperate climate, so storms are often experienced during other seasons throughout the year too.

What does this mean to me? The entire Homer area is vulnerable to the effects of severe weather. Strong winds can cause widespread power outages, downed trees and structural damage. Accompany these winds with freezing temperatures, it is a good idea to have an emergency power source and provisions on hand should roads become unpassable.

Notable severe weather from 2000 to 2021 include:

- In December 2019, a southerly jet stream brought several low-pressure systems to Southcentral Alaska. These were accompanied by above freezing temperatures, abundant rainfall, and high winds as the fronts passed through. A primary impact of this event was the flooding of the Anchor Point River. In addition, North Fork Road was impassable, and the Sterling Highway was flooded in several locations between mile 161 and 163, there was flooding across East End Road at Bear Creek Drive, and a mudslide on East End Road at Kachemak Bay Drive.
- In January 2020, a low-pressure system developed south of the Aleutian Islands and then moved north along the Alaska Peninsula and up Cook Inlet. A strong high-pressure system that followed brought a large amount of cold air, which created high winds through the Cook Inlet area. Homer reported 8 hours of blizzard conditions and nearwhiteout conditions.

Police Department -

Parenting in a Digital Age

Join HPD's Lt. Ryan Browning, **Saturday February 4th, at 6pm** in the Homer High Theater for a presentation and conversation on parenting in the digital age. This will be an **ADULT/PARENT ONLY**, very candid, and probably uncomfortable conversation on what our children are seeing and experiencing online and how to help them navigate responsibly and safely.

Side note: We want this to be a safe space for you to listen, share and have some authentic dialogue with us. <u>No recording will be permitted.</u> If we get feedback that it's worth doing, we'll do it again.





Self-Defense Class a 'Hit' in Soldotna

The Homer Police Department took their show on the road in January to host another free women's self defense class in Soldotna. Thanks for All American Training Center, APOA, Soldotna Police Department, City of Kenai Police Department, Alaska State Troopers for your staff and time; Mae, Jennifer, Britney, Pam and Karlene from Redemption MMA, Megan Stoll and Timberline Tree Care provided refreshments. Most importantly - thanks to the 71 amazing women who came out to empower themselves and have a great time with law enforcement.

IF YOU CAN'T CALL 911, TEXT 911

As of January 16th, contacting 911 in the event of an emergency situation is a little easier. If you are unable to call 911, you can now text 911. In some situations, texting for help might be more convenient and safer than making a phone call.





Homer Harbor Crew and Team Salvage Submersed Sailboat

Shout out to the Port and Harbor for their efforts to salvage a vessel that need to be rescued and hauled out of the water quickly to prevent further damage. On December 27-28, Deputy Harbormaster Matt Clarke led the charge to engage the harbor tug and hydraulic winch to salvage the 28-foot sailboat. With the owner's permission, Clarke called on services from C & C Aquatics, a local dive salvage operator, to help efforts to save the immersed vessel.

The Port and Harbor is staffed 24 hours a day to keep an eye over the facility and to respond to issues as quickly as possible. To keep the 'ship' running smoothly, the Homer Harbormaster has 19 full-time employees to cover administration, operations, maintenance and crew for the fish dock/ice plant. During peak summer months, more staff is employed for additional support.

Port Expansion Charrette

The City, working together with Corvus Design, hosted a port expansion charrette on January 16th. The event was held because the existing conceptual design is getting old and with the Army Corps' General Investigation on the horizon, it was a good time to conduct public engagement related to the design of the port expansion. While the original intention was to keep the work session relatively small, nearly 40 participants participated, which included a large number of individuals who make a living on the water, or supporting those who do. Corvus will be reviewing the information collected during the charrette and creating two design concepts that will be used to continue engaging the federal delegation, the State legislature, and the public.

Four groups of commercial and industrial users with vested interest in the project broke into groups to share their knowledge.





Read the Homer News January 5th article here.



Peter Briggs of Corvus Design introduces the exercise.

General categories of discussion included:

- Facilities and amenities needed by potential users of the Port Expansion
- Improvements needed to existing infrastructure
- Factors that could influence the success of the facility.
- The best location for the expansion.

The purpose of the charrette was to gather information to develop a revised conceptual master plan for the proposed Large Vessel Harbor to better reflect current and projected future needs. The plan will be used to communicate the project to continue to develop support and to seek funding.

The large vessel harbor will be solely for commercial and industrial uses, with the significant benefit of removing these uses from the existing small boat harbor.

Group #4 at work during the charrette.

PUBLIC SAFETY NOTES

"Public Safety" covers a lot of areas - from health and wellness to fire safety, safe driving practices and winter tips for safe travel. Don't forget our pets too! Each month we strive to provide relevant information to help you live well and stay healthy. If you have a tip to share, please let us know - email us.



Ready, Set, GO! Help Spread the Word!

Be Aware. Be Prepared. Go Now!

The Kenai Peninsula Borough Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has a new website that provides information, real-time maps and preparedness tips by hazards.

"Ready, Set, Go! Program" (RSG!) is a new local program designed specifically for the Kenai Peninsula to address natural disasters such as floods, wildfires, volcanoes, weather, earthquakes and more. RSG! not only highlights prevention-based topics, but also vital evacuation and re-entry updates during a disaster.

Help spread the word; visit the website at **<u>info.kpb.us</u>** and be sure to select the "Community Influencers" tab and sign up for KPB Alerts!

Make a Difference in Your Community

Become a Volunteer Firefighter or EMT

Stop by the Homer fire station for more information





Hornaday Park: Campground Closure and Playground Improvements

Like last year, under the authority of Homer City Code 19.08.030(d), all City-operated campgrounds were closed for winter 2023. Winter camping has been problematic in years past and requires too much staff time to manage successfully. This year, the Karen Hornaday Campground will not re-open, so we can take time to determine needs for improvements.



Hornaday Campground is the least popular of our facilities with a most number of complaints. Since 2020, 101 calls for service have been recorded by HPD at the park for various disturbances, including vandalism, harassment, assault and drug activities with multiple arrests over the last three years. Suspending Hornaday Campground for 2023 will give City staff the opportunity to break the cycle of abuse the campground has been experiencing and work with PARCAC on a master plan for the best use of the space - Improved camping program? Fitness trail with park exercise equipment? Some other yet to be determined use?

Last year, the Homer Foundation reached out to discuss ideas for the potential use of approximately \$20,000 in remaining funds from the Homer Playground Project and the Boat House Pavilion. The City proposed directing the funds to repair and replace certain pieces of equipment at Hornaday Park playground to include swings, diggers, slides, tire swings, and more including ADA equipment considerations.

Want to learn more or get involved? Come to a Parks, Arts and Culture Advisory Commission (PARCAC) meeting to share your ideas and lend your expertise toward this and other projects in Homer.

Meet the Staff



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

Christine Drais

Assistant to the City Manager

Christine joined the City of Homer ranks in May 2021. A transplant from South Carolina, she brought



her talent and personality to brighten up City Hall and the City Manager's office. Among her many duties, Christine produces the monthly newsletter, works on special projects, manages the website and City's Facebook page, enjoys marketing projects, and hosts special events for staff and VIP visitors. Prior to moving here, she owned a large gift shop near Clemson, SC. *Go Tigers!* Christine holds a BA in Business Administration from University of Central Florida and a MS in PRTM from Clemson University. Christine's family also lives in Homer. She has two Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, enjoys quilting, baking (did you see the Halloween cake she made?), and home improvement projects.

Christine's smile and sense of humor is contagious, so y'all come say 'hey' next time you're in City Hall.

January Anniversaries

We would like to recognize City staff members with anniversaries this month. Thank you for the dedication, commitment and service you've provided the City and taxpayers of Homer over the years. You all are an integral part of what makes the City of Homer a great place to work and the community.

Teresa Sundmark	Library	16	Years
Tomasz Sulczynski	IT	15	Years
Andrea Browning	Admin	11	Years
Brody Jones	Public Works	9	Years
Jona Focht	Dispatch	8	Years
Lynda Gilliland	Finance	5	Years
Amy Woodruff	Port	2	Years
Rose Riordan	Port		Year

The City of Homer has current Job Openings!

Sign up for Job Alerts or Apply Online at: *cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs*



Special KPB Mayoral Election February 14

The Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) is holding a **Special Mayoral Election** Tuesday, February 14, 2023. Absentee in Person voting for the Special Election will be available at the KPB Annex Building located at the intersection of E Pioneer Avenue and Lake Street, and open January 30th through February 13th. Day-of election will be held at your usual polling locations from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm.

Questions? Contact the Borough Clerk's Office

- Phone: (907) 714-2160
- Email: assemblyclerk@kpb.us

For more information visit the KPB Election website at https://www.kpb.us/assembly-clerk/elections/elections

Need to register to vote or update your Voter Registration? Visit the Alaska Division of Elections at <u>https://www.elections.alaska.gov</u>.

) Your Pics 🕬



Christine Drais found this handsome poser.

City of Homer Roster

Rob Dumouchel, City Manager Melissa Jacobsen, MMC, City Clerk/Deputy Director of Administration 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/City Engineer Dave Berry, Library and IT Director Mike Illg, Community Recreation Manager Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

Mayor - Ken Castner (2024)

City Council

Donna Aderhold (2024) Jason Davis (2025) Shelley Erickson (2024) Storm P. Hansen-Cavasos (2025) Rachel Lord (2023) Caroline Venuti (2023)

Commissions & Boards

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

STAY CONNECTED TO CITY COUNCIL

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS

February

1	5:30pm	Planning Commission Worksession
	6:30pm	Planning Commission Regular Meeting
9	5:00pm	ADA Advisory Board Regular Meeting
13	5:00pm	City Council Committee of the Whole
	6:00pm	City Council Regular Meeting
14	6:00pm	Economic Development Advisory Commission
		Regular Meeting
15	5:30pm	Planning Commission Worksession
	6:30pm	Planning Commission Regular Meeting
16	5:30pm	Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission
		Regular Meeting
21	5:30pm	Library Advisory Board Regular Meeting
22	4:00 pm	Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Worksession
	5:00pm	Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Regular Meeting
27	5:00pm	City Council Committee of the Whole
	6:00pm	City Council Regular Meeting
28	5:30pm	Economic Development Advisory Commission
		Worksession

MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION

Learn more about the municipal art collection at: <u>https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/</u> <u>prac/city-homer-municipal-art-collection</u>



Title: **Darwin's Theory of Evolution by Herbert** Location: Cowles Council Chambers Lobby Size: 18 x 23 inches Medium: Framed colored pencildrawing Date: 1988

JOIN OUR TEAM

The City of Homer has current Job Openings. Sign up for Job Alerts or Apply Online at: <u>cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs</u>

CURRENT JOB LISTINGS

- Building Custodian, Full-time
- Firefighter/EMT I, II or III
- Police Officer
- Public Safety Dispatcher I, Full-time
- Temporary Firefighter/EMT-Basic/EMT-Advanced
- Treatment Maintenance Technician I or II
- Water & Wastewater Utilities Technician I, II or III
- Mechanic I or II

Offices Closed Monday, February 20 in observance of Presidents' Day

City of Homer

491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska 99603 907-235-8121 <u>www.cityofhomer-ak.gov</u> Page 11

Parenting in the Digital Age



ADULTS-PARENTS-GUARDIANS <u>ONLY</u> A Candid Conversation & Presentation with Lt. Ryan Browning, Homer Police Department

Saturday, February 4 at 6pm Homer High School Theater

- What are kids seeing & experiencing online?
- How can we help them navigate responsibly & safely?
- You're invited to participate in this open, safe place to talk candidly about what kids are exposed to online.

