

# Homer Officials Spread the Word in Juneau Twice this Winter

Every year, municipalities across the state travel to visit their Juneau to legislators in person to advocate for priority projects. In January, Homer's Special Projects Coordinator Jenny Carroll, Port Director Bryan Hawkins, and City Manager Rob Dumouchel traveled to Juneau to spread the word and build awareness about



Council Members Erickson, Lord and Aderhold (l-r) awaiting Senator Murkowski's speech in Juneau.

the harbor expansion project along with other City priorities included in the FY24 Capital Improvement Plan.

City lobbyists, J&H Consulting, successfully arranged meetings for Homer City officials and staff members to spend valuable time with numerous legislators.

In addition, US Coast Guard Rear Admiral *Nathan Moore*, Department of Transportation Commissioner *Ryan Anderson*, and Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner *Jason Brune* were available for a great round of productive conversations about upcoming projects, grants, environmental issues and more. See photos on page 4. The January trip concluded with a visit to the Marine Exchange of Alaska to explore ways to collaborate to support Homer's port expansion project.

The second trip at the end of February was to attend the Alaska Municipal League's Winter Legislative Conference. City Manager *Rob Dumouchel* was joined by Mayor *Ken Castner* and Council Members *Donna Aderhold, Shelly Erickson,* and *Rachel Lord.* The agenda included presentations from numerous elected officials and State agency executives. They also met with legislators in their individual offices to talk about the top priorities for the City of Homer. Overall, we were encouraged by the very productive trip. Thank you, Juneau!

## **WHAT'S NEW?**

- Library Events
- Community Corner
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- Meet the Staff
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- 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 - <a href="https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/citymanager/monthly-email-newsletter">https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/citymanager/monthly-email-newsletter</a>

"where the land ends and the sea begins

## **LIBRARY EVENTS**

#### **Virtual Author Talks**

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



**March 13:** Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World. David Epstein - 9:00 a.m.

March 21: Southern Inspired: More Than 100 Delicious Dishes from My American Table to Yours, Chef Jernard A.
Wells - 12:00 p.m.

March 24: Woman, Captain, Rebel, Margaret Willson - 6:15 p.m.

March 28: Code Name Sapphire, Pam Jenoff - 3:00 p.m.

#### **2nd Sunday Shakespeare**

**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**

March 14 - Rachel Lord

Noon - 1pm

Join the conversation with Council Member *Rachel Lord*. Bring your questions and topics for discussion and enjoy lunch over Zoom. Follow instructions here.



#### **Teen Advisory Board**

Have ideas? Want to make things happen? We're looking for teens to join our teen advisory board. You can plan fun and exciting events and programs at the HPL with Cinda, the Youth Sciences Librarian.

Email Cinda for more info at cnofziger@ci.homer.ak.us



www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library/teen-advisory-board

Check out the complete Line-up of Library programs





#### **Homer Public Library**

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

## **Community Corner**

What's happening around the City of Homer

## Homer Resident Joan Edens is Turning 90!

Meet *Joan Edens*, Council Member Shelly Erickson's mom. Joan has always been an adventurous lady! She came to Homer when she



was 3 and turns 90 this month. For those who know her, she is an inspiration and continues to garden, ride her 4 wheeler and work around the pasture, fix trails in the summer, and ride snow machines in the winter, just for starters. A person can never be too old to enjoy the beauty and life around Kachemak Bay.

Looking for something fun to do outside this winter? Want to connect with new friends or join a new club? Check out Snowmads Snowmachine Club at <a href="https://www.snomadsonline.org">https://www.snomadsonline.org</a>.

#### Winter Carnival 2023

Mayor Ken Castner was aboard HVFD Engine 1 in the 69th Annual Winter Carnival Parade on February 11th organized by the Homer Chamber of Commerce. From public safety vehicles and SVT penguins, to cheerleaders, vintage trucks, boats and race cars, the community broke out of hibernation! Festive Homer people lined the streets to cheer the parade and celebrate. Did you see the ice races on Beluga Lake afterward?





## **Community Recreation**

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



#### Light Therapy Lamps Now Available Sports Gear Lending Program

Thanks to the South Peninsula Hospital, there are four Light Therapy Lamps available to check out through the Sports Gear Lending Program at the Homer Public Library. Did you know that light therapy can help ease your mood and reduce symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)?

Want to know more about the Sports Gear Lending Program at the Homer Library? https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec/sports-gear-lending-program



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: <a href="https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec/jewelry-making-classes-spring-2023">https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec/jewelry-making-classes-spring-2023</a>

March 4 & 5: Introduction to Silversmithing

March 24 - 26: Lost Wax Casting

April 1 & 2: Intermediate Silversmithing



Community Recreation Manager Mike Illg and Library Director Dave Berry show off one of the new light therapy lamps.





Associate Planner *Bella Vaz* enjoyed a warm, bluebird day while ski touring Manitoba near Cooper Landing.

## **Economic Development**

#### Old Town Road Improvements Conversation Continues

The City partnered with Bunnell Street Arts Center to host a series of neighborhood meetings to discuss road improvements in Old Town, latest of which was Tuesday, February 7. In July 2022, City staff and consultants Nelson Engineering asked these community members for ideas on what road improvements they would like to see in the Old Town area. At the February 7 meeting, Nelson



City Engineer/Public Works Director Jan Keiser with Nelson Engineering rep.

Engineering presented design options in response from that conversations including landscaping, parking, and sidewalks along Ohlson Lane and Bunnell Avenue. Residents and business owners had the opportunity to voice their concerns and provide feedback, and staff was able to gather more valuable community input on the proposed project as a result of the meeting.

# Meeting with Representative Mary Peltola and Staff

The City of Homer had its first official meeting with our new Congressperson via Zoom. Mayor Ken Castner, Special Projects Coordinator Jenny Carroll, and Port Director Bryan Hawkins participated from the Harbor Office, City Manager Rob Dumouchel called in from Anchorage, our lobbyists joined from Juneau, and Representative Peltola and staffer Logan Basner spoke with us from Washington D.C. The call was an opportunity to discuss priority City projects and begin to build a good relationship with Representative Peltola's office. We look forward to hosting her in Homer sometime in the near future!





Above: Senate Finance Co-Chair Stedman stops to chat with the Homer Delegation and City staff.

Below: City staff meets with DOT Commissioner Anderson and key staff.



## **Finance Department**



#### Sales Tax Update for 2022

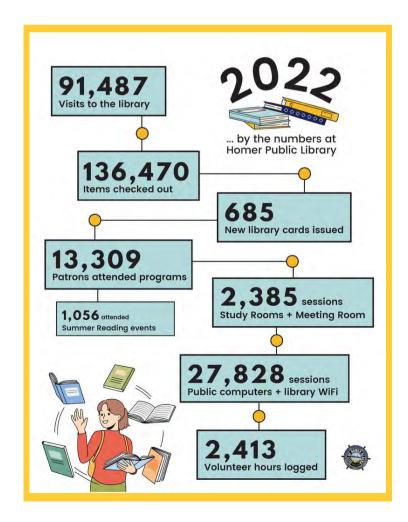
Complete sales tax numbers for calendar year 2022 have been released by the Kenai Peninsula Borough. The 4th quarter (or 2nd quarter of Fiscal Year 2023) saw a 2.6% increase in taxable sales over the previous year and is expected to bring in approximately \$2 million in total sales tax revenue (not including remote sales tax). Year over year, the City's taxable sales increased 7.2% and should amount to approximately \$12.5 million in total sales tax revenue (not including remote sales tax).



#### Homer Public Library 2022 by the Numbers...

The **Homer Public Library** was a busy place this year with over 91,000 visits! Other numbers were equally impressive, as seen to the right. Thank you for making the Homer Public Library a great place to visit. Your patronage is highly valued as are the thousands of hours logged by our many volunteers from the Friends of the Library.

Be sure to stay in touch to see what's new for 2023! Go to **cityofhomer-ak.gov/library** to find out more about upcoming programs and events.





## **Fire Department**



#### **HVFD Gains Two New Firefighters**

Two new Firefighters have joined the ranks of the Homer Volunteer Fire Department staff. As the community's needs grow, so does the need to expand our services. This addition will allow the extra help needed when overlapping calls occur, which is often.

Pictured right, excerpts from the February Firefighter-1 class brought personnel from your three local departments - Homer VFD, Western Emergency Services and Kachemak Emergency Services with (Deputy Chief Joe Kahles, far left). The class trained on ropes, ladders, knots, and getting out of confined spaces. Good times!

If you would like to become a volunteer firefighter or find out about the next training class, give us a call at 907-235-3155 or email **jkahles@ci.homer.ak.us.** 





#### Homer Special Olympics Team Qualifies for State Competition

On February 16th Homer Community Special Olympics held their local competition at the DOT ski trails. Seven local athletes competed in various events from the 25 meters to 800 meters. All have qualified for state competition March 11th in Anchorage to compete against Alaska athletes. The athletes have been practicing twice a week since December in preparation. Athletes can compete in three events as well as a relay.

A winter competition in Homer hasn't taken place since 2014, so it's great to see this event happening again. Special thanks go out to **Kachemak Nordic Ski Club** for the beautiful grooming and support in utilizing a portion of the DOT ski trails; **Homer Police Department**, *Evangelina Campuzano* and *Jessica Poling*, for presenting awards; and to **Homer Volunteer Fire Department** for attending for medical standby.

<u>Head Coach:</u> Jaclyn Arndt <u>Assistant Coach:</u> Dana Snyder

#### **Athletes:**

Caleb Arndt
Mike Daily
Christopher Gregoire
Lee Grundstad
Nick Kvasnikoff
Kinna Ledger
Robby Reeves

Special Olympics is looking for a coach for the Summer or volunteers in either Track, Swimming or Basketball.
Email homer@specialolympicsalaska.org



# Planning Department-

#### New Online Permitting Process Launched

The City of Homer Planning Department is pleased to announce a more customer-friendly and efficient way for Homer builders, contractors, and property owners to apply for and track development projects through our new software called SmartGov.

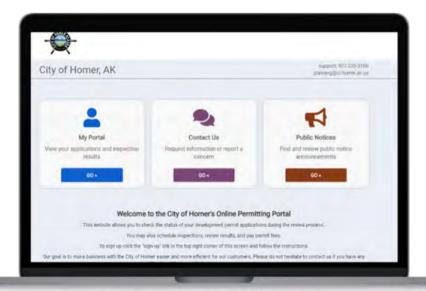
SmartGov provides an intuitive, easy-to-use platform for permit applications, eliminating paperwork and manual data entry. It also enables administrators to track applications in real-time, providing visibility into the entire process.

"Our department's goal is to provide responsive, reliable, consistently-good customer service from the moment a development starts to the moment we issue a permit," said Rick Abboud, Planning Director, "We are proud to provide this innovative solution and look forward to seeing how SmartGov will transform the permitting process."

#### Using the SmartGov Portal is easy!

New customers, without existing permits or applications, can create a new account by clicking <u>Sign Up on the Online Portal</u>. For customers with existing accounts, the Planning department will provide an access code that will link to existing applications and active permits. Customers can call the department at **907-235-3106** to receive the access code.

More information about how to create a portal can be found on the City's **Permits webpage.** 



City of Homer's New SmartGov Online Permitting Portal

# LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

# **TSUNAM**



Tsunamis are generated by a disturbance most commonly associated with earthquakes, which occur below or near the ocean floor. Other sub-marine landslides and volcanic eruptions can also generate a tsunami.

Tsunami waves are destructive and affect beaches that are open to the ocean, tidal flats and anything in their path. Secondary hazards occur from erosion, destruction of roadway embankments, foundations, cause damage to structures, roads, bridges and more caused from extreme floodwaters and debris. Toxic materials and sewage released from damaged wastewater treatment plants can pose health risks and contaminate water and food supplies. Tsunamis can cause the most devastating damage in a short time than any other hazard to a community.

The tsunami inundation zone for Homer is nearly the entire Homer Spit along with low-lying areas around Beluga Lake and to the coast, excluding the airport.

The 1964 Great Alaska Earthquake triggered several tsunamis between 20 and 40 minutes after the quake. Homer was struck between 2 and 5 minutes after the earthquake, which caused most of the deaths and damage here.

The Alaska Earthquake Center and University of Alaska Fairbanks created a model for tsunami waves and inundation map for Homer. You can read more about it in the **Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, Table 3-8:**Tsunami. They conducted several scenarios to simulate various degrees of inundation depending on the severity of the earthquake. The likelihood of a tsunami is hard to predict; however, previous events have shown that an earthquake-generated tsunami could impact the Homer community in the next five years (up to 1 in 5 chance of occurring).

#### **Homer is a Tsunami Ready community!**

Check out the great resources available on the City of Homer's **Emergency Information** page or call the Homer Volunteer Fire Department for help to prepare. Click here for the

Know Your Tsunami Hazard brochure

# Police Department

# Community Outreach: Parenting in a Digital World

Lt. Ryan Browning has been busy meeting with Homer parents to present helpful tips and valuable information through candid and honest conversation to help families understand what kids are up against in today's cyber world.

- Did you know that since 2007 the number of high school students attempting suicide has doubled in our state?
- Do you know how many teenage girls report being so depressed they've stopped doing normal activities?
- Did you know that almost 60% of students report being bullied via social media or on digital devices?
- Do you know what your children are looking at online and with smartphones?

Attendees will walk away with tools to help navigate their digital world. More dates will be scheduled, so stay tuned to our popular <u>Facebook</u> <u>page</u> for details about this and other community outreach programs. In Alaska, help is available through <u>CareAlaska.com</u> or by calling <u>988</u> for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

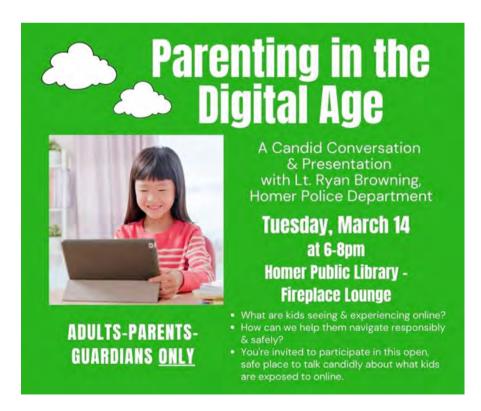


Taylor Crowder captured the Northern Lights while on duty.









# Port & Harbor

#### Ice Plant Gets Update

The Ammonia replacement project happened this month at the Ice Plant. The first time in 40 years! Although the Ice Plant has been maintained very well since being built in 1983, bringing the plant up to date with efficiencies of today's technologies will have an exponential benefit to the overall operation system. The upgrade will also reduce operating costs, optimize energy savings, and give everyone peace of mind.

Ice Plant Manager *Del Masterhan*, (top photo), is shown masked up and working on the system during the project. New ammonia tanks (below right) were carried and put into place to replace the aging system.

The Ice Plant & Fish Dock produces over 3,500 tons of flake ice per year to preserve the quality of more than 20 million pounds of salmon, halibut, sablefish, and pacific cod landed at the Port of Homer.



# BOAT HAULING

#### **Anchorage Boat Show**

Port Director Bryan Hawkins exhibited at the Anchorage Boat Show in February. Bryan has said many times that the Anchorage Boat Show feels more like the Homer Boat Show in Anchorage. Homer definitely had a dominant presence at the show, so Bryan was in good company among marine vendors of the industry. It was a great chance to spread the word about the Homer Port Expansion.

#### Tsunami Siren Network Expansion

The Kenai Peninsula Borough's Office of Emergency Management has been working with HPD Chief Robl and others to determine an appropriate location for a new siren. Working with Northern Enterprises Boatyard management, several potential locations were identified in the boatyard and transmitted to engineers for final planning. Installation is expected to occur this summer and the new siren will provide coverage to the inundation zone located on Kachemak Drive at the northeast end of the Beluga Lake Drainage.



Arial view of the Homer Spit taken on 1/19/23 by Andrew Tomey (Arctic Stills Photography)

# **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.



#### Difference Between Flu and COVID-19

Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a coronavirus named SARS-CoV-2, and flu is caused by infection with influenza viruses. You cannot tell the difference between flu and COVID-19



by symptoms alone because some of the symptoms are the same. Some PCR tests can differentiate between flu and COVID-19 at the same time. If one of these tests is not available, many **testing locations** provide flu and COVID-19 tests separately. Talk to your healthcare provider about getting tested for both flu and COVID-19 if you have symptoms. Learn more about Diagnosing Flu at: <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/testing.htm#have-flu">https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/testing.htm#have-flu</a>

## **Public Works**



#### **Grant Award for Green Infrastructure Project**

The City of Homer has been awarded a grant from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's Alaska Clean Water Actions (ACWA) program to design and construct the Beluga Slough Green Infrastructure Project.

This project is one of the four green infrastructure storm water management projects introduced in early 2022. It will capture sediment and other contaminants from one of Homer's primary storm drain systems, before the water is discharged into Beluga Slough, which in turn flows into the waters of Kachemak Bay, a designated critical habitat area. The remediation will be accomplished through the use of green infrastructure strategies, including a sediment/pollutant collection device, bio-swales, and wetland vegetation.

The City has been collecting data related to water volumes to help with project scoping as well as design of the sediment/pollutant trap and swales. The City will collect water quality data before and after the green infrastructure installation to document treatment effectiveness. The grant agreement and request for matching funds will be presented to Council soon.



**New Grader is Here!** After over a year of waiting, about as long as it takes to gestate an elephant, our new grader has arrived. Lead Mechanic Mike Parrish getting the City's new grader ready for heavy duty on Homer's roads!!



Public Works Utilities crew hard at work! From (R-L) Sean Love, Ralph Skorski and Jason Hanenberger.



# Jaclyn Arndt's Call to Adventure: Iditarod Trail Invitational -ITI 2023

As we 'speak', Homer Volunteer Fire Department's *Jaclyn Arndt* is on her way to uphold her crown in the ITI 2023. For a second year in a row, Jaclyn will face a true test of human endurance while traveling 350 miles on the historic Iditarod Trail. Competitors are given 10 days to complete this journey. On skis, Jaclyn is hoping to break the record of 7 days and 3 minutes. Last year she made it in 7 days and 20 hours which included a nap. Wow!

Competitors bike, run or ski the Iditarod Trail with only six check points, they haul their own survival gear and are self-powered through all types of winter terrain. They will face bone-numbing temperatures in one of the most remote places on the planet. Competitors will no doubt reach deep inside themselves to persist relentless physical and mental challenges and adversities to reach the finish line.

Two other entrants from Homer will be on foot for the journey - *Derek Bynagle* and *Brian Burns*. From all of us at the City of Homer and the Homer Community, loud cheers - **Go HOMER! Go Jaclyn!** 

If you'd like to track the Jaclyn and the other racers, go to: https://itialaska.com/tracking

#### **February 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.

Jenny CarrollAdmin7 YearsMorgan TracyPolice6 YearsKevin CoLibrary4 YearsTyler JeffresPolice4 Year





Sign up for Job Alerts or Apply Online at: <a href="mailto:cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs">cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs</a>

## **Meet the Staff**

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

Recreation Manager **Mike Illg** has been serving the Homer community by orchestrating thousands of educational and recreational opportunities and special events for the past 20 years. Originally hired as the coordinator for the Homer Community Schools program in 2003. As the program evolved it changed its name and was taken over by the City of Homer in 2006.



Originally from Lowell, Massachusetts, Mike took a semester off of college to visit his sister

Vicki in Homer for a few months in 2000 with the goal to help convince her to move back home at the urgency of their Mom. A story like many others, he quickly fell in love with this amazing place and the incredible people, and took a job coaching wrestling at the high school and became a substitute teacher in the public schools.

Fast forward to today, Mike has been heavily involved with leadership and advocacy on a local and state level for his two greatest passions: education and recreation. Mike recently served as the President of the Alaska Recreation & Parks Association as well as five years representing Homer on the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education. He is a Certified Parks and Recreation Professional, holds a Bachelor of Science in Parks and Recreation Management and a Master of Science degree in Recreation, Sports & Tourism from the University of Illinois. In addition to spending time with family, Mike enjoys watching football, jogging and telling cheesy jokes. If you have an idea or suggestion for a new class, program or event, please reach out to Mike at millg@ci.homer.ak.us.





I spy with my little eye, a moose walking along the edge of the road. Looks like she got a get out of jail free card and is heading over to Ulmer's. Photo credit: Bethany Christman

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## **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

# MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION

Learn more about the municipal art collection at:

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



**Bookshelves** by Evelyn Wythe is a hand quilted/machine pieced quilt sized 58" x 68" and is displayed at the north end wall outside fireplace lounge of the Homer Public Library. through the Friends of the Library 2006 Endowment fund recognition project.

#### 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**

#### March

1	5:30pm	Planning Commission Worksession
	6:30pm	<b>Planning Commission Regular Meeting</b>
13	5:00pm	City Council Committee of the Whole
	6:00pm	City Council Regular Meeting
14	6:00pm	<b>Economic Development Advisory Comm</b>

Regular Meeting

5 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

28 5:00pm City Council Committee of the Whole

6:00pm City Council Regular Meeting

#### **JOIN OUR TEAM**

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

#### **CURRENT JOB LISTINGS**



- Building Custodian, Full-time
- Firefighter/EMT I, II or III, Full-time
- Public Safety Dispatcher I, Full-time
- Port Maintenance Technician I or II, Full-time

#### City of Homer

491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska 99603 907-235-8121 www.cityofhomer-ak.gov