CITY OF HOMER

NEWSLETTER

VOL. III - ISSUE I | SEPTEMBER 2023



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

City of Homer - Transportation Plan

The public review draft of Homer's Transportation Plan is out!

GET INVOLVED!

Your voice matters in shaping the direction of our transportation system. We invite you to share your thoughts, suggestions, and insights. This is your opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the way we move, connect, and thrive in our city.

Copies of the <u>Public Review Draft (PDF)</u> and comment forms are available at City Hall and the Homer Public Library, or via the <u>City website</u>.

PROVIDE YOUR FEEDBACK VIA EMAIL

Comments on the draft Transportation Plan can be sent to homer.transportationplan@kinneyeng.com by end of business day Tuesday, October 10, 2023.

OR STOP BY THE PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

There will be a public presentation and discussion on Tuesday September 26th, 2023 from 6-8 pm at the Kenai Peninsula College campus.

Thereafter, a draft with revisions based on public comment will be presented to the Planning Commission in late 2023, followed by the City Council in 2024.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- Library Events
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- Public Works
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- · Join Our Team

Discover something new today and see the latest City project updates information! Learn about ways community members can get involved at City Hall and in the Homer community.

Follow us on Social Media

- · City Hall: @cityofhomerak
- Parks & Recreation: @homerparksandrec
- Homer Public Library: @homerpubliclibrary
- Homer Police: @homerpolice
- · Fire Department: @HomerVolFireDept

Subscribe to the Monthly Newsletter:

www.cityofhomer-

ak.gov/citymanager/monthly-email-newsletter

"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. For a complete list of Upcoming Speakers, go to libraryc.org/homerlibrary/upcoming.

Sep 7 at 3 p.m. Life, Love, Family, and Food by Lidia Bastianich Sep 20 at 10 a.m. How to Get Unstuck When It Matters Most by Adam Alter Sep 27 at 4 p.m. On Writing Three International Bestsellers by Amor Towles

ONGOING EVENTS

Mondays, 1:30-4:30 p.m. Knitting Club

Wednesdays, 10:30-11 a.m. Toddler Time
Wednesdays, noon-2 p.m. Community-Defined Youth Outreach
Wednesdays, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Chess Club
Fridays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Preschool Storytime
Fridays, 3:30-5:45 p.m. LARP
First Tuesday, 6:30-7:45 p.m. SPARC Radio Club
First Thursday, 1-3 p.m. Literary Ladies
First and Third Thursdays, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Tech Help
Third Thursday, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Radio Storytime on KBBI
Fourth Tuesday, 4:30-6:30 p.m. FHL/HPL Book Club
Tuesday following the first City Council meeting of the month,
noon-1 p.m. Lunch with a Councilmember (schedule may vary
depending on availability)

SPECIAL EVENTS

Sep 8-9: Fall Book and Plant Sale Sep 12, 6-7:45 p.m. Kachemak Swim Club Sep 20, 10:15-11:45 a.m. Independent Living Center Sep 26, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Zoom author visit by Margaret Willson, author of *Woman, Captain, Rebel*



FALL BOOK & PLANT SALE

Saturday, September 9, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Browse through hundreds of books and dozens of plants at the Friends of the Library 2023 Fall Book & Plant Sale! Everybody welcome.

Want to get first pick? Become a Friends of the Library member and join us for the members pre-sale Friday evening, September 8. Memberships start at \$15. Join at the door or become a member today.





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



COMMUNITY CORNER



BURNING BASKET

September 3-9 Build Week (12-5 p.m. daily) Event on Sunday, September 10 at Sundown

More information:

Mavis Muller

907-299-1478

www.facebook.com/BurningBasketProject



CONNECTION 5K RUN FOR FUN

September 16, 2023 Kevin Bell Arena at Homer Spit

www.facebook.com/allthingsrecoveryskp

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2023

The City of Homer and Kenai Peninsula Borough Regular Elections will be held Tuesday, October 3, 2023. Absentee/early voting will be open downstairs at Homer City Hall Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. starting September 18 until October 2. If you'd like to request a ballot by mail or electronic transmission, applications are available the on City Clerk's webpage or at the City Clerk's office.

On election day, polls are open from 7 am to 8 p.m. There are two polling places for city residents, Homer No. 1 precinct is located downstairs at City Hall, and Homer No. 2 precinct is at the Methodist Church.





Voters must be registered to vote thirty days before the day of the election. If you need to register to vote or update voter registration you may do so online at <u>elections.alaska.gov</u> or during regular business hours at the City Clerk's or the Homer Public Library. The deadline to register is Sunday, September 3.

If you have any questions regarding elections, or voter registration, or would like to serve as an Election Worker, please contact the City Clerk's office at <u>clerk@ci.homer.ak.us</u>, 907-235-3130, or stop by the Clerk's Office downstairs at City Hall, located at 491 E Pioneer Avenue.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HERC HAZMAT REPORTS AVAILABLE

In spring 2023, the City contracted with Hazardous Building Materials Consulting, LLC to carry out a limited Hazardous Materials Assessment of HERC 1 (big building) and a comprehensive assessment of HERC 2 (little building). The results reveal that both buildings contain hazardous materials, as expected due to their age and the prevailing construction materials utilized in the 1950s. Examples include lead paint, asbestos, and materials like paint and varnish that harbor PCBs. Click <u>HERE</u> to read the assessment reports.

These test results hold significant implications for these buildings' demolition (or renovation). It will likely be years before the existing property is ready for redevelopment. Options for moving forward are twofold; pursue EPA Brownfields grant funding to remediate the existing HERC buildings, and consider a new site for building a community recreation center. Council will hold a work session at 4 pm Monday September 11th to further consider the concept of new location for a new recreation building.

PARKS

PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY: MASTER PLANS FOR KAREN HORNADAY AND BAYVIEW PARKS

Since the initial Karen Hornaday Park Master Plan was adopted in 2009, use patterns, community demographics, and site assessments have changed. The Master Plan is due for an update. Homer City Council approved funding in the FY24-25 capital budget to review the existing plan and collect updated input from the public on the role this park will play in our future growth as a community. Funds have also been secured to improve Bayview Park. The first step is to finalize a Master Plan to guide the Bayview Park improvements.

Join the City at one or all of the Public Forums planned for Tuesday, September 12. We want your input! For more park project information, scan the QR codes or contact Matt Steffy, Parks & Trails planner at msteffy@ci.alaska.ak.us or call 907-435-3178.

Bayview Park & Karen Hornaday Park

Public Forums



Public comments and questions regarding either park project are welcome at any of the three public forums scheduled. On-site planning exercises will focus on the respective park.

TUESDAY · SEPTEMBER 12 · 2023



BAYVIEW PARK PUBLIC FORUM

Location: 195 W Bayview Ave, Homer, AK 99603

Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM



SCAN ME!





KAREN HORNADAY PARK PUBLIC FORUM

Location: 475 W Fairview Ave, Homer, AK 99603

Time: 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM





CITY HALL PUBLIC FORUM

Location: Upstairs Conference Room at Homer City Hall, 491 E Pioneer Ave, Homer, AK 99603

Time: 5:30 PM — 6:30 PM

UPGRADES AT KAREN HORNADAY PARK PLAYGROUND!

The City of Homer's Parks Staff has been hard at work enhancing the Karen Hornaday Park Playground, with more improvements on the horizon. In a display of teamwork, Parks Maintenance Coordinator Chad Felice and Parks Technician Matt Hornaday reassembled the expansive slide, drawing the anticipation of eager youngsters awaiting their turn. An upgrade to the tire swing introduces a more durable and modern design.

Get ready for even more fun as we gear up to introduce two new diggers in the expansive sand pit adjacent to the playground. These additions are sure to spark creativity and imaginative play among our young visitors. Not only have the larger elements received attention, but our team has also been diligently working on hardware replacements and minor repairs, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone.

Stay tuned for further updates on the ongoing enhancements at Karen Hornaday Park Playground – where laughter, adventure, and community come together!



Chad Felice with Slide (Julie Engebretsen)

NEW EQUIPMENT HELPS MAINTAIN OFF-ROAD TRAILS AROUND TOWN



Chad Felice, Parks Maintenance Coordinator, stands with Public Works' new powered wheelbarrow and mini-compactor. This equipment, acquired with FY24 Capital Budget funds, is a game changer when maintaining off-road, narrow trails around town. This equipment was put to work on the Calhoun Trail recently. See story on page 6.

HOMER'S PARKS EMBRACE RECYCLED PLASTIC PICNIC TABLES

Discover the success of recycling in Homer's Parks Department! The City recently procured two new 8-foot picnic tables crafted by Alaska Plastic Recovery LLC made from recycled plastic materials, including HDPE (#2) and PP (#5) plastics.

The plastics used to manufacture these tables were collected locally from "super sack" collection points outside the offices of the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies. They were transported to Alaska Plastic Recovery LLC near Anchorage where the plastics were transformed through melting and extrusion into vibrant green "lumber." These picnic tables are cost-competitive with traditional wooden options and offer significantly extended durability, possibly up to 50 years. This endeavor is a win-win – benefiting our budget, the environment, and ensuring joyful picnicking experiences for all.

ENHANCING HOMER'S TRAILS FOR YEAR-ROUND ENJOYMENT

In spite of unpredictable weather conditions, the devoted efforts of our City staff and enthusiastic volunteers persist in enhancing our local trail systems this season. The Karen Hornaday Park (KHP) Playground has seen notable progress, with the creation and compaction of multiple access pathways to ensure both safety and ease of use. The KHP Nature Trails, weaving through Woodard Creek and extending to Danview, have undergone consistent resurfacing for improved quality.

Significant attention has also been dedicated to enhancing the upper section of the Calhoun Trail to improve accessibility and better surface conditions, especially during the winter months. The City Parks Crew, Chad Felice and Matt Hornaday, contributed their expertise and strength to the Calhoun Trail project. These collective endeavors have been guided by Parks & Trails Planner Matt Steffy and the passionate volunteer cohort of Homer Drawdown. As autumn approaches, we look forward to the continuation of these volunteer-driven initiatives.



Volunteer Mike Haines smooths out new gravel that City Parks staff Chad Felice delivers with the Toolcat while Matt Hornaday runs the compactor on Calhoun Trail. Photo credit: Matt Steffy



Volunteers Donna Vixon and Mike Haines spread gravel while Todd Hindman keeps the wheelbarrow running on Calhoun Trail. Photo: Matt Steffy



Calhoun resurfacing in progress shows the difference between the old trail and the new one. Photo credit: Matt Steffy

DOGS CAN'T FLUSH......

There's nothing worse than going for a stroll down your favorite trail, tossing a frisbee in the park or breathing in the fresh air along the beach, when all of a sudden you smell something gross – and it's coming from the bottom of your shoe!

The City is receiving reports from the field about an unprecedented amount of dog waste in parks, on trails and beaches.

Pet feces not scooped and disposed of properly can pose a health risk to children and adults, and it can also wash into our city storm drains or directly into our urban streams, becoming detrimental to our water quality.



......PLEASE SCOOP FIDO'S POOP!

The City provides numerous dog poop collection bag dispensers and trash receptacles in our public parks to make pet clean up a cinch. While City and Parks maintenance staff clean up what they can, poop scooping is a personal responsibility and not a municipal service. From the potential for disease and environmental harm, to the unpleasant surprise of poo on your shoe, there are a multitude of reasons to care. Please scoop and responsibly dispose of your pet waste.

PORT & HARBOR

THANK YOU TO JEFF WELLS, A DEDICATED VOLUNTEER!

We proudly honor Mr. Jeff Wells for his exceptional dedication to preserving our beloved port and harbor. For over six years, his citizen-volunteerism has made an indelible impact on our community. Mr. Wells' journey began in 1968 when he first arrived in Ninilchik, and his love for our region deepened over time. His strong connection to Homer Spit is a testament to his desire to positively influence the environment. We've witnessed him patrolling and tidying our spaces, his actions conveying the message that every small effort matters. Beyond this, he has formed connections and shared his passion with like-minded individuals, showcasing the power of community. Mr. Wells' work has led to the collection of six dumpsters' worth of trash, reflecting his commitment. His legacy will inspire future generations. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for his selfless actions and celebrate his enduring impact on our environment.



HOMER HARBOR EXPANSION STUDY UPDATE

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has completed the design alternatives milestone as part of the Homer Harbor Expansion Study. Thirteen innovative design concepts were evaluated and narrowed down to five alternatives. These five designs will move into the design alternative formulation and analysis phase of the study.

The second phase of the study is just getting underway. Activities include:

- · Environmental coordination with agencies and environmental stakeholder working group;
- Coastal Numerical Modeling (waves, tides/storm surge, sediment transport) of existing conditions.
- · Identifying the current fleet and the future with and without expansion scenarios, as part of the economic benefits analysis.



The event kicks off at 10 am in Room P201 at the Kenai Peninsula College campus with a study update and overview of the design alternatives moving forward by USACE and HDR.

Participants will have the opportunity to break into small focus groups to workshop opportunities and offer ideas for the following topics:

- Uplands Considerations & **Aesthetics**
- Resiliency & Sustainability
- **Reduced Environmental Impact**
- **Balanced Harbor Design**
- **Business/Economic Opportunities**

Conversations will be facilitated by project staff from the City of Homer, **USACE**, and HDR Engineering.





Saturday, September 23 at 10 a.m.



Kenai Peninsula College Campus, Room P201



www.homerharborexpansion.com



PUBLIC WORKS

WATER AND SEWER MAIN EXTENSIONS COMPLETED

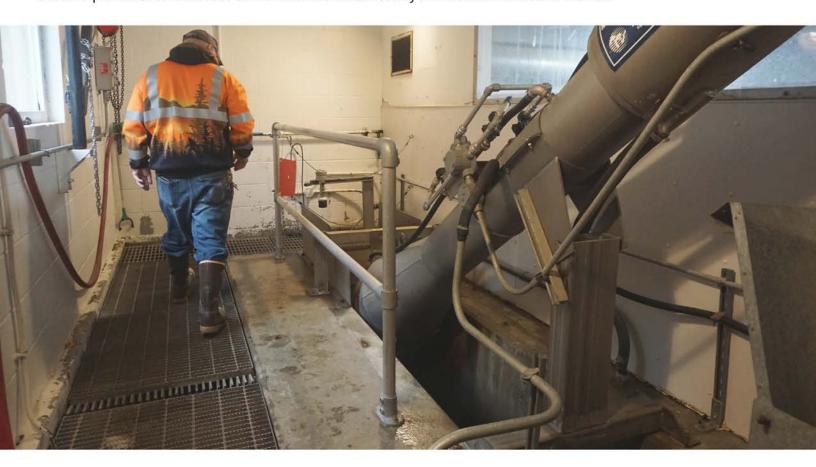
The Charles Way and Bunnell Avenue water and sewer main extensions project is now complete! This project, funded by the City's "Homer Accelerated Water and Sewer Program" (HAWSP) Fund and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's State Revolving Loan Fund, brings improved services to residents and businesses. With the last pipe in the ground, homes and enterprises in the neighborhood can now connect to City water and sewer.

The project also revitalized the area, reconstructing driveways and hydroseeding yards. We thank the community for their patience during the construction in the area. The completion of this project enhances convenience, aesthetics, and sustainability, fostering a stronger, more vibrant city.

UPGRADES AT HOMER'S WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT

The City is pleased to share the successful completion of upgrades at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The clarifier is now operational with a new belt, ensuring smoother wastewater processing. New high-efficiency blowers have been introduced to provide oxygen, enhancing the natural bacteria's treatment process. These upgrades not only improve efficiency but also reduce the plant's environmental impact.

Originally built in 1987, the plant's rejuvenation extends its lifespan, ensuring continued reliable service to our community. We extend our gratitude to the dedicated crew and contractors for their hard work in making this possible. These improvements reflect our commitment to sustainability and a cleaner future for Homer.



COMMUNITY RECREATION

UPDATED FEE SCHEDULE

The City of Homer Community Recreation division has announced changes to the drop-in program fee schedule. Starting September 1, we're introducing new rates that will offer the community more flexibility and value. For over 20 years, our participation fees have remained the same, reflecting our commitment to providing affordable recreational opportunities. However, as the cost of delivering our diverse programs has increased over time, we find it necessary to adjust our fees slightly to ensure the continued excellence of our services.



For adults, drop-in sessions will be \$5, and you can also choose the convenient 10-visit card for \$45. If you're planning to attend regularly, our 3-month membership at \$110* is the perfect option (*available from December 1). Youth participants (at the HERC only), starting from December 1, can enjoy drop-in sessions for \$3, or opt for the 10-visit card at \$27. A 3-month membership at \$66* provides an excellent way to stay engaged (*available from December 1).

Don't worry if you've already purchased old rate punch cards - we'll continue to honor those. Plus, we're keeping drop-in programs at public schools **free** for youth. And to show our appreciation, all active service members can enjoy all drop-in programs for **free**.

These changes are designed to make our programs more accessible and affordable for everyone. We're excited to see you at our drop-in sessions and create memorable experiences together!

FREE CLOTHING SCHWOP

WHEN: Saturday, September 16th 11am- 2pm

WHERE: Homer High School Commons

Bring your gently used toys, clothes, gear, and equipment for children 0-5yrs, and get ready to swap those items for the sizes that best fit your kiddos!



The SCHWOP event also kicks off National Diaper Awareness week. If you have any unopened diapers that you'd like to donate to our safe diapering program bring them to the Shwop!

This event is co-hosed by Sprout and Community Recreation. For more information call Sprout (907)235-6044 or email classes@sproutalaska.org.



PUBLIC SAFETY CORNER



In this section, we aim to keep readers informed about the latest developments in public safety in the community. Whether it's news about crime prevention, emergency preparedness, or updates on local law enforcement activities, we've got you covered. Our goal is to promote a safe and secure environment for all community members and visitors of Homer, and we believe that staying informed is a crucial part of achieving that. Read on to learn more about what's happening in public safety in Homer.

A sunny day in Alaska calls for opening all the windows and letting the house air out. But there's a hidden peril for young children, and that is children falling out of the window. Last month we had 2 young children fall out of a window from the second floor in the Homer area. One-third of the children hospitalized after a window fall require intensive care, and one in four children return home with a disability. Children who land on concrete are more likely to be severely injured. Window screens provide no protection against these tragedies and likely contribute to the risk of a fall. Over 85% of the children who fall out of windows first fall through a screen. Following the following steps from the Nationwide Children's Hospital will help prevent falls from windows.

- Remember that window screens do not prevent children from falling out of a window. Screens are designed to pop out for fire safety- the weight of a toddler can easily push through a screen.
- 2. When possible, keep windows closed in rooms where children play. Open windows from the top rather than the bottom.
- 3. For windows you must open fully, commercially available window guards can be installed to prevent children from falling. These guards cost as little as \$20 and are designed to swing open to allow escape in the event of a fire.
- 4. For other windows, inexpensive window stops can be installed on windows that slide open horizontally to prevent them from opening more than 4 inches and therefore prevent a child from falling.
- 5. Move beds, chairs, tables and other furniture away from windows in order to prevent a small child from climbing onto the sill. Do not permit children to sit on window sills or jump from them to furniture.
- 6. Consider placing shrubs, bark or grass under windows to cushion potential falls. The landing surface can greatly affect the degree of injury sustained from a fall. Anything is better than cement.
- 7. New homes should meet safety standards to prevent window falls. Talk with your contractor or landlord to make sure your home meets window safety standards.



Various manufacturers make window screen guards designed specifically for child safety.

If you would like to check some samples out, stop by the Homer Volunteer Fire Department. They have two examples of Child Safety Screen Guards made by Tough Tek Metals (toughtekmetals.com). These can be special ordered to fit.

For further information, check out https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/research/areas-of-research/center-for-injury-research-and-policy/injury-topics/home-safety/window-falls

allelone TO THE TEAM!

The City is delighted to extend a warm and enthusiastic welcome to the new members of the team. We are thrilled to have them join!

- · Aaron Knowles, Firefighter/EMT I
- · Leslie Thomas, Port Admin Assistant
- Isaiah Nevak, Harbor Officer I
- · Japheth McGhee, Ice Plant Operator I

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

We would like to recognize City staff members with anniversaries last 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.

Joe InglisPublic Works12 YearsKellen StockPolice4 YearsRob DumouchelCity Manager3 YearsWinnifred WadePolice1 Year

CITY STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

This is a bittersweet announcement, but I am transitioning to a job in Anchorage this month. While I'm enthusiastic about this new career opportunity, I also want to express my profound appreciation for the individuals I've had the privilege to collaborate with during my brief tenure at the City of Homer.



The people I've had the pleasure of working alongside here have shown remarkable resilience, industriousness, and creativity. I've gained valuable insights from my time here, and I hope that I've been able to contribute some of my perspectives from the "big city" to our collective endeavors. I eagerly look forward to returning to Homer for visits and staying updated on the exciting and innovative projects that you all will continue to pursue.

- Bella Vaz

MEET CITY STAFF

Meet Amy Woodruff

I'm the Administrative Supervisor with the Port & Harbor, which is a role that encompasses recordkeeping, billing, and liaising with the Port & Harbor Advisory Commission. Every day I learn something new in this job!

I get a lot of satisfaction from doing work that supports an essential community resource. The Harbor is a place that we go to work, play, to fill our freezers, and more. It's an economic driver for the whole region.

Outside of work I enjoy hiking, paddling, biking, and harvesting wild foods. I just bought a small sailboat so I'm getting to learn about the harbor from a whole new perspective.



CITY OF HOMER ROSTER

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)

City Staff Leadership

Rob Dumouchel, City Manager

Melissa Jacobsen, MMC, City Clerk/Deputy Director of Administration

Mark Robl, Chief of Police

Bill Jirsa, Chief Technology Officer

Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

Elizabeth Walton, Finance Director

Mark Kirko, Fire Chief

Dave Berry, Library Director

Andrea Browning, Personnel Director

Bryan Hawkins, Port Director

Jan Keiser, Public Works Director/City Engineer

Ryan Foster, City Planner

Mike Illg, Community Recreation Manager

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



Roaming the Land Melisse Reichman



Beings of the Bay Melisse Reichman

Each piece is located on the exterior of the public restrooms on Pioneer at Bartlett Street.

Constructed of fortified cement over carved foam

STAY CONNECTED TO CITY COUNCIL

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS

September

6 6:30 p.m. Planning Commission Regular Meeting

11 5 p.m. City Council Committee of the Whole

11 6 p.m. City Council Regular Meeting

12 1 - 6:30 p.m. Bayview & Karen Hornaday Parks Public Meetings

12 6 p.m. Economic Dev. Advisory Commission Regular Meeting

19 5:30 p.m. Library Advisory Board Regular Meeting

21 5:30 p.m. Parks, Art, Rec & Culture Commission Regular

23 10:00 a.m. Homer Harbor Expansion Public Meeting

25 5 p.m. City Council Committee of the Whole

25 6 p.m. City Council Regular Meeting

26 6 - 8:00 p.m. City of Homer Transportation Plan Public Open House

27 5:30 p.m. Port & Harbor Advisory Commission 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

CURRENT JOB LISTINGS:

- Assistant Planner or Associate Planner
- Building Custodian
- Mechanic I or II
- Temporary Building Custodian
- Temporary Recreation Specialist



ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The City of Homer Newsletter is published monthly. For questions or comments, please contact the Office of the City Manager at citymanager@ci.homer.ak.us.

City of Homer

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