

Session 13-01 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Wagner at 6:00 p.m. on January 8, 2013 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONER FAULKNER, ROSS, SCHMITT, WAGNER

ABSENT: SARNO, KRISINTU (both excused)

COUNCILMEMBER: ZAK

STAFF: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR KOESTER
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 11, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented by consensus of the Commission.

VISITORS

A. State of Alaska DCCED Division of Economic Development New Loan Programs

Sandee Holst from the State DCCED reviewed three loan programs offered through the State. She explained the criteria to be able to apply for and receive the loan funds. There was discussion about some different scenarios and loan options for commercial charter operators.

B. Councilmember Bryan Zak Triple Bottom Line Tool

Councilmember Zak provided a brief introduction to the Triple Bottom Line tool from the University of Washington. The tool doesn't just look at financials it integrates quality of life, value to the community, and social value. He said he could provide more information through Mrs. Koester and they can do a more in-depth discussion at a future meeting.

STAFF AND COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOROUGH REPORTS

A. Staff Report: Gas Line Update

Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester reviewed her staff report, noted the public meeting that Enstar will be doing on the 9th, and the public hearing dates for Homer City Council.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Downtown Vitalization – Brainstorm Ideas, Potential Visitors, Follow-up

Vice Chair Wagner suggested inviting Michael Haines as he is very involved with businesses and has a lot of history. He also suggested Derotha Ferraro to give some insight into the hospital and an overview of the other medical things going on in town.

Mrs. Koester commented that she sees downtown as Pioneer Avenue, but the downtown district could also include Old Town. There was discussion about the city center and the need for infrastructure and determining what will pay for that infrastructure. Walkability of a town has a lot to do with economic development as well, and maybe we are missing things like benches, bathrooms, and more visible crossing areas on the road. It was suggested that preparing a gravel parking lot in the town center area would be a low cost alternative and easy to remove when needed. Mrs. Koester said she will bring the CIP request and maps of the area to look at what has been proposed for the area.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. RV Parking in Downtown Update: Commissioner Ross

Commissioner Ross and Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester reviewed the information about RV parking downtown in an effort to bring more interest to Pioneer Avenue. A group met to talk about available options for downtown parking areas and came up with the HERC parking area for the west side of town. It is a city owned space and would be a good space for a pilot program type area. City Manager Wrede seemed supportive of the concept as well. The issues that need to be addressed include signage, advertising, and enforcement of day use only parking. Using the HERC area for the first summer will allow them to work out any kinks and provide a model to bring to business owners to help get them involved and help with expanding options.

There was discussion of using the high school parking area for the east side of town. It is something that could be brought up to the school district, but concerns they have with that area is maintenance and insurance. It is also tucked away so it's not as visible to rv's. It was noted that a little signage would resolve the visibility issue, and it is just a short walk to Pioneer from the lot.

B. Resolution 12-102 Re: Regular Meeting Schedule

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Larry Slone, city resident, commented in support of parking at the high school. It is public property, but might be a challenge since it isn't city owned. A benefit in relation to enforcement is that it is located in close proximity to the Police Department and since it is a wide open space, people may be less likely to push the limits.

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester thanked everyone for a good meeting. She asked them to let her know if they have packet ideas. At the next meeting they will have elections for Chair and Vice Chair.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

Councilmember Zak commented that CIRI is a property owner in the town center area and they may be a potential partner. Also with the legislature in session, maybe something will come from there.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Vice Chair Wagner commented that it might be worth inviting CIRI to a meeting to talk about options for the area. He reminded everyone of the worksession on Thursday at 4 in the conference room.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Ross said he appreciated the comments about the police station in relation to parking at the high school. That input makes him see it as a good option to pursue.

Commissioner Schmitt commented that the loan information was really interesting. Back when he fished he had interest in pursuing a boat, but the loan process was a real headache to get through. It was good to hear about new options.

Commissioner Faulkner and Student Representative Davis had no comments.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 12, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____