

WORK SESSION AGENDA

1. Call to order 5:00 pm
2. Discussion of “Marketing Homer to High-Tech Entrepreneurs”
 - a. Define individuals/group types that Homer is wanting to attract.
(Reference p. 24 of December 10, 2013 EDC packet)
 - b. SWOT Analysis
 - c. Action Items
 - i. Update on action items from EDC work session *(Reference p. 27 of December 10, 2013 EDC packet)*
 1. Survey *(Reference p. 99 of December 10, 2013 EDC packet)*
 2. Relocation/Living in Homer Info *(Chamber, Reference p. 26 of December 10, 2013 EDC packet)*
 - ii. New or Revised Steps
 - d. Identify who will be responsible for action items
 - e. Timeline
 - f. Follow-up Plan
3. Public Comments
4. Commission Comments
5. Adjournment

From: [Katie Koester](#)
To: [Katie Koester](#)
Subject: FW: Here what I just wrote for you about Broadband Internet
Date: Wednesday, January 08, 2014 8:54:01 AM

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Here what I just wrote for you about Broadband Internet

Date: Mon, 6 Jan 2014 19:59:45 -0900

From: Kevin Kreitz <kevin@kreitz.net>

To: neil@sustainablehomer.org <neil@sustainablehomer.org>

Benefits of Broadband Internet

The Internet can bring new visitors, residents, workers and entrepreneurs to town. It can give new life to existing businesses by expanding markets and create new Internet based business sectors.

Right now Homer has acceptable Internet access, given a town it's size and geographical location. However to be competitive, Homer needs 3-4 times the basic individual capacity at 25% or less the cost of what is currently offered today. For example in cities in the lower 48 one can get 30 Mbps for \$39/month as compared to 25 Mbps for \$250/month here in Homer.

Given the delicate nature and beauty of the environment, in and around Homer, it would seem that courting businesses that leave a "clean" footprint would be desirable. Which of course high tech businesses are the most desired by cities and towns throughout the country.

Homer has a high tech community of business people that ranges from owners of virtual businesses to telecommuting workers for large companies to individual contractors in web design, graphics, engineering to B&B owners reservation systems and marketing to online Alaskan fish sales and more. This still is a fledgling community, yet it could be the fastest, most profitable and environmentally aligned business sector in Homer. If given the opportunity and infrastructure, it has the potential to outpace all other sectors, including oil and gas, for overall community benefit ie. local income, environmental protection, social benefits and locally based decision makers. This exactly is why we are reading about all of the success stories of cities and towns that have invested in their Internet infrastructure.

Instead of the tag line "Homer is open for business" directed at the same declining business sectors from the past, how about "Homer is investing in the future of business" targeted at the new and growing business sectors of the future.

Here are a number of proven areas of benefit to broadband Internet Access:

Information Access

Broadband facilitates the distribution and access of information in many different forms.

Economic Development

The Internet is also a catalyst for job creation. Among 4,800 small and medium-size enterprises surveyed, the Internet created 2.6 jobs for each lost to technology-related efficiencies.

Businesses, large and small, seek out high speed broadband access when choosing to grow, or move, their business. Communities that connect their residents create wealth and attract business investments. Internet based businesses are one of the fastest growing sectors in the United States and other countries throughout the world.

Telecommuting

Broadband enables people to work from home, saving time and expenses. Employers have been encouraging this concept to save overhead expenses and improve employee satisfaction.

Healthcare

Telemedicine has become an important element of efficient healthcare delivery, which promotes better patient care, and even saves lives. Doctors are also now sending prescriptions directly from their offices to pharmacies, greatly reducing errors, with automatic checking for interactions.

SmartGrid

SmartGrid technology enables homeowners to monitor energy usage in real time, and adjust usage patterns to save energy costs and aid in conservation efforts.

Communications

Being digitally connected means communications can improve people's lives on the job, in their personal lives, and unite people with disabilities. Broadband empowers people with disabilities and removes barriers that keep them from participating in everyday activities.

Public Safety

Broadband enables interoperable broadband public safety networks. High speed Internet improves victim to responder communications by enabling instantaneous digital transmissions to and from members of a connected community.

Education

Broadband Internet access levels the playing field when it comes to educational resources. Children in inner city neighborhood, affluent homes, and farm communities can all access

the same resources. Textbook materials can be complemented with online resources, and children can access all of these materials from school and home.

Kevin (Xin) Kreitz
Google Voice # 702.518.3713

--

"You must BE the change you wish to see in the world."...Mahatma Gandhi

SWOT ANALYSIS



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
491 E. PIONEER AVENUE
HOMER, ALASKA**

**JANUARY 14, 2013
TUESDAY, 6:00 P.M.
COWLES COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**NOTICE OF MEETING
MEETING AGENDA**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
- 4. RECONSIDERATION**
- 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. December 10, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes **Page 11**
- 6. VISITORS**
- 7. STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/ BOROUGH REPORT**
- 8. PUBLIC HEARING**
- 9. PENDING BUSINESS**
- 10. NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. Market to High-Tech Entrepreneurs
 - B. Expand Shoulder Season Sports **Page 17**
- 11. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**
- 12. COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**
- 13. COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF**
- 14. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER**
- 15. COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR**
- 16. COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**
- 17. ADJOURNMENT/NEXT REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Ave, Homer, Alaska.**

Session 13-09 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Barth at 6:00 p.m. on December 10, 2013 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONER ARNO, BARTH, ROSS, SARNO, WAGNER

ABSENT: KRISINTU

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

AGENDA APPROVAL

ROSS/WAGNER MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 12, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes

It was noted that the attendance on the minutes needed to be corrected to show Commissioner Wagner absent and Commissioner Arno as present.

The minutes were approved by consensus of the Commission.

VISITORS

A. Aaron Kallenberg, High Tech Entrepreneur out of New York

Mr. Kallenberg introduced himself and said he grew up in Homer and graduated from Homer high school. He recognized that the influence and encouragement of particular high school teachers helped him get where he is today. During high school he taught web development at Community Schools, and then attended college in Washington State. He talked about his experience in developing a consulting business, and web based businesses. Mr. Kallenberg also addressed the importance of location when working in the technological field. He said it wouldn't be impossible to do his kind of

work from Homer at the point he is now, but location and access to jobs is important when getting started. Location is key based not only being where there is a trained work force, but also ease of accessibility from other locations in the state. For example Boulder, Colorado and Austin, Texas are both growing in the technological field and are somewhat centrally located from either coast. He spoke of a technology incubator that he was involved with in one of his businesses called TechStars. They pull you on site, mentor your company, and introduce you to capital with investors.

Homer is at a disadvantage because it is a lot smaller, and travel to and from can be challenging, but he thinks there are things the city could do to position itself to create an environment that is conducive to the culture and location. He thinks Homer could be marketed or positioned as a destination for something specific that could augment the tech conversation on a global level. One way to do that is hold some sort of tech conference where you would really play up that there is no better place to have a conference than the Homer, Alaska. Then it becomes extremely desirable and convenient when you are doing something globally and trying to get people in from Asia and the states. It would take a lot of planning but is attainable, and there are a lot of cities that are doing it. Another thing that is important, before trying to attract companies or investors, is to focus on creating and nurturing a work force. That can be done starting in high school, or even earlier. There is an organization called Code for America where people share their expertise for little or no cost to local government. Creating that resource pool for companies to benefit from is key. Mr. Kallenberg also suggested a event called a Hackathon, where people come in and win a prize to build a new product. A surprising amount of companies get started this way. Direct incentives are an option to consider. He emphasized that there would be a need to get Homer on the map and over time start to attract attention.

Talent is one thing, but capital is also important. Focusing Homer as a place where tech investors come to discuss tech investment would be an interesting approach. A surprising number of those people have heard of Homer, visited, or even own property here.

In relation to internet or infrastructure, Mr. Kallenberg said he hasn't had an issue with it in Alaska. He probably wouldn't put a data center here, but for web companies, a lot of stuff is moved over the Cloud and the service is adequate for that type of work.

They talked briefly about ways to enhance the city center, should it be developed in the future, to house some type of high tech business. Mr. Kallenberg noted a large company that has a main office in New York and satellite offices in Dublin and in Portland. It's his understanding they did that because there are a lot of developers and engineers in those less competitive areas and put engineering departments there. He talked about other circumstances that are relative to people in high tech fields who are able to work from home and also conference potential, but continued to emphasize the importance building an environment conducive to tech talent and lobbying companies with enough incentives to thrive in Homer.

STAFF AND COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOROUGH REPORTS

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Marketing Homer to High Tech Entrepreneurs

The Commission took some time to review and talk about the packet materials that comprise the groups work regarding High Tech Entrepreneurs. Initial discussion focused on the survey, and that is still an option for them to put out and get feedback. One of the issues initially with the survey was who to send it out to. The group talked about getting it out to the entrepreneur group that is meeting regularly, and possibly working with the Chamber to send out to businesses in its database. The group agreed to schedule a worksession to finalize the survey. Commissioner Wagner said he would send it out to a few key people to get their input on it.

They briefly reviewed the information about the fiber cable and the challenges to use it.

Lastly the group touched on the conference idea that Mr. Kallenberg mentioned. It was suggested that would be a good idea to get people here and get an idea of what it would be like to live here or do business here. Commissioner Wagner talked about an event they went to in Yakutat that addressed alternative energy. A competition will get a little buzz going, that is something they can continue to think about.

The Commission agreed on January 7th for a worksession and Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester said she would coordinate with the Mr. Lavrakas from the Chamber to see if he can attend. Commissioner Sarno said she would be absent at the January 14th, regular meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Memo to Council Re: Status Update on Resolution 12-041

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Bumppo Bremmicker, city resident, encouraged the Commission not to let go of the town center concept. He participated on the Town Center Committee and the group had a lot of discussion with CIRI. At that time they were interested in doing something and willing to work with and trade with the city and the city could develop the needed infrastructure, as land ownership in that area is about 50/50. When it went to the voters on the ballot the city hall question kind of brought it down. He was always a big promoter of doing a big park green space, and including businesses and residential. There were a lot of good plans and a lot of good work done on it. He thinks it's good that some time has passed since then for things to settle down. He still thinks there is good potential for something good there. He hopes they keep it in mind, and he hopes that green space is a part of it.

Larry Slone, city resident, commented that everyone loves the concept of the town center, but they aren't willing to pay the money to put in the infrastructure. Without some large commercial entity willing to locate there and provide financing for infrastructure, his sense is that is simply isn't going to go anywhere. This topic seems to be revisited on a regular basis, and this is ultimately what it comes

down to. He thinks they are all aware of the city status with regard to financing and providing funding for all the entities that want it. The budget was adopted last night and they provided all the funding requested. But they are coming up against the insurmountable barrier of the health care costs for city employees. It is presumably going to get worse in the future. They managed to get through this year, but will have a tough time in subsequent years. Money will be tight so if the group has no way of dealing with funding for the town center infrastructure, any plans they may have for that are pretty much dead in the water.

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester commented that she looks forward to working with the Chair on the upcoming worksession and meeting agenda.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Barth commented that money is the issue and he is encouraged that their focus as a commission is really on increasing the tax base through economic development, not necessarily by just a vote to raise taxes. It's encouraging business to come in and produce income, which in turn generates revenue through sales tax. He personally prefers that approach and he is excited they are talking about things that could potentially make that happen.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Ross thanked staff for compiling the information in the packet, it was a good comprehensive overview and he is glad it is consolidated for review before the worksession. He thanked the audience for their feedback. Part of the reason he is here is because he thinks it's important to be involved in our local government, and to have the community input is also part of that. The ideas we share and talk about bring about the change that is being sought. Without it we are stagnant, and that's not good.

Commissioner Sarno commented that she spoke to council last night and she mentioned there are millions of gallons of water that could be sold. Today she found herself talking to the Finance Director Li and Public Works Director Meyer about that idea. There's 50 million gallons of water bled off every year because it can't sit in the lines past a certain amount of time. Finance Director Li did a little math and came up with 400 million bottles of water. That's a lot and water is the most precious thing on the planet right now. She said Mr. Li and Mr. Meyer asked to be invited as visitors to talk to them about what they have come up with relating to this. She thanked staff for providing copies of the CEDS to them and encouraged everyone to read it. It could really help Homer unite as a city. We developed this plan, so let's use it.

Commissioner Wagner said he agrees with Commissioner Sarno's comments and appreciated the feedback tonight. He thinks the whole thing is to keep it real. He said with things going on the

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 10, 2013

internet for businesses, so either we can join it or not. It should always be part of our plan for how we develop economically.

Commissioner Arno said he feels like they accomplished a lot tonight. He's glad to be here working on this with the Commission.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 14, 2014 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:_____



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Economic Development

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

(p) 907-435-3101

(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: Homer Advisory Economic Development Commission
FROM: Katie Koester, Community and Economic Development Coordinator
DATE: January 8, 2014
SUBJECT: Expand Shoulder Season Sports

One of the directives from the Homer City Council in Resolution 12-041 was to come up with recommendations regarding implementation strategies including timetables, responsible parties and funding sources for “Expanding Shoulder Season Sports.” The purpose of this memo is to provide some information for the Commission to begin that conversation.

What are “Shoulder Season Sports”?

I was not able to get clarity from Council on their definition of shoulder season nor is it specifically mentioned in the CEDS. According to Dictionary.com, shoulder season is “a travel season between peak and off-peak seasons, especially spring and fall, when fares tend to be relatively low.” I think a safe assumption would be that the Council is looking for activities that bring in visitors and dollars outside of the peak summer months.

What Sporting Activity is Generated by the Homer High School?

I spoke with Homer High School Athletic Director Mark Casseri about the athletic program at Homer High School. The High School supports the following sports, all of which are not summer sports as school is not in session during that time.

- Basketball
- Hockey
- Football
- Cross Country Skiing
- Swimming
- Running
- Baseball
- Softball
- Track and Field
- Soccer

The High School charges an entrance fee (\$5 per adult, \$2 per student) for the most popular sports (Basketball, Hockey and Football). Mr. Casseri estimated that 1,000 individuals ‘come

through the doors' at any one of the events for the major sports. That includes athletes, staff and fans. He said there is a healthy fan base for visiting teams and a 60/40 split home/visitor in the audience. Many of these fans are families that will fill up their gas tanks, eat at our restaurants and on some occasions stay in Homer hotels.

The teams themselves spend a fair amount to get to away games. A recent trip for the Homer High Boys and Girls Basketball teams to Ketchikan cost \$18,000, mostly in airfare (\$14,000). Round trip travel to Anchorage is \$1,200 per bus, and \$600 to Soldotna, more frequent destinations. The school district pays some of the transportation costs, but much of the revenue for these trips is generated by fundraising in the community.

Tournaments and regional competitions attract both a large number of athletes and out of town fans whose longer stay means more dollars spent in our community. Homer Hockey is hosting Regionals in February which will bring 6 teams and their fan base and Bantams in March will attract 12 teams.

I asked Mr. Casseri what could be done to attract sporting events and their fans to Homer. He emphasized the need to get the community out to see the kids play, the more fans there are the more buzz and support our local teams have.

What Organized Sports and Sporting Events Occur in Homer Outside of the School District?

Homer Hockey Association has a robust program that includes broom ball and multiple leagues (adult, pee-wee, etc).

City of Homer Community Recreation facilitates indoor/outdoor soccer, pickle ball, basketball, karate, gymnastics, rock climbing, volleyball, and dance. Most of these are local activities/games that do not have tournament participation that draw spectators from outside Homer.

Kachemak Nordic Ski Club grooms over 70 miles of trail in the Homer area. The Kachemak Nordic Ski Club hosts events such as Sea to Ski, Homer Marathon, and Epic 100 that draw participants from other communities.

Kachemak Ski Club maintains and operates a rope tow at Ohlsen Mountain for downhill skiing.

Dog Mushing. The course for the Tustumena 200 has a check point in Fritz Creek.

Homer Running Club hosts a number of events that may draw out of town participants including the Spit Run (June), Migration Run (May), Run to the Alter (October).

What could the City do to Increase Off Season Visitorship through Shoulder Season Sports?

The City could be accommodating and helpful to organizations that would like to host or facilitate a regional event such as a triathlon, running race or other event that would attract participants (and possible fans) from out of town.

The City could work to support the construction of infrastructure needed to host sporting events, for example, the recent move to upgrade the Homer High Track and Field were supported through resolutions by the Homer City Council.

In Conclusion

According to the Homer Chamber of Commerce, every visitor to Homer spends an average of \$100 a day. Bringing new business to Homer's restaurants, stores and hotel/B&Bs during the 'down season' is new money flowing into our local economy when we need it the most.

This is by no means a comprehensive list of the sporting events that take place in Homer. It is merely intended to give the Commission a starting place to frame the conversation of what the City can do to promote shoulder season sports.

SWOT ANALYSIS



