

Session 14-02 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Sarno at 6:00 p.m. on February 11, 2014 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

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

ABSENT: KRISINTU (unexcused)

STAFF: DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

### **AGENDA APPROVAL**

WAGNER/ARNO MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

### **RECONSIDERATION**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. January 14, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes

WAGNER/SARNO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **VISITORS**

A. Michael Haines: Creating an Entrepreneurial Culture for Homer

Michael Haines gave an overview of his experience in working with entrepreneurs and helping them succeed in their endeavors. He touched on the challenges of small communities, like Homer, trying to drive economic development by attracting large corporations with tax benefits and the like, but not having success. Small communities should drive economic development through entrepreneurial functions.

Mr. Haines reviewed his presentation called “A Work in Progress” that addressed the following concepts in fostering an entrepreneurial culture in Homer.

- Three prime objectives are to find entrepreneurs, nurture them, and recognize them.
- Of the things that make up an entrepreneur the key to being successful is for them to be innovative and risk tolerant.
- Entrepreneurs have talent and start at the 50% level of his talent opportunity scale but once they are educated and supported they can excel to 100%.

Relating back to the three prime objectives, ways to find, nurture and recognize them include

1. Business ideas- Bizidea, Entrepreneur Network, Aps 4 kids, Lemonade Day.
2. Nurture – Entrepreneur Network, KBC classes, SBDC courses. Need to promote mentoring and financing.
3. Successful networking- Entrepreneur Network, promoting events for people to gather. Need to promote mentoring in this area as well.
4. Recognize them – Develop an Entrepreneur Award.

Some things needed to help foster an entrepreneurial culture in Homer include

- Finding focus.
- Bubble up strategies – getting groups together to brainstorm projects and ideas “bubble up” from those sessions.
- Developing a website.
- Angel Financing

Question was raised whether we need to develop a center. Mr. Haines responded that Homer doesn’t need a building as there is not the population to support it. He added that a business incubator doesn’t have to have walls and creating the services to support the entrepreneurs is the way to do it here.

There was discussion around work being done with gaming through the KBC campus and the Aps 4 Kids project at the library; and also relating to websites and ways to promote that Homer is open for business.

## **STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/ BOROUGH REPORT**

Councilmember Zak updated the Commission on recent council actions.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

## **PENDING BUSINESS**

A. Market to Internet Based Entrepreneurs: Final Review of Survey

The group reviewed and discussed the recent draft and agreed on the following changes:

- Change question 5 to gross income.

- Change email page title to Are you an Internet Based Entrepreneur? Change body to Please Complete the Survey, We are Looking for Feedback.

The commissioners discussed widening the scope of distribution and encouraged each other to send it out to people they know to help broaden the range of feedback.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Expand Shoulder Season Sports**

The Commission discussed the benefits of sporting events to the community and noted that the state tournaments for school sports rotate each year to different communities. They recognized that there are other associations that hold tournaments but are unsure how the groups lobby for where the events are held. The Commission agreed it would be beneficial to reach out to those groups to find out how they vie for those opportunities and if there is an area where they can help.

Councilmember Zak spoke of the facility in Wasilla that was built with money raised by a tax the voters approved, that was put into place solely to raise funds specifically for their hockey center, and then it was eliminated the tax after it was complete. He recognized the Hockey Association for their work in keeping our facility up and running and wonders what more we can do to help promote better facilities at the hockey rink and throughout Homer.

Commissioner Arno explained that he is the steering committee that working on a survey for the recreation needs assessment and part of their goal is to find out what people want and how they want to pay for recreation in Homer. There are representatives from most of the groups like the Hockey Association and Re-Create Rec who are involved with the steering committee as well.

They talked briefly about other funding mechanisms like a bed tax, and also about maintaining the HERC building.

SARNO/ARNO MOVED TO INVITE MIKE ILLG AS A VISITOR TO TALK TO THE COMMISSION ABOUT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS OF THE HERC BUILDING.

There was brief discussion in support.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **B. Memo from City Clerk Re: Scheduling Meetings for Boards and Commissions**

The Commission discussed the memo and acknowledged the Councils goal of making the best use of staff's time and reducing costs. They disagreed with the statement of the EDC not having specific tasks, because they are currently working on things that were given to them by Council.

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They feel that continuing to meet monthly is beneficial and as a group they need to stay focused on the five tasks and continue to make recommendations to Council.

Focusing on tasks in a systematic way and making recommendations. The survey is ready to move forward now. They also believe that other things will be coming forward including the recreation movement.

The Commission did not recommend scheduling fewer meetings. They recognized they need to communicate better with the Council regarding their work in an effort to keep them better informed. The Commissioners also recognized they could take more of an active role in working among themselves to help alleviate some of the work that Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester does.

They are also interested in opportunities for worksessions so they come together to discuss things happening in the community or address what they are hearing from other user groups prior to their regular meeting.

C. Land Allocation Plan

The Commission reviewed the Land Allocation Plan.

Discussion ensued questioning the status of the lot where Pier One Theater is located and on the importance of having the 10,000 square feet available for RFP so the Wooden Boat Society would have an opportunity to submit a proposal and acquire a lease to use the 10,000 area.

SARNO/WAGNER MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL THAT A 10,000 SQUARE FOOT PIECE BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR LEASE AND RFP.

There was discussion recalling some history of the previous work Wooden Boat Society trying to lease the property and the Harbor not being interested in that because of the financial implication of reducing the lease rate. They recognized that the property would have to go out to RFP and the Wooden Boat Society would be able to apply.

It was pointed out that the note in the Land Allocation Plan refers to 11-037(A) and that it is in progress. It isn't clear what that refers to and whether it is tied to something specific that is in progress and it would be helpful to know, before voting on the motion. Concern was raised that this motion could harm the efforts of the Wooden Boat Society in acquiring the portion of the lot for their use. It would be beneficial to know more before sending this message to council.

The Commission agreed to include in their memo that they support the notion of having the 10,000 square feet made available to the Wooden Boat Society but because of the question regarding the status relating to Resolution 11-037(A), they were reluctant to make a specific recommendation at this time.

VOTE: NO: BARTH, SARNO, WAGNER, ROSS, ARNO

Motion failed.

The Commission considered lots 11, 20, and 11B Homer Spit Subdivision Amended on page E-31. It was suggested that Lot 11 could be used for more business as it is right next to an existing boardwalk and promote more economic development in the area. They weighed the options for other lots in that area as they felt there is potential if there is a potential user for the area. There were also comments that developing the area would reduce recreational space for the public.

ARNO/ROSS MOVED THAT LOT 11, 11B, AND 20 BE PUT UP FOR AVAILABLE LEASE.

Comment was made that these are park areas and it may be an issue for parks and recreation. It is a prime area and having all 3 out there for lease is a concern as there isn't all that much natural open space, Lot 11 only would be a preferred option for some members. It was suggested that Council would look at the recommendation and choose most appropriate of the three lots for potential economic development. It was also suggested that when Council sees the recommendation for 3 lots, they could say no to the whole thing.

VOTE: YES: ARNO, BARTH, ROSS  
NO: WAGNER, SARNO

Motion failed.

BARTH/ARNO MOVED TO RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL MAKE LOT 11 AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC LEASE.

The Commissioner's felt that this lot is next to one that already has development on it, and would be a more appropriate option for potential development. They recognized that there space available out there now is full, and that only recommending lot 11 would minimize the impact to the overall area.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

- A. Resolution 14-021 A Resolution of the Homer City Council Approving an Economic Development and Tourism Marketing Agreement Between the City of Homer and the Homer Chamber Of Commerce.
- B. Resolution 13-116(A) A Resolution of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending the Economic Development Advisory Commission Bylaws to Include that the Director of the Homer Chamber of Commerce and a Representative of the Homer Marine Trades Association May Serve as a Non-Voting, Ex-Officio Members of the Commission. City Clerk/Economic Development Advisory Commission.
- C. Ordinance 14-01 An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending Homer City Code 2.76.010, Commission—Creation and Membership, to Make a Representative of the

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Homer Marine Trades Association and the Director of the Homer Chamber of Commerce Ex Officio, Non-Voting Members of the Economic Development Advisory Commission. City Clerk/Economic Development Advisory Commission.

D. City Manager's Report

E. Citizens Academy Flyer

Chair Barth commented that the Commission didn't push for a Marine Trades Association seat because they had expressed that they weren't interested in a seat on the Commission, and he was surprised to see it when it was on the Council's agenda. He doesn't want the message to be that the commission opposed it, because that isn't the case. They would certainly welcome any member from that organization to come and let the EDC know what they have going on.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

Bumppo Bremmicker, city resident, commented about the area the Wooden Boat Society was hoping to lease. It sounded at one point like it was going to happen and but then there was concern expressed by some of the Council Members and some of the harbor people t and it fell apart. He isn't aware of what the in progress status means in relation to the lot. He was disappointed they didn't recommend that nonprofits be in that area, he thought it would be a good thing and encourage the city to do something on that. He was glad Michael Haines was able to meet with the group as he is really sharp and his work is greatly appreciated. He commented about groups that raise money within the group to give to someone to develop their idea, and then pay the group back so the money can go to another person. He commented that the University should encourage a renewable energy center in Alaska. This is the place to do something like that since we have wind, tidal, geothermal, and wave energy. He commended them on their good work tonight.

#### **COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF**

None

#### **COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER**

Councilmember Zak thanked the group for letting him participate during the meeting. He looks forward to working with them and reporting back to Council.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR**

Chair Barth commented that he thinks they have enough information that it would be a good time for a Commissioner to go to the Council meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> to comment. He thanked everyone for their work tonight.

Commissioner Sarno said she could attend. It was clarified that she could give a brief summary of the memos and recommendations that will be presented to them. It's also nice to let them know what's on the Commissions radar.

**COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Ross had no comments.

Commissioner Sarno said she appreciates being able to go back and forth Corbin and hearing his distinct point of view. He's kind of quiet, but she hopes he keeps sharing his ideas because they make a lot of sense.

Commissioner Wagner thanked everyone for coming and said that he will out of state for the next meeting.

Commissioner Arno said it was great working with everyone tonight.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 11, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

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MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_