

Session 14-03 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Barth at 6:00 p.m. on October 14, 2014 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONER ARNO, BARTH, BROWN, ROSS

ADVISORY MEMBERS: COUNCILMEMBER BRYAN ZAK, CHAMBER DIRECTOR JIM LAVRAKAS
MARINE TRADES ASSOCIATION REP CINDA MARTIN

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

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Barth requested the agenda be amended to for the Chamber Director to give a report under new business item A.

The amended agenda was approved by consensus of the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 11, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Barth called for a motion to approve the minutes.

ARNO/ROSS SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

VISITORS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/ BOROUGH REPORT

A. Staff Report: Commission Updates

Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester commented her staff report included updated on things that have happened since they last met.

There was no discussion regarding the staff report.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Chamber update

Jim Lavrakas, outgoing Chamber Director, updated the Commission on improvements to the Chambers relocation packages and information. They receive about 250 requests for relocation information each month.

Chair Barth requested the Chamber relocation package review be included at a future meeting.

B. Staff Report: Update on Directives from Council

Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester briefly reviewed her staff report that includes a summary of their prior work.

C. Staff Report: Summary of Work to Date on Affordable Housing

Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester reviewed her staff report that included a summary of their work on affordable housing and also copies of information from previous packets.

The commission recognized that affordable housing is hard to nail down because there are many factors that play in to what affordable housing is, and that it means different things to different people.

Mrs. Koester left the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Discussion points include:

- Demographic information for people or businesses interested in moving to Homer is beneficial. It's an important point when people are looking at places to move to.
- There has been an amendment to the zoning code to allow a second house on a lot in some zoning districts.
- Most of the statistics they have reviewed so far relate to home buying, but there are also people who need rentals as well.
- Affordable housing is generally defined as 30% of one's income. That can be challenging for most people in Alaska, especially when it includes utilities.
- There is not an abundance of subsidies for seniors and people with disabilities, or many of the accommodating services that larger cities may offer.

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- They would like information about zoning for multi-family housing within the city.
- It is challenging for developers in that lots in Homer are costly, and it is also costly to build. It would likely take a lot of time to recoup the money spent on new development.
- Carol Swartz from the college might be a good resource to address student housing needs.

Chair Barth called for a short recess at 6:53 p.m. The meeting resumed at 6:58 p.m.

Chair Barth invited Cinda Martin up to talk to the Commission. She wanted to remind them there have been other projects done in town for rentals for seniors, disabled and low income renters. Those developments were done in partnership with Alaska Housing. The Senior Center and the Kenai Peninsula Housing Initiative (KPHI) are two groups who have participated with Alaska Housing for these developments. She has a contact at KPHI and will contact her to get some information to provide to the Commission. Steven Rouse, KPHI Director, would be a good resource to talk to the Commission about the work he does and how he gets funding for projects.

A. Memorandum from City Clerk Re: 2015 Meeting Schedule

The Commission reviewed the 2015 meeting schedule. The 2015 meeting schedule was approved by consensus of the Commission.

D. Memorandum from Deputy City Clerk Re: Rescheduling the Regular Meeting of November 11, 2014

The Commission reviewed the memorandum and agreed to reschedule their November meeting to Monday, November 10th at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall conference room.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. 2014 Alaska Construction Spending Forecast
- B. Email from Attorney Klinkner RE: Open Meetings and Advisory Commissions
- C. Park, Art, Recreation and Culture (PARC) Needs Assessment Flier

Chair Barth noted that the information regarding the Open Meetings Act clarifies that there was an amendment from two members to three as the number who can talk, before it becomes a risk of violation of the OMA.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Thomas Daly, owner of HiSpeed Company, with locations in Kenai, Soldotna, and Anchorage, said they are a high tech company who wants to come to Homer. He shared his experience in trying to conduct hi speed demonstrations at Islands and Ocean in Homer, and no one attended. He also shared challenges with trying to submit bids to provide services to the City of Homer for the major pieces in his line. They are a Toshiba full line dealer. He gave his presentation to the City Manager and the Mayor at Chamber of Commerce meeting when they were the only three in the room. Mr. Daly talked about the challenges of government contracts and the negative effects of spending money outside of the City and Borough. He noted throughout his comments that if the city wants to invite business to the community, they need to be willing to invest in those they invite.

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

There were no staff comments.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

Councilmember Zak commented that it was good to reconvene the EDC meetings and he is glad to be here.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Barth confirmed the next meeting is scheduled for December 10 at 6:00 p.m. in the conference room.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Ross said it is good to be back and he looks forward to getting more information on affordable housing.

Commissioner Brown said he appreciates being appointed as a Commissioner. He is passionate about family freedom and world free enterprise. He chose Homer as his home and to invest his time into the community. He expressed is appreciation to Mr. Daly for taking time to share his comments tonight.

Commissioner Arno said see you all next month.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 10, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Conference Room located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____