

Session 18-06 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Acting Chair and Senior Commissioner Anders Gustafson at 6:00 p.m. on October 9, 2018 at the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS GUSTAFSON, JOHNSON, BROWN, RICHARDSON, AREVALO, AND COUNCILMEMBER SMITH (arrived at 6:17 p.m.)

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS EVANS (unexcused) AND MARKS (excused)

STAFF: SPECIAL PROJECTS AND COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR CARROLL
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY

AGENDA APPROVAL

Acting Chair Gustafson requested a motion to approve the agenda.

AREVALO/BROWN 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. Regular Meeting Minutes for September 11, 2018

Acting Chair Gustafson requested a motion to approve the minutes. There was brief discussion on a typo that Commissioner Arevalo pointed out before the meeting; page four, first paragraph, "ease policy" was changed to "lease policy".

BROWN/AREVALO MOVED TO APPROVE THE AMENDED MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 11, 2018.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS

REPORTS

- A. Marine Trades Association Report
- B. Chamber Director Report
- C. Pioneer Avenue Task Force Report
- D. Staff Report – Jennifer Carroll, Special Projects & Communications Coordinator

Acting Chair Gustafson noted there was no one present from the Homer Marine Trades Association or Homer Chamber of Commerce to give a report.

Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll provided her report that included the following topics:

- Homer Transportation Fair on October 3rd – Representatives from ADOT&PF, the City, and KPB to discuss transportation projects with the public;
- Retention and expansion survey comments specific to Sign Ordinances – outlined in Ms. Carroll’s memo;
- Kenai Peninsula Economic Development Districts’ (KPEDD) snapshot of Homer’s demographics and economics;
- Planning Assistance to States Program – A joint program with the Corps of Engineers and City, currently co-founding a study for the large vessel port expansion project.

Commissioner Arevalo had a brief question regarding a computer virus attack being reported by the Mat-Su Borough, noted in the City Manager’s Report. Ms. Carroll responded that the City’s IT is aware of the issue and has made precautions to ensure the City’s online safety.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Wayfinding/Streetscape Plan Proposal: Utilizing Local Expertise for Plan Deliverables

Acting Chair Gustafson deferred to Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll to report on her memo. Ms. Carroll provided a brief overview of the last meeting, at which the commission approved a scope of work. The second stage is to figure out how to develop the plan. She explained that normally consultants are hired on for this step, but the commission wanted to minimize costs. She posed the question “how do you envision the process for utilizing local expertise to help develop the project deliverables?”

Ms. Carroll formulated a list of what a consultant would likely ask; she gave an overview of each list/section from her memo:

- 1) Inventory and Assessment – Tasks/deliverables that could be done locally
- 2) Recommend Wayfinding Strategy/Design-type Preferences – Determining a “Homer-appropriate” wayfinding design
- 3) Define the Process for Plan Development – Defining how the commission intends to identify the “building blocks” for the proposed plan; what will EDC propose to City Council?

Councilmember Smith arrived at 6:17 p.m.

The commission extensively deliberated the information Ms. Carroll presented. The discussion covered the following:

- Asking questions on consultation work;
- Tying in the results from the BR&E Survey;
- Summarizing what has been done: Survey, setting wayfinding/streetscape scope;
- Clarifying the next step: Determining a presentable plan on how to develop the scope and how a design should be obtained;
- Comparing/contrasting the use of a task force, a consultant, local expertise, or in-house (staff/commission) for some or all of the tasks;
- Addressing the fact that all areas/ROW are owned by different entities: The purpose of the plan is establishing a wayfinding/streetscape guide for the city that can be referenced when deciding to improve on something (benches, rest stops, corridors, etc.); it is not mandating standards on private owners/businesses or the State;
- Holding worksessions with other organizations/groups such as the Chamber of Commerce or Planning Department to conduct the work internally, or to hash out a detailed plan that can be presented to a hired consultant;
- Reviewing signage designs: There isn't really an existing City plan (beyond Planning/Zoning sign ordinances) for design standards;
- Separating the two concepts of design and logistics in the commission's scope: Streetscape design focuses on the aesthetics/theme, while wayfinding is the navigational/logical side of planning;
- Defining "sign clutter" under the task list, and the EDC's wish to not have too many signs while still conveying enough information;
- Reiterating that the outlined tasks are the "pre-development" phase to help assemble the necessary building blocks of the plan, how not all tasks require a specialist to complete, and that the commission needs to come up with a plan first before they can make a presentation to Council for any kind of funding;
- Consulting with Councilmember Smith to determine if there is a budget for a consultant: There is but there needs to be a supporting plan with more buy-in from the commission before anything can get approved on the Council level.

Commissioner Arevalo brought the commission back to Ms. Carroll's memo and broke down each bullet-pointed task under the Inventory and Assessment section, one-by-one, to help each commissioner figure out where they stand on inputting their own effort. There was further deliberation on the best way to tackle the inventory and assessment tasks, and what each task entails.

Commissioners then agreed to undertake the following tasks and present on them at the next meeting:

- Inventory and map existing wayfinding signs (#5) – Commissioner Richardson
- Inventory and map principal destinations/points of interest (#2) – Commissioner Brown and Gustafson
- Inventory current streetscape elements (#7) – Commissioner Arevalo
- Map lands available for benches, pocket parks, trash receptacles (#8) – Commissioner Arevalo
- Conduct background research of related local studies/plans and ongoing efforts such as Homer's Non-motorized Trail Plan, new trail development plans, etc. (#1) – Commissioner Johnson
- Identify areas where sign clutter is a concern (#6) – Commissioner Gustafson

Acting Chair Gustafson asked if Commissioner Arevalo would be interested in tracking who is doing what, and, if necessary, delegating remaining tasks. Ms. Arevalo agreed to track who has volunteered for what, but opined that these items are a grocery list of what needs to be done based on everyone's availability; the commissioners can bring what they have finished to the next meeting.

There was brief discussion on the legality of some temporary signage that popped up along the Sterling Highway Bypass near Main Street.

The commission recapped which tasks were volunteered for, and Ms. Carroll confirmed the agreed-upon details to better plan for the November 13, 2018 meeting.

There was no further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. William Richardson EDC Appointment Letter
- B. City Manager's Report for September 22 & October 8, 2018
- C. Commissioner Attendance at City Council Meetings

Acting Chair Gustafson welcomed new commissioner Bill Richardson.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Special Projects & Communications Coordinator Carroll and Deputy City Clerk Tussey had no further comments.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

Councilmember Smith had no comments.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Acting Chair Gustafson thanked the commission.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioners Brown, Richardson, Arevalo, and Johnson had no comments.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Acting Chair Gustafson adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 13, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

RACHEL TUSSEY, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I

Approved: _____