

Session 18-07 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:00 p.m. on November 13, 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, EVANS, JOHNSON, BROWN, MARKS, RICHARDSON, AND AREVALO

ABSENT: COUNCILMEMBER SMITH

STAFF: SPECIAL PROJECTS AND COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR CARROLL

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Marks introduced public audience member Katia Holmes, who is interested in possibly applying for the EDC's Student Representative vacancy.

Chair Marks requested a motion to approve the agenda but with an amendment to New Business Item 10.A.i, to read " Resolution 18-xxx Approving Meeting Schedule for 2019" instead of "2018".

BROWN/GUSTAFSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

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 October 9, 2018

Chair Marks requested a motion to approve the minutes.

AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 9, 2018.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS

A. Mayor Castner – Commission Goals for the Upcoming Year

Chair Marks introduced and welcomed Mayor Ken Castner. Mayor Castner thanked the commission for their volunteer work and shared his reasons for running for mayor, his level of involvement as a policymaker, and his opinions on how budget should support policy. He encouraged the commission to notify him of EDC projects/goals that they want to get done in 2019 so he can make sure it remains on the City Council agenda until it gets addressed.

Mayor Castner explained his reasoning for not doing proclamations, but he will conduct recognitions. He encouraged the commission to annually recommend a person involved in economic development to be recognized at an EDC meeting. He further shared economic development/commerce goals he has for Homer, and how EDC can help him write those policies.

B. Glen Carroll, Port & Harbor Advisory Commission – Sling Lift Project

Chair Marks introduced Mr. Carroll. Mr. Carroll noted that much of his presentation is his own work and not necessarily representing the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission as a whole. His presentation touched on the following items:

- Background information on himself as a retired commercial fisherman;
- Work that has been done thus far, plus his findings, on the sling lift project, and the overall value that a large vessel sling lift haul-out facility would bring to the Homer community;
- Strong support for a Private Public Partnership (PPP) to fund such a facility, with ballpark financial figures, and why such a partnership would be the best option versus being solely owned by the City or a private business;
- Number of local organizations/businesses that would benefit from it and the level of local support that would be willing to invest immediately;
- Location of a large vessel sling lift facility on the Spit;
- Technical details of the sling lift/ramp and waste water run-off management;
- Financial/facility comparisons among other Alaskan communities.

Chair Marks inquired what kind of action Mr. Carroll would like to see the EDC take on this topic. There was brief discussion on the information provided and to bring the topic back to the commission once there was a more defined route of action to take.

C. Charlie Stewart, Homer Hockey Assoc. – Kevin Bell Arena/HHA in the Community

Charlene Flyum, Homer Hockey Association Representative, introduced herself to the commission and presented the benefits the ice rink provides to the community. She provided background information on the Kevin Bell Arena and how it compares to other rinks in the state, and noted the following:

- Extensive community participation from varying age groups – true family participation
- Correlation between economic development and the ice rink is to get people to come to Homer and have something for them to do once here
- Improves the quality of life – locals who choose to live and work here are more willing to stay
- Visitors of the ice rink generate additional revenue for other local businesses (e.g. restaurants, supplies, lodging)
- Revenue stream for the community during the normally slower winter months

Charlie Stewart explained that the association's goal is to garner the commission's support, who would then make a recommendation to City Council to reinstate the Kevin Bell Arena back into the budget after it was cut a few years ago.

Chair Marks recommended that this topic be on the commission's next agenda as an actionable item so further discussion and a motion of support can happen. There was brief deliberation between Chair Marks, Special Projects and Communication Coordinator Carroll, and Mayor Castner on the limited timeline to make budget amendment requests. Ms. Carroll and Chair Marks discussed amending the agenda to include the topic under New Business.

GUSTAFSON/AREVALO MOVED TO ADD KEVIN BELL ARENA/HOMER HOCKEY ASSOCIATION BUDGET LINE ITEM REQUEST UNDER NEW BUSINESS ITEM C.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

REPORTS

- A. Homer Marine Trades Association Report
 - i. HMTA Agenda for November 7, 2018
 - ii. HMTA Meeting Minutes for October 10, 2018
- B. Chamber Director Report
- C. Pioneer Avenue Task Force Report
- D. Staff Report – Jennifer Carroll, Special Projects & Communications Coordinator

Chair Marks reviewed each Report item, noting the Homer Marine Trades Association report in the packet and that there were no representatives present from the HMTA or Chamber of Commerce.

Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll noted she was clerking the meeting since Deputy City Clerk Tussey was absent for training. She provided her report on the following:

- HMTA meeting minutes announcing that Northern Enterprise Boat Yard is expecting to have a 150 ton travel lift operational within the year;
- Recently published statistics: United Fisherman of Alaska 2016 commercial fishing and seafood processing facts;
- KPC Campus event with Alexander James, a UAA economics professor, speaking on natural resources and economic development at home and abroad.

Ms. Carroll stated that she will be absent for the EDC's December 11, 2018 meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Wayfinding/Streetscape Plan Proposal: Reports from Commissioners
- i. Memo from Commissioner Richardson Re: Mapping of Directional Signage for Homer
 - ii. Homer Wayfinding Signs Inventory

Chair Marks briefly reviewed the action taken at the last meeting and the efforts made so far by the commissioners on the wayfinding/streetscape plan. She deferred to Special Projects and Communication Coordinator Carroll and commissioners that brought updates to report on.

Ms. Carroll referenced her memo, pointing out the already approved project scope, and explained how the next step is to clearly define the approach the commission wants to recommend to City Council for completing the wayfinding/streetscape plan. She described ways the commission could accomplish that, such as requesting to hire a professional consultant and determining their level of involvement.

Commissioner Johnson presented his discoveries from researching the background information on related local studies/plans and ongoing efforts that are already in place or have been proposed in the past. He listed and described in detail the following City plans and how they relate to the EDC's efforts:

- Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan
- Homer Comprehensive Plan
- Homer Spit Comprehensive Plan
- Town Center Development Plan

Chair Marks clarified with Mr. Johnson, who agreed, that it seemed the policy aspect of their work has already been laid out, there isn't a reason to reinvent it, and it's the implementation of those plans that is needed.

Commissioner Richardson reported on his efforts to map directional signage in Homer, and produce a digital compilation of the existing signage already in place. He pointed out that the signs are there to guide a traveler into the place, but they might not be showing the way to the sign itself; it is important to not abandon electronic wayfinding since that helps find the general location.

Commissioner Johnson emphasized the need to encourage businesses to update their online information to help with the electronic wayfinding. Chair Marks noted that "using all aspects of technological and physical wayfinding signage and tools" was included in their approved project scope to support that emphasis.

Commissioner Gustafson presented his findings on sign clutter. He shared how it seemed everywhere he went there was a significant amount of signage with very little comprehensive design throughout, so it all seemed cluttered. He shared concerns on the number of signs that are state or federally-owned and how would EDC go about working with those entities to make changes. He opined that the commissioners aren't experts and supported the next step in bringing a consultant in; an expert that knows how wayfinding works and can work with the various road/highway entities.

Commissioner Brown reinforced the findings on sign clutter, and explained how she and Mr. Gustafson struggled with applying the project scope since majority of the signs needing change weren't City signs. She noted that the majority of business' signs followed a naturally occurring theme of custom painted signs that are creative and artistic. Ms. Brown considered it a defining trademark of Homer and suggested that the commission use it when making decisions on streetscape/design consistency.

Chair Marks opined that with all this information, it is the opportune time for the commission to present their findings to City Council to proceed with standardized designs.

Commissioner Arevalo reported on her two tasks: inventory the current streetscape elements, and map lands available for more. She and Matt Steffy, Parks Maintenance Coordinator, have been working together to inventory the various resources contributing to our sense of space in our current community and identify the paths forward for a better flow.

Chair Marks recapped all the reports, noted that City staff is already working towards accomplishing some of these tasks, and what the next step the commission needs to take. Commissioner Richardson questioned the possibility of getting UAA students of sociology to conduct their sign research instead of hiring a consultant. Commissioner Johnson answered, explaining there is one professor at the local campus that teaches that particular class but it may not include signage in the curriculum; Mr. Johnson said he'd ask that professor.

There was discussion on wording the recommendation to Council to plan out which groups will be involved and how much, e.g. a consultant coordinating efforts with a local college class and the commission. Ms. Carroll provided input on how the commission could work with a consultant and agreed to reach out to potential firms to get an idea of how the process works/costs.

RICHARDSON/AREVALO MOVED TO REQUEST CITY STAFF RESEARCH CONSULTANT FIRMS TO ASSIST THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION IN ESTIMATING CONSULTATION COSTS.

Commissioner Johnson clarified the motion to note it is to look at various consultants that will work under these conditions and with the EDC's own recommendations/guidelines rather than conduct all the work at a higher cost. Chair Marks and Commissioner Arevalo wanted to ensure the consultant would also include the work of other groups/resources from the community.

Commissioner Brown brought up concerns regarding the scope. Ms. Carroll referenced the approved project scope in her memo and reiterated the commission isn't making sign ordinances, they're making a strategic plan for the City when decisions come up that will be implemented in stages. She recapped the commission's goal to come up with a plan on how to accomplish making the Strategic Plan, and what will be recommended to Council for support.

Ms. Carroll explained how a motion is not necessary to task her with reaching out to various consultants to see if one exists that is capable/willing to conduct the work the commission has laid out. Motion was withdrawn with the understanding that Ms. Carroll will complete the requested task.

The commission discussed not holding a December 2018 meeting due to her scheduled absence, and have her present research findings/revised RFP draft at the January 2019 regular meeting instead. Commissioner Arevalo volunteered to aid Ms. Carroll in her research efforts.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Meeting Schedule for 2019
 - i. Resolution 18-xxx Approving Meeting Schedule for 2018

Chair Marks reviewed EDC's 2019 meeting schedule as described in the draft resolution and commented on the commission's prior discussions on canceling the July and December meetings.

Commissioner Johnson shared that he will not be available to attend the January 8, 2019 meeting.

RICHARDSON/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION'S 2019 MEETING SCHEDULE WITH AMENDMENTS TO CANCEL THE JULY 9TH AND DECEMBER 10TH REGULAR MEETINGS.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Election of New Chair & Vice Chair

Chair Marks requested a motion to select a new Chair.

AREVALO/EVANS MOVED TO ELECT KARIN MARKS AS NEW CHAIR.

Chair Marks accepted the nomination for another year.

VOTE. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Marks commended Commissioner Gustafson for his work as acting chair, being he's the next senior member. She asked if there were any other nominations.

BROWN/AREVALO MOVED TO ELECT ANDERS GUSTAFSON AS NEW VICE CHAIR.

Commissioner Gustafson accepted the nomination of Vice Chair.

VOTE. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

C. Kevin Bell Arena/Homer Hockey Association Budget Line Item Request¹

Chair Marks introduced the amended agenda item and asked if there was anyone from the audience that wished to speak on the topic.

¹ The action taken pertaining to the Kevin Bell Arena budget item was negated since the item had not been properly noticed per the Open Meetings Act. Homer Hockey Association was notified of scheduled public hearing on the budget at City Council's Monday, November 26, 2018 meeting and encouraged to present either at that time or reschedule at a future EDC Meeting.

Mayor Castner suggested the commission authorize the Chair to write a letter to City Council that states EDC's recognition of the economic importance of the ice rink, and that EDC would support City participation in its funding.

GUSTAFSON/JOHNSON MOVED TO AUTHORIZE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION'S CHAIR TO WRITE A LETTER TO CITY COUNCIL RECOGNIZING THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF THE KEVIN BELL ARENA AND RECOMMENDING THAT COUNCIL REINSTATE THE \$20,000 LINE ITEM TO HOMER HOCKEY ASSOCIATION IN THE 2019 BUDGET.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. City Manager's Report for October 22, 2018

Chair Marks commented on Deputy City Clerk Tussey's efforts to include more informational materials in the packet.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Katia Holmes, City Resident, shared her interest in the economic development of the local community and looked forward to be more involved in the commission.

Tim Moore, City Resident, shared his background as a commercial fisherman, longtime resident of the Kenai Peninsula, and that he's the chairman of the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation. He stated he's aware of how controversial the local hatcheries have been, but wanted the EDC to know the value the hatcheries and fishermen bring to Homer and shared findings from a 2018 McDowell report on the matter. Mr. Moore noted that he hopes to attend another meeting to give a presentation.

Mayor Castner opined on how informational the meeting had been. He suggested a local landscape and interpretive signage artist as a resource, and potentially with the City Manager about HART Fund monies for a consultant. He spoke to the commission's discussion on wayfinding/streetscape policies, and on economic development in the community, specifically with the ice rink.

Chair Marks asked Ms. Carroll for clarification on when the commission could make a decision on canceling the December meeting.

MARKS/BROWN MOVED TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO PUT A VOTE TO THE COMMISSION ON WHETHER TO HOLD OR CANCEL THE DECEMBER 11, 2018 REGULAR MEETING.

Chair Marks confirmed with the commission that everyone was in agreement to cancel the December meeting.

VOTE. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Special Projects and Communication Coordinator Carroll had no comments.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Marks opined on reaching out to the Chamber Director to attend the meetings to provide input from the Chamber of Commerce's perspective.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Gustafson thanked Mr. Moore for his patience and public comments.

Commissioner Arevalo thanked City Staff for their work on the packet and shared her support for hockey.

Commissioners Evans, Johnson, Brown, and Richardson had no further comments.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 8, 2019 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: _____