

Session 18-02 a Special Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:00 p.m. on March 22, 2018 at the City Hall Upstairs Conference Room located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS GUSTAFSON, EVANS, MARKS, BROWN, AREVALO

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS RICHARDSON, SANSOM
COUNCILMEMBER SMITH
STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE GROVES (EXCUSED)

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

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Marks requested a motion to approve the agenda.

GUSTAFSON/EVANS- SO MOVED

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 9,2018 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Marks requested a motion to approve the minutes.

GUSTAFSON/EVANS- SO MOVED

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS

A. Carol Swartz, Kachemak Bay Campus Director- Workforce Development

Carol Swartz, Kachemak Bay Campus Director, talked to the commission about Kenai Peninsula College/ Kachemak Bay Campus (KBC) and their role in workforce development and workforce maintenance. Ms. Swartz explained that KBC is one of two campuses under Kenai Peninsula College, which is a part of the University of Alaska school system. She gave a brief overview of the campus and its history. As the community has grown, the campus and the need for education has also grown. **KBC's** mission is to work with the city to provide accessible career, technical, and educational opportunities to expand the economy and quality of life in our community. Seven hundred and forty two individuals are taking traditional classes, with another one hundred and fifty four that are taking job training and community education classes. Over the years KBC has evolved to have three different types of classes/degrees. The first example of this would be the traditional credit classes/degrees such as the nursing program, the other allied health programs, the business programs, and the marine biology programs. Ms. Swartz explained that the nursing program has been a huge success in workplace development. South Peninsula Hospital, and all of the other doctor offices in Homer no longer have to bring in nurses from other towns or states to work for them, unless they are looking for a certain specialty. Another example is the non-credit/community education classes such as the maritime technology program which is training individuals to improve or start a business in a Maritime trade. She explained that maritime is one of the biggest fields in Homer, and KBC is meeting the need of the community by offering classes to continue to develop that field. The last example is online classes/degrees. **Fifty-five percent of KBC's** student body are online class takers. KBC also offers an adult basic Education and GED Program that helps people finish up high school for free through grants. The other resource KBC has available is a public meeting space. Ms. Swartz states that they are always renting out their empty rooms for public meetings.

Ms. Swartz also commented that housing for students is a big issue in Homer. The college has no dormitories, so they try to accommodate by helping students from out of town find reasonably priced rentals.

Chair Marks thanked Ms. Swartz and stated that workforce development is one of the long term items that came out of the BR&E Survey. She stated that the college has been working very hard to promote workforce development, but there seems to be a missing link between KBC and the public, according to the survey. Her thoughts are that the business owners and individuals who took the BR&E Survey were mostly small business owners rather than large businesses. Small businesses may not have the time or the knowledge that they can suggest classes or programs to be implemented at the college, unlike larger businesses like South Peninsula Hospital.

Commissioner Brown thanked Ms. Swartz for her presentation and noted that she also picked up on the fact that the college relies on information from the community to develop their programs. She also stated that the Economic Development Advisory Commission needs to facilitate KBC in getting that information to the community.

Commissioner Arevalo suggested that the commission touch base with the individuals who took the survey, about what kind of skills they feel are most needed in the community.

Ms. Swartz commented that next Friday, March 30th, 2018 is the Homer Job Fair at the college that has over 15 employers attending and hiring people on the spot.

REPORTS

- A. Marine Trades Association Report
- B. Chamber Director Report
- C. Pioneer Avenue Task Force Report

Chair Marks reported on behalf of the Pioneer Avenue Task Force and stated that they will begin meeting again on the 28th of March at the Chamber. They are going to be looking into creating a masterplan for a more connected and vibrant central commercial district. They hope to have something to bring back to the commission at their April meeting. She stated that they will also be working on putting together the clean-up day for the Chamber, which will be the first weekend in May.

D. Staff Report

Jenny Carroll, Special Projects and Communication Coordinator, briefly reviewed her report and mentioned that Chair Marks developed an email that was sent out to all of the survey participants that provided an email address, thanking them and letting them know the commission may be contacting them in the future. She also mentioned that DOT put a hold on the Pioneer Avenue Shave and Pave Project a couple months ago and that she has tried to get someone from their office to come have a conversation with the commission since then, with no luck. The City Manager and several other **Department Directors had a meeting with Homer's DOT Representative** and more information from that meeting can be found in the upcoming City Manager Report.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Moving Forward with BR&E Action Items
 - i. Short Term Items
 - ii. Long Term Items

The commission reviewed and discussed all of the items that came out of the survey. Chair Marks stated that one of the biggest topics that came up from the survey was the need for a large vessel haul out/barge mooring facility. She commended the Port & Harbor Commission for actively pushing for the large vessel haul out/ barge mooring facility to happen. She suggested the commission write a letter or memorandum to all of the commissions and boards informing them of the topics that came out of the survey and showing support for everything they have accomplished.

Chair Marks requested a motion to approve the letter of support be sent out to all of the Commissions.

EVANS/AREVALO- MOVED TO APPROVE THE LETTER OF SUPPORT AND THAT IT BE SENT OUT TO THE COMMISSIONS

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

The commission had a brief discussion about the Corps of **Engineer’s feasibility study** of the Port and Harbor.

Ms. Carroll stated that Commissioner Richardson has been looking into workforce retention activities in other communities/ municipalities and will give a brief synopsis at the next meeting in April about **what she’s learned**.

The commission had a brief discussion on how business friendly city code is in regards to signage for a business. Ms. Carroll suggested that they direct their concerns to the Homer Advisory Planning Commission and support them in developing more business friendly signage. Chair Marks asked the commission to read city code on business signage and bring back ideas or concerns that they could recommend to the Homer Advisory Planning Commission at the next meeting.

Chair Marks stated that one of the short term items that came out of the survey was the need for a master plan for a more vibrant and connected central business district. She spoke to the Planning Department about the potential of developing a master plan. When speaking with the Planning Department, Chair Marks discovered that many of the plans are already in place, but they are not in a format that can be used to apply or receive grants. Chair Marks stated that during her meeting, the Planning Department suggested that the commission ask for additional funding to hire a staff person to combine the **“building blocks” already in place into one master plan**. Chair Marks suggests that the Economic Development Advisory Commission work with the Planning Department and the Homer Advisory Planning Commission to find a way to find funding to create a master plan.

B. Follow-up with Business Participants

The commission discussed the possibility of making an advertisement to keep the survey participants engaged, but ultimately decided against it.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. **City Manager’s Report March 12th Meeting**

Commissioner Gustafson made reference to the Pitman-Robertson funding in the City Managers Report. The commission talked about the process of the funding and everything it entailed.

B. Commissioner Attendance at City Council Meetings

Chair Marks explained the process of reports at the City Council Meeting to New Commissioner Arevalo. Chair Marks will be at the April 9th City Council Meeting, but she will not be at the 23rd City Council Meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Marks commented that she is so happy to have Commissioner Arevalo on the commission.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Arevalo asked that everyone be patient with her during the learning process and that she is happy to be here.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m. The NEXT REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

HAYLEY SMITH, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____