

Session 19-10 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:00 p.m. on November 12, 2019 at the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS MARKS, BROWN, AREVALO, RICHARDSON, MINK, AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE BROWN

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER JOHNSON

STAFF: SPECIAL PROJECTS & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR CARROLL
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Marks called for 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 UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. EDC Regular Meeting Minutes for October 8, 2019

Chair Marks asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

BROWN/AREVALO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.

Commissioner Brown requested to strike her comments under Comments of the Commission as they were more personal and not germane to the discussion.

Commissioner Arevalo requested to revise the third bullet point under Staff and Council Reports, Item A, to read "...Commissioner Richardson to keep you informed on when sign code would be on their agenda".

Ms. Arevalo also requested to amend Staff and Council Reports, Item D, to clarify who is doing and completing the work to Pioneer Avenue.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Special Projects & Communications Coordinator Staff Report
- i. Planning Staff Report 19-87 Sign Code
 - ii. Planning Staff Report 19-88 Permitting

Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll noted in her staff report the following items:

- Updating commission on the Grow Economy presentation; the group withdrew their proposal to City Council so the ordinance failed.
- Planning Commission updates; referenced the PC minutes on Sign Code and the new permitting process.

Ms. Carroll deferred to Commissioner Richardson who had attended the PC worksession on Sign Code. He briefed the commission on Planning Staff's work to propose some very straightforward changes and options for the PC to go over, and which of those changes were given to them by the EDC. Chair Marks noted City Planner Abboud's comments in the PC minutes regarding parking lot entrance and exit signs and how it was similar to wayfinding.

- B. Chamber Director Report

Amy Woodruff, Chamber of Commerce Marketing Director, introduced herself to the commission and reported on recent events that the Chamber of Commerce will be hosting/sponsoring:

- Small Business Saturday, event after Thanksgiving that focuses on shopping locally
- Information to local businesses on the transition away from plastic bags
- Holiday Tree Lighting Event
- Updates to the Visitor's Guide for 2020
- Renewing memberships
- Welcome Bags Project for people who just moved to town and are looking for information

Chair Marks commended the Chamber for their support on the Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan ordinance that will be going before City Council.

- C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

Chair Marks noted the HMTA meeting minutes in the packet.

- D. Pioneer Avenue Task Force Report

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan Ordinance
 - i. Draft Ordinance 19-XX Developing Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan
 - ii. Planning Commission October 6, 2019 Meeting Minutes Excerpt
 - iii. PARCAC October 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes Excerpt

Chair Marks asked for a motion regarding the Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan Ordinance to begin discussion.

BROWN/MINK MOVED TO SUPPORT THE INITIATIVE TO CREATE A WAYFINDING-STREETScape PLAN AND FORWARD TO CITY COUNCIL.

Chair Marks mentioned a correction that needed to be made to the draft ordinance, Line 39-40, to include the Non-Motorized Trail Plan. Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll confirmed the verbiage to be used to update the clause and said she would make sure the revised draft will be the one that goes before Council. Ms. Carroll also noted some of the changes she made after the commission's worksession, such as grammatical. Commissioner Arevalo stated her revision suggestions at that meeting were with the Clerk. In response to a question from Ms. Arevalo, Ms. Carroll clarified that adding the Non-Motorized Trail Plan to a draft already approved by other commissions (such as Planning Commission) does not change the substance so it is allowed without having to go back to all the other commissions.

VOTE: YES: AREVALO, MINK, MARKS, BROWN, RICHARDSON

Motion carried.

Chair Marks reminded the commissioners that this ordinance will be before City Council at their November meeting, and requested as many commissioners attend to voice their support.

- B. Ordinance to Repeal HCC 2.76 to Inactivate the EDC
 - i. Draft Ordinance to Repeal HCC 2.76

Chair Marks opened the floor for discussion regarding the ordinance to repeal HCC 2.76 to inactivate the EDC and noted the recommendations made by staff on the types of motions the commission could make.

MARKS/AREVALO MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL THAT THE THREE FOLLOWING GOALS BE CONSIDERED WHEN RESTRUCTURING THE CITY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.

Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll spoke to her memo, describing how she came to her recommendations. Per the EDC's meeting minutes, she discerned that the commission wanted to give a statement to Council in agreement that things could be better, that they are open to

change, and to voice primary goals such as the EDC's mission statement and utilizing Staff/Commissioners' time most effectively. She condensed the commission's numerous discussions on the matter into three goals that the EDC can recommend to City Council for consideration when restructuring the City's economic development cycle:

- Create an effective annual cycle for review and action on economic issues
- Make sure the City of Homer is represented in the CEDS, which is now developed by the KPEDD
- To use people's time and resources effectively so we can move forward

Ms. Carroll noted that the four restructuring ideas she has provided to the commission were based on several brainstorming meetings with Councilmembers Lord, Erickson, and Smith, the City Manager, and Chair Marks. She emphasized that these ideas were all written keeping in mind the wishes the EDC has voiced throughout their meetings.

Chair Marks shared her thoughts and how these suggestions give feedback to Councilmember Lord, who is writing an ordinance to repeal the EDC, and City Council. She noted that this is the commission's opportunity to put forward suggestions not just on goals, but also on how the EDC will be restructured.

Commissioner Brown voiced her confusion on the whole process and inquired as to why the goals wouldn't be the EDC's bylaws. She read to the commission the "Purpose" section of the bylaws and voiced her feelings that it seems they are throwing away their main purpose and making something new. She opined why they can't just go back to what the EDC's purpose is and change that.

Ms. Carroll repeated that the goals being recommended are not for the EDC, they are for Councilmember Lord who is proposing an ordinance to disband the EDC. She reminded the commission that at their last meeting they agreed to craft a statement to Council accepting the change from a standing commission. She posed the question: if the structure is flawed and they agreed to a change, then how does that change look like to the commission? Ms. Carroll reiterated the three goals provided, the purpose and reasoning behind them, and that this is the commission's opportunity, as an advisory body, to recommend to City Council their combined thoughts/opinions on how the City should handle economic development. She clarified that she is not proposing bylaw changes for this body.

Commissioner Mink opined that the commission should be discussing the structure options first before the recommendation goals and making any type of recommendation to Council.

Chair Marks spoke to her motion and it possibly being too specific at this time before the commission had a better opportunity to have a more general discussion about the topic as a whole.

VOTE: NO: AREVALO, MINK, MARKS, BROWN, RICHARDSON

Motion failed.

Chair Marks repeated Ms. Carroll's reasoning behind the four restructuring ideas and reiterated that they are not talking about if there should be a change, but that there will be a change; they're just discussing what that change may look like.

Commissioner Mink questioned City Council's buy-in with the EDC, if any. Chair Marks shared the discussion that happened at the last meeting where Councilmember Smith voice his support of keeping a body of citizens available to participate in economic development. Councilmember Smith's idea was that councilmembers are independent citizens that may not have a professional economic background, and having a group of economic-related volunteers would better serve the need.

Chair Marks voiced her opinion on the reasoning for restructuring, noting the following:

- Conflicting ideas of needing more or less economic development activity.
- The Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) has created a borough-wide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), making the EDC's primary purpose of overseeing the City's CEDS duplicative and obsolete.
- Lack of buy-in to EDC's projects from the Council/breakdown in the EDC's advising duties.
- Needing to maintain some sort of system to handle economic issues while minimizing the impact to staff time/resources.

Commissioner Arevalo noted that there has not been any buy-in yet from Council since Councilmember Lord agreed to postpone her ordinance introduction to give EDC time to formulate their suggestions and solutions.

RICHARDSON/AREVALO MOVED TO RECESS FOR FIVE MINUTES.

Chair Marks confirmed the time.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

The commission recessed at 6:55 p.m.¹

The commission reconvened at 6:57 p.m.

Chair Marks echoed Commissioner Richardson's opinion that the commission needs to agree on what their plan is for this meeting.

Commissioner Richardson shared his thoughts on what he heard from the councilmembers: "value vs. time spent and staff resources". He opined that groups (such as City Council) need to have a way to prioritize certain tasks to someone else who is dedicated to take care of those issues. It is not necessarily EDC's job to provide tasks/projects to work on, but to be present, to participate, and be

¹ Commissioner Richardson had requested to go "off record". The commission understood this to mean take a recess, which was voted for unanimously. Mr. Richardson wished to seek commissioners' candid opinions about the EDC being disbanded. Commissioner Richardson and Brown began to voice their personal opinions. Deputy City Clerk Tussey called for a point of order and explained that their comments are germane to the matter at hand and cannot be discussed off record. Chair Marks reconvened the meeting.

active, and that those tasks should be fed to them [from City Council]. He suggested that the commission recommend ideas of what Council can feed them that would help while specifically stating how that should be done.

Commissioner Brown opined that there's a lot of value to the EDC. She feels it's a great commission to start on for city involvement and pointed out the differences in opinion between councilmembers on the matter. She voiced her opposition to disbanding the commission at this time.

Commissioner Mink stated they need to look at the facts: they are an advisory commission, do not have much power, and lost their City Council representative. He explained that Council has more power and they as commissioners either find a great way to sell the EDC/restructuring, which will require a significant amount of work and tenacity, or put it in City Council's hands since this is their decision. He understands why Council would want to disband the commission given the amount of time/resources it takes for being such a nebulous group. He noted Mr. Richardson's comment that they need to focus on what is best for the City, and opined that the facts are clear that Council does not want this commission to remain in its current state.

Commissioner Arevalo echoed Mr. Mink's comments, reiterating that change is in the air and the EDC is not going to remain the same. She commented on what she learned from the meeting with Chair Marks, Councilmember Lord and Erickson, and Ms. Carroll. She explained one idea that came up was creating a yearly prioritization of issues and seeing if task forces were the best way to tackle those issues, which correlates with Option 4 in the memo. The idea still allows for community involvement and providing an opportunity for understanding city processes. She acknowledged the large amount of time Ms. Carroll puts into the EDC, how the Council is not seeing enough value there, and shared her confliction with the decision; she referenced Councilmember Smith's comments that the EDC can be a place that citizens can have a focus point for their concerns. She felt that having an organized, annual structure for review of economic issues/CEDS would still allow community involvement while using less resources.

Discussion ensued on the four restructuring options:

1. Disband the EDC and amend City Council operating manual to include a time on City Council's annual calendar when they consider Economic Development issues.
2. Replace the EDC with an Economic Development Committee.
3. EDC remains as a standing advisory commission but without a designated staff person and possibly meets quarterly and/or as needed.
4. Disband the EDC and establish an annual review/action-plan for Economic Development Priorities (EDP).

Commissioners shared their thoughts on each idea, directed questions of clarification to staff, and deliberated on what they would like to recommend to Councilmember Lord for consideration. Ms. Carroll pointed out that the commissioners have brought up important aspects they feel should be considered when restructuring the EDC. She reiterated staff's initial recommendation to the EDC about their top three goals outlined in her memo, and how she was looking for the commission to agree to those goals so she can properly translate the commission's recommendations to Councilmember Lord

and Council. She explained that the commission needs to figure out the core goals, and then determine how to accomplish them.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey outlined the two motions being requested: a motion agreeing on the important aspects/goals that the EDC would like to have incorporated into the statement that Ms. Carroll will be writing; and a motion in response to Councilmember Lord's request for feedback with the EDC's restructuring recommendation for her to consider when revising her draft ordinance.

There was discussion on what type of verbiage the commission wanted to use in a motion and where it would be appropriate to list out the EDC's important aspects versus where to outline the recommended actions.

AREVALO/MINK MOVE TO RECOMMEND THAT STAFF WRITE A MEMO TO CITY COUNCIL THAT READS "THE EDC RECOMMENDS THAT THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT ASPECTS BE INCLUDED WHEN RESTRUCTURING THE EDC: 1) CREATE AN EFFECTIVE ANNUAL CYCLE FOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW AND ACTION ON ECONOMIC ISSUES FACING THE CITY; 2) INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND DRIVE CITY OF HOMER ISSUES INTO THE KPEDD BOROUGH-WIDE CEDS; AND 3) UTILIZE CITIZEN TIME AND CITY RESOURCES TO THE MAXIMUM POTENTIAL FOR EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING THAT MOVES FORWARD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY" TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE EDC'S RECOMMENDATION.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: YES: MINK, MARKS, BROWN, RICHARDSON, AREVALO

Motion carried.

BROWN/AREVALO MOVED TO GO WITH RECOMMENDATION NUMBER FOUR FOR THE RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCILMEMBER LORD.

There was discussion on the commission's consideration for action to disband the EDC and establish an annual review/action-plan (similar to the Capital Improvement Plan) for Economic Development Priorities. In response to Mr. Mink's concern that it was too lengthy of a recommendation, Chair Marks reiterated that the information they're agreeing on is a recommendation to Councilmember Lord for her to input into her draft ordinance; Councilmember Lord can wordsmith the detailed information the commission gives her. Ms. Carroll noted that councilmembers are also already familiar with the CIP process, so the additional description in the memo is to describe the process to the commission.

Ms. Arevalo requested clarification on Mr. Mink's statement. He explained that he wasn't sure if the commission should be recommending any type of action but instead make a statement acknowledging their intent to disband the EDC, along with the important aspects they discussed, and then leave it in the hands of City Council to decide.

Discussion ensued on the shorter statement in Option 1, if the commission wished to combine different aspects of other options into one, and the details listed in Option 4. Chair Marks clarified with Deputy

City Clerk Tussey that an amendment to the motion was not needed to include the BR&E Study to the list in 4.i.b. "These may include..."

VOTE: YES: MARKS, AREVALO, MINK, BROWN, RICHARDSON

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Meeting Schedule for 2020
 - i. Draft Resolution 19-XXX Adopting 2020 Meeting Schedule

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading of the title and opined if the commission should approve or postpone the schedule given the unknown future of the EDC. Deputy City Clerk Tussey noted that technically they are still a commission and recommended they pass the schedule, and if it changes in the future then it can be amended.

AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE 2020 MEETING SCHEDULE.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

- B. 2020 Draft Land Allocation Plan
 - i. HCC 18.08.020 Land Allocation Plan
 - ii. Draft 2020 Land Allocation Plan (Supplemental Document Online)

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item and noted staff's request to recommend any changes to the draft LAP, and a recommendation on retaining Lot D-3 for a public purpose until such time as Council determines another use. Chair Marks described the location and brief history of the vacant lot. The commission used area maps to identify the parcel and briefly discussed its location. Commissioner Mink noted he had attended the last City Council meeting. He explained Council's decision to keep it City-owned was because of a potential offer for a 5G wireless tower.

Chair Marks confirmed that the commission mutually agreed they did not have any recommendations to change lands available for long term lease.

Chair Marks reiterated the second request: if the commission wanted to recommend Lot D-3 be retained for a public purpose, or made available on the market to sell.

MINK/AREVALO MOVED RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL TO MAKE LOT D-3 AVAILABLE FOR SALE.

Commissioner Mink explained that Lot D-3 had been up for sale for a long time. A group came in with a request to Council and the Mayor to possibly put in a 5G wireless tower on the lot, and the City would generate revenue from the land lease. At that same time, a private business showed interest in buying it with a significant amount of public stepping up to show support for that business. Mr. Mink shared his perspective that if the City is going on a “maybe” versus someone who is highly interested in buying, has been a good citizen, and would help generate more revenue for the City in general, then he considers what the EDC is about: improving the vitality of the Pioneer Avenue/Downtown area. He stated that the EDC is here to foster that kind of economic growth.

In response to questions, Mr. Mink reiterated that the lot was taken off the market for the prospect of leasing the land to the wireless provider, which could generate approximately \$5,000/month in lease revenue. He shared some of the details regarding the tower that he knew and noted that at this time nothing further has been heard from the company.

Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll confirmed whether the motion had to include verbiage referencing the Land Allocation Plan. It was agreed by the commission that it did not since it was a recommendation to sell the lot.

VOTE: YES: MARKS, RICHARDSON, AREVALO, MINK, BROWN

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. City Manager's Report for October 14, 2019
- B. City Manager's Report for October 28, 2019
- C. EDC 2019 Meeting Calendar
- D. Commissioner Attendance at 2019 City Council Meetings

Chair Marks noted the informational items provided. She confirmed the next City Council meeting date and encouraged the commissioners to attend.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll commended the commission on what they have come up against and working through it. She voiced her appreciation for the input and everyone coming together to put in the additional work on the recommendations.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey thanked the commission for a productive meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Marks thanked the commission and staff, noting it's been a great group to work with. She reminded the commission that there won't be a December meeting but will be in January. She also noted there might be an opportunity at the January meeting to see what Councilmember Lord will be proposing to Council in February.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Brown thanked Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll and the commission for their participation.

Student Representative Brown commented that she has learned a lot in the two meetings she has participated in.

Commissioner Richardson wished everyone a great holiday season and thanked Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll.

Commissioner Mink commented that he also has learned a lot in the two meetings he's participated in. He noted that they did their job and to see how things go.

Commissioner Arevalo commended Chair Marks for how much she reached out to businesses in the community to support the Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan. She said the commission should try to pull in more businesses that feel like the wayfinding/streetscape concept is worth pursuing at the City level.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 8:22 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 14, 2020 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: _____