

Session 20-03 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:00 p.m. on June 9, 2020 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, MINK, JOHNSON, RICHARDSON

STAFF: CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda was amended to include reports from Commissioner Richardson on his attendance at the Planning Commission meeting and from Chair Marks on the Workforce Planning Meeting with KPEDD,

MARKS/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA (3 Minute Time Limit)

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS (10 Minute Time Limit)

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS (5 Minute Time Limit)

- a. Staff Report Laydown Memo from Deputy City Planner Engebretsen

Chair Marks noted the staff report and its recommendation that the Wayfaring and Streetscape project move to 2021. It's probably best to have the work done on Pioneer Avenue completed and then have a consultant come in to help with next steps. It was recommended that the City wait to purchase banners before a Wayfaring and Streetscape plan is in place.

- b. Chamber Director Report

Brad Anderson, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, reported Tim Dillon was onsite today to work with business owners on Alaska Cares Act grants. Mr. Anderson shared that the Homer Halibut Tournament has been postponed to the first weekend in July and provided an overview of the steps being taken to create a successful event and accommodate social distancing throughout the event. The first peony celebration will be July 10-25 to celebrate the growers and the different businesses supporting it. The Chamber is trying to show that Homer

is more than fishing. The World Arts Festival is in September and there is work being done to make it a virtual event. The Chamber is getting a lot of calls from instate tourists, but travel is down and people are dealing with a decrease.

- c. Homer Marine Trades Report
- d. Pioneer Avenue Task Force Report

Chair Marks commented briefly about the upcoming Peony Festival and efforts to make this sustainable for years to come.

- e. Planning Commission Meeting Regarding Sign Code Amendments

Commissioner Richardson reported the Planning Commission the sign code is very broad. Our goal was to get increased signage for buildings with multiple tenants and larger sized buildings. The Commission changed parameters where signage is in parking lot and increasing the access to signage for larger businesses with multiple road frontage or for multiple tenants. It also allows the Planner to approve up to 50% more signage for those buildings. The next step will be for it to go to City Council.

- f. Workforce Group meeting with KPEDD

Chair Mark reported on attending the Workforce Preparedness Program meeting was informative and she feels strongly that KPEDD is serious about working with diverse groups to create more workforce development. One issue is having workforce development on the south peninsula. Marine trades has had various programs at the high school and college. It may be possible to have AVTEC programs in Kenai.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Economic Development Advisory Commission Bylaws

Chair Marks opened the discussion addressing some of the conversation she's had with KPEDD staff regarding a regional CEDS program and how to incorporate that into their bylaws under their purpose. She also touched on her suggestions for bylaw amendments that she and Commissioners Richardson and Arevalo assisted with.

Commissioner Mink shared his experience that bylaws are created to be fairly simple and ambiguous, because if they're too specific then you're always trying to change something with the ebb and flow.

City Clerk Jacobsen concurred that bylaws are generally rules on how a body runs their meeting and noted the Clerk's office recommendation from March to hold off on any bylaw

amendments until the EDC information is updated in City Code under duties and responsibilities of the Commission. She suggested the information addressed in the emails could be more effective as items for a strategic planning type document.

The Commission discussed compiling the information in a working document type format and reviewing at their next meeting. They agreed to schedule a worksession August 11th at 5:00 before their regular meeting to talk through the items with the goal of finalizing something at their regular meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- a. CARES Act Funding
 - i. Ordinance 20-25(S) Appropriating Funds
Resolution 20-057 Establishing a Small Business Economic Relief Grant (SBERG) Program
 - ii. SEBERG Program
 - iii. Memorandum 20-070 Re: SEBERG Program

- b. City Manager's Report - June 8, 2020

Commissioner Arevalo commented regarding the SBERG Grant program, sharing her appreciation for the program, wondering how to help promote it, and whether there were any opportunities for household assistance or non-profit assistance. City Clerk Jacobsen replied that Council touched on the program during their worksession and will be discussing it further at the June 22nd Committee of the Whole.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE (3 Minute Time Limit)

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

City Clerk Jacobsen thanked the Commission for their good discussion this evening.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY COUNCILMEMBER (if present)

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Marks appreciated everyone showing up tonight. She thinks it's important now that they're back on track and have some potential for being very involved with the CEDS program this fall.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Richardson commented regarding the SBERG, he doesn't know the capacity of the city now. The payroll protection program that's available through the Federal government is the biggest benefit to small businesses right now. He doesn't know how best to reach out to small businesses to apply.

Commissioner Johnson said it was good to read the comments about the bylaws and he'll try to have some better comments for their next meeting. He thanked Brad for the information he shared about the CARES funding and the work with small businesses.

Commissioner Arevalo commented the Homer Farmer's Market is open so we should all go there and support the farmers. It's set up differently to accommodate social distancing, masks are required, and craft vendors aren't allowed to be there because of spacing issues. They're asking that only one person per family go to the market, and there's no hot food on site right now.

Chamber Executive Director Anderson shared the Chamber will continue to work with businesses and the grant programs that are becoming available.

Commissioner Mink commented he just returned from Texas and they seem about as open as we are in Homer. Traveling is a pain right now, chat him up later if you want to hear more about it. He's tested and is doing his quarantine now. He shared that he'll miss playing live music this summer, there have already been a few events cancelled. There are some unique opportunities to enjoy Alaska right now and he encouraged taking advantage of them.

Commissioner Brown thanked Nicole and Bill for their work on the bylaws, she appreciated their comments and looks forward to working on them at their next meeting. She commented on behalf of her daughter, who's out playing softball now, and shared her appreciation for the opportunity to serve as their Student Representative this past year.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 7:33 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

Melissa Jacobsen, MMC, City Clerk

Approved: _____