

Session 22-09 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:00 p.m. on September 13, 2022 at the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. One seat remains vacant from the resignation of Commissioner Adele Person on September 13, 2022.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS MARKS, BROWN, CHEROK, AREVALO, GAMBLE, PEREZ

CONSULTING: STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PEARSON

STAFF: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER ENGBRETSSEN
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY
FINANCE DIRECTOR WALTON

AGENDA APPROVAL

AREVALO/GAMBLE MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA (Items listed below are considered routine and non-controversial by the Commission and are approved in one motion. If a separate discussion is desired on an item, a Commissioner may request that item be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda under New Business.)

A. September 13, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Marks read the Consent Agenda and requested a motion.

PEREZ/GAMBLE MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

A. FY24/25 Budget Process & EDC Involvement – Elizabeth Walton, Finance Director

Chair Marks introduced Finance Director Walton.

Ms. Walton explained that the Finance Department's primary purpose for reaching out is to encourage participation in the FY24/25 budget process. City Administration has lengthened the budget calendar

to allow for more input by the boards and commissions, City Council, and members of the public during the budget cycle. She commented on how the EDC has shown interest in the budget process, how they can be involved, and made herself available to answer questions.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen shared her budget requests for this cycle was for a business expansion and retention program, as well as money to continue funding the Small Business Development Center. Chair Marks commented on how the EDC has not looked at the budget as much in the past

Ms. Walton responded to questions and facilitated discussion with the commission on the City budget cycle and process, the EDC's role, and what kind of budgetary asks would come from the commission or new Economic Development division.

B. Transportation Plan – Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager & Brad Parson

Chair Marks introduced Economic Development Manager Engebretsen and Brad Parson.

Mr. Parson gave a brief background of himself and presented on people-oriented transportation and the plan for rewriting the City's Comprehensive Transportation Plan. He explained the components and data that go into a transportation plan, how it addresses conflict zones (intersections), what "Vision Zero Action Plan" is, and examples of how economic development improvements can have positive impacts on pedestrian-friendly corridors.

Ms. Engebretsen spoke to their outreach efforts and the engagement opportunities available through October and November at City meetings, the Homer High School, and Kachemak Bay Campus. She highlighted the City's project goals including the need for a truck route, need to prioritize new sidewalk construction, identify new trail/non-motorized routes, and giving special attention to Old Town for all modes of transportation.

Ms. Engebretsen and Mr. Parson responded to questions, facilitated discussion with the commission, and gathered feedback.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. EDC Staff Report

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen noted her written report.

Chair Marks shared her involvement with a think tank group organized by Port and Harbor Advisory Commission Chair Crisi Matthews. The think tank was formed to bring together stakeholders from respective fields for community-wide pre-planning efforts on any harbor expansion.

In response to questions from Commissioner Brown, Ms. Engebretsen explained the organization of new and existing positions for the Planning Department.

Commissioner Arevalo congratulated Ms. Engebretsen for being selected to participate in the Alaska Municipal League's new Cities of Opportunities program. There was brief discussion of what the program is and what it means for our community.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Housing Staff Report

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title and deferred to Economic Development Manager Engebretsen to give a report.

Ms. Engebretsen reported on the short-term rental presentation she and Special Projects Coordinator Foster gave to City Council at their October 10th meeting. The same presentation was also given to the Chamber of Commerce. One topic that came up at the Chamber's Luncheon was if the City is going to be making sure people are collecting their sales taxes, what about outside the City? She had a meeting with Assembly Member Chesley, City Manager Dumouchel, and the Borough Finance and Assessing Department directors to talk about tax collection; it was good to have that discussion with the Borough.

She explained a program the Borough has called "data scraping" that looks at all the short-term rental listings to determine compliance and sales tax delinquency; the program pays for itself. What that tells her is there is already a process in place for enforcing sales tax compliance and that short-term rentals are not treated any differently than any other business. The Borough Finance Director noted there seems to be less enforcement needed within City limits because people already had a business license. While Homer does not have that same tool, the Borough agreed to share some data with us to help determine whether people are paying their sales taxes or not. A presentation was given to City Council and it is up to them to decide what they want to do next.

Ms. Engebretsen responded to questions about the presentation's contents and data, where a recording of it can be found online, and clarification of what a housing plan is.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Annual Review of the Strategic Plan

- i. DRAFT EDC 2022-2023 Strategic Plan/Goals
- ii. Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) Survey Executive Summary Section

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title and deferred to Economic Development Manager Engebretsen to facilitate discussion.

Ms. Engebretsen explained the purpose of the EDC's strategic plan and goals list. She shared the 2022-2023 draft on screen via Zoom and spoke through each of her recommended staff edits.

There was discussion on the following:

- Keeping the Ongoing Goals as they're still relevant.
- Near Term Goals (NTG): what the commission would like to work on over the next six months.
 - Update task descriptions for Goals #1-4 and 6, removing Goal #5, and addition of a new goal: Increase partnership between the Chamber of Commerce and the City, including the EDC.
 - Commissioner Perez will work on having a renewable energy speaker for Goal #1 and writing a mission statement for Goal #2.
 - Chair Marks will continue taking the lead on staying engaged in the housing conversations for Goal #3.

- Housing issue, the cost of living in Homer, and Commissioner Brown's concerns regarding the regulation of short-term rentals
- Using a worksession to more thoroughly discuss some of these topics, such as stronger partnership with the Chamber, how tourism need not be only economic engine they focus on, and housing.
- Kachemak Collective, a grassroots group of local businesses that get together to talk about business needs and how they can come up with ideas and best practices.

Chair Marks closed the floor to discussion and confirmed with staff that they will continue this agenda item at the next EDC meeting.

B. Rescheduling or Canceling the November Meeting

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen explained how due to the General Election Day and the City's auditor schedule, the EDC's regular meeting on November 8th had to be cancelled. She presented the commission with different options including holding a special meeting sometime in November, or not having a meeting in November altogether.

The commission, Ms. Engebretsen, and Deputy City Clerk Tussey discussed which dates were open, when commissioners would be available or not to meet in November and December, and whether or not they should hold a special meeting.

GAMBLE/PEREZ MOVED TO HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING ON THE 1ST OF NOVEMBER.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

C. Transportation Topics

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title and deferred to Economic Development Manager Engebretsen to give a report.

Ms. Engebretsen reported on the several different transportation projects going on over the next year:

- The City's Transportation Plan, which was the presentation the EDC had tonight
- Conversations about "Rural Transit" going on in the Southern Kenai Peninsula; a consortium group looking into services such as a bus or shuttle that operates between Ninilchik and Homer.
- The State is updating their statewide long-range transportation and freight plan.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Memo from City Clerk Re: Implementation of New Agenda Management Software
- B. Ben Walters Park Recognition Ceremony Flyer
- C. EDC 2021-2022 Strategic Plan/Goals
- D. PHC 2022-2023 Strategic Plan & Goals
- E. City Manager's Report for September 12, 2022
- F. City Manager's Report for September 26, 2022
- G. EDC 2022 Calendar

Chair Marks noted the informational materials provided in the packet. There was discussion on giving the EDC report at the November 14th Council meeting instead of October 24th per the request of City Clerk Jacobsen. Commissioner Cherok confirmed he would be available to give the report for both the October and November EDC meetings.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen thanked the commission and they will do it again November 1st.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Brown thanked everyone for letting her go off on a rant, and suggested Commissioner Arevalo start an online cooking class.

Commissioner Arevalo thanked everyone for allowing her to participate virtually from home; work constraints have her working late and she needed to multitask during the EDC meeting. She congratulated Ms. Engebretsen again for being on the Alaska Municipal League's new Cities of Opportunities task force.

Commissioner Perez thanked everyone for the good conversation.

Commissioner Gamble commented it was nice to see everybody in person.

Chair Marks commented it was nice to see different faces participating on Zoom and attending in person.

Commissioner Cherok and Student Representative Pearson had no further comments.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey commented on the City Clerk's memo regarding implementation of new agenda management software and asked commissioners to start thinking about how they would like their agenda packets, either electronically as the new software operates, or to continue receiving a paper packet.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m. The next special meeting is Tuesday, November 1, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers and via Zoom Webinar.



RACHEL TUSSEY, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: November 1, 2022