

1. CALL TO ORDER

Session 22-10 a Special Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:00 p.m. on November 1, 2022 at the City Hall Conference Room located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. One seat remains vacant.

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

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER GAMBLE (excused)

CONSULTING: STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PEARSON, CHAMBER DIRECTOR ANDERSON

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

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

CHEROK/PEREZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Arevalo arrived at 6:03 p.m.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

4. RECONSIDERATION

5. 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.)

- 5.A. EDC Meeting Minute Approval
October 11, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Marks read the Consent Agenda and requested a motion.

AREVALO/PEREZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

6. VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

- 6.A. Homer Chamber of Commerce Annual Presentation - Brad Anderson, Chamber Director

Chair Marks introduced Homer Chamber Director Brad Anderson.

Mr. Anderson presented the Homer Chamber of Commerce’s 2022 annual presentation to the Economic Development Advisory Commission. He spoke to the following topics:

- Chamber’s efforts to establish their 2022-2027 strategic plan and priorities
- Their long-term envisioned future for a thriving, multi-dimensional Homer economy, mid-term is for a sustainable Homer economy, and their strategic operating priorities
- How they supported economic development in 2022
- Sales tax collected in Homer: comparisons to other Kenai Peninsula Borough communities and how tourism bounced back from COVID
- Recap of the community events they sponsored in 2022 and new events planned for 2023
- How the chamber has conducted community outreach and education, and partnered with members and Homer Marine Trades Association to promote Homer at trades shows
- The Homer Bucks program and how much funds have circulated since 2018.
- How the chamber has been marketing Homer with their visitor guide, magazine, video, through partners, physical chamber locations, social media, and the website and its interactive tools for booking/reservations and maps

Mr. Anderson facilitated discussion and responded to questions from commissioners.

7. STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.A. EDC Staff Report

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen provided a verbal report, noting the following:

- Trick-or-treating turnout at Homer City Hall; about 235 kids stopped by.
- Her recent Transportation Plan presentation at the Senior Center.
- Results of a presentation she watched from the State demographers pertaining to cost of living, housing, and community capacity, and comments the Senior Center Director shared with her on how labor shortages affect services for senior citizens and the elderly.
- Council approved funding for the Small Business Development Center representative position; she hopes to use them and other community partners as resources while staff evolves our way of managing our City-owned land for lease.
- Status on how the Transportation Plan Community Outreach is going and upcoming events.

7.B. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) Report

Chair Marks verbally reported on KPEDD’s quarterly meeting:

- Noted some of the projects they’re working on include a Broadband Task Force, an Economic Development Administration Revolving Loan Fund, an Economic Resiliency Program, and its involvement with a Kenai Peninsula Transit Group.
- Shared that the Pratt Museum’s Executive Director will be speaking at City Council at their November 14th meeting not just about the Pratt but about an economic development administration grant they’ve received for planning a type of outdoor venue for presentations and performances.
- Spoke to how Homer is using more of KPEDD’s resources for handling community projects, paperwork, and guidance for securing more funding.
- Commented on how she looks forward to integrate some of these topics into their strategic plan and goals.

There was discussion on the upcoming Chamber Luncheons and Industry Forums, commissioners' attendance at these events, using them for networking, and how they're advertised.

7.C. Homer Marine Trades Association (HMTA) Report

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen noted she is working to invite a HMTA member to give a report at an upcoming EDC meeting.

8. PUBLIC HEARING

9. PENDING BUSINESS

9.A. Housing Staff Report
Agenda Item Report EDC 22-001

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

Ms. Engebretsen reported that City Council has not taken any action on short-term rentals since Council's October 10th worksession. At this time this topic is not scheduled for any of their upcoming meetings for the remaining year.

Chair Marks commented on her efforts to keep this subject at the forefront while many people are discussing transportation, the Comprehensive Plan, and at events such as the Industry Forum, with the assistance of Chamber Director Brad Anderson and KPEDD.

In response to questions from Commissioner Perez, Chair Marks explained how the current objective is to acknowledge there is a housing situation here in Homer (as there are in other communities such as Seward) and bringing people with different viewpoints together to agree that we're in this together and how can we embrace some basics.

Ms. Engebretsen added how it sounds like Seward is addressing their housing issue by providing education to their current residents about the magnitude of the problem. Different groups are discussing the need for housing.

9.B. Annual Review of the Strategic Plan
Agenda Item Report EDC 22-002

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

Ms. Engebretsen spoke to the edits she made to the strategic plan and goals based on the feedback she received from the commission at their last meeting. She asked the commission to consider the edits, make any other changes to the document, and adopt the amended document.

Chair Marks opened the floor for any comments or additions/edits to the plan.

Commissioner Arevalo commented that many of these items seem more aspirational than goal-like, and if an opportunity comes up they can always add it to an agenda. Commissioners Cheroke, Brown, and Perez had no objections to the plan as presented.

Commissioner Arevalo had no wordsmithing edits. Commissioner Perez commented on if there was a way they could track workforce support gaps. Ms. Engebretsen revised existing Goal #4 in mid-term goals to address his comments. There was discussion on the goal's phrasing.

Commissioner Brown commented on the wording for near-term goals #2, #3, and #5 and there being disconnect between the Chamber of Commerce's efforts to market Homer and if the City is in a position to invite people to Homer if we can't support them. She suggests a conversation should be had between the City and the Chamber. Discussion ensued on how the EDC's goals have recognized their effort to make that balance, concerns with the relationship with the Chamber to address these issues, and rephrasing Goal #5.

Student Representative Pearson left the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

There was further discussion on wordsmithing.

BROWN/CHEROK MOVED TO APPROVE THE AMENDED 2022-2023 EDC STRATEGIC PLAN AND GOALS.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.A. EDC Meeting Schedule for 2023 Agenda Item Report EDC 22-003

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title. She explained how this is their annual opportunity to set their regular meeting agenda for the upcoming year and shared experiences with certain meetings being cancelled due to absences/busy schedules.

Chair Marks suggested they cancel the July meeting. There was discussion on also canceling the December meeting or whether the meetings should remain scheduled just in case.

AREVALO/PEREZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION'S 2023 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE AMENDED TO REMOVE THE JULY AND DECEMBER MEETINGS, AND RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

10.B. Decision to Hold the EDC's December Regular Meeting Agenda Item Report EDC 22-004

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title.

Commissioners shared their availability for that week. The consensus was majority of the commission would not be able to attend.

PEREZ/CHEROK MOVED TO CANCEL THE EDC'S DECEMBER 13TH REGULAR MEETING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

- 10.C. Annual EDC Report to City Council
Agenda Item Report EDC 22-005

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

Ms. Engebretsen explained how the annual EDC report to City Council provides a recap of what the year looked like and what was worked on. She went over the components of the report and facilitated discussion on the draft; commissioners suggested wordsmithing edits and confirmed which dates it will be before City Council.

PEREZ/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE EDC'S 2022 ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE CITY COUNCIL.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

11. INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- 11.A. City Manager's Reports
CM Report for October 10, 2022
CM Report for October 24, 2022
- 11.B. EDC 2022 Meeting & City Council Report Calendar
EDC 2022 Calendar
- 11.C. Written Testimony
Email to City Council, City Manager, & Mayor Re: HERC Improvements from Kathy Hill dated 10/30/22

Chair Marks noted the informational materials provided in the packet.

12. COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

13. COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen thanked the commission.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey reported on Early Voting efforts that were taking place and reminded commissioners of the election timeline if they haven't voted yet.

14. COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Cherok had no further comments.

Commissioner Brown thanked Chamber Director Brad Anderson for his presentation. She commented on the interesting prospect of comparing collected sales tax and visitor numbers by sectors. Ms. Engebretsen commented on certain variables that would need to be considered when making that comparison, but that it was good food for thought.

Commissioner Perez wished everyone a happy holidays and new year.

Commissioner Arevalo reported on three days' worth of workshops regarding resilient community food systems for here on the Kenai Peninsula that are coming up, and some session and schedule details about the workshops if anyone is interested in attending them.

Commissioner Marks thanked the commissioners and staff and that they are glad they're going to take a break before coming back January 10th. She thinks it will be a very fulfilling year.

15. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, January 10, 2023 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: January 10, 2023