

1. CALL TO ORDER

Session 23-01 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:06 p.m. on January 10, 2023 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Gordon Pitzman was appointed November 14, 2022 to fill the vacant seat.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS MARKS, AREVALO, GAMBLE, PEREZ

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS PITZMAN, CHEROK, BROWN (excused)

CONSULTING: STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PEARSON

STAFF: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER ENGBRETSSEN, DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

GAMBLE/PEREZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

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
November 1, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes

Deputy City Clerk Tussey read the Consent Agenda. Chair Marks requested a motion.

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

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

6. VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

7. STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.A. EDC Staff Report
Agenda Item Report - EDC 23-003

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen spoke to her written report, highlighting the notable events and work that took place through December. She verified with the commission that they would

like to add the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) Industry Outlook Forum to the EDC's calendar for every January as a reminder for participation and to have it as an agenda item.

There was brief discussion on the new Food System Resilience tool that Commissioner Arevalo provided information on.

- 7.B. Homer Marine Trades Association (HMTA) Report
HMTA Meeting Minutes 11/8/2022
HMTA Agenda 1/4/2023

Chair Marks noted the HMTA meeting information that was provided in the packet.

8. PUBLIC HEARING

9. PENDING BUSINESS

- 9.A. Housing Report
Agenda Item Report - EDC 23-002

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen explained how the City was intending to host a housing forum partially as a way to give people the opportunity to speak their concerns, and partially to help staff with Comprehensive Plan work. Staff recently learned that there are other organizations in the community who would like to do the same thing. So rather than duplicate that effort the City would like to collaborate with those groups, such as MAPPS and South Peninsula Hospital Foundation, and what some of that joint effort may look like. Any forums or public events scheduled will likely be in March.

Chair Marks noted there will be an initial stakeholders meeting on January 30th; she and Ms. Engebretsen will be participating and she encouraged other commissioners to attend if interested.

There was discussion on the upcoming housing stakeholder's meeting and who is involved, when it's taking place, and what information will be discussed at that meeting.

10. NEW BUSINESS

- 10.A. Discussion of KPEDD Industry Outlook Forum & EDC Strategic Plan
Agenda Item Report - EDC 23-001

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title. She noted the agenda from the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) Industry Outlook Forum is in the packet and deferred to Economic Development Manager Engebretsen.

Ms. Engebretsen highlighted a few of the forum presentations she had good takeaways from, including:

- Demographic statistics from the Alaska Travel Industry Association on who is visiting the State of Alaska and Kenai Peninsula, and what those stats may be saying about Homer.
- Upcoming resource opportunity on how to start and operate an in-home daycare.
- Infrared drying technology, initially started for fish products but is now being used by peony industries.

Chair Marks shared her takeaways from the forum and how she applied them to the EDC's strategic plan, most notably:

- Efforts by a local State employee to get better understanding of what it takes to license and work with the State.
- Local resources that provide workforce development; lots of work being done by the transit task force; that workforce development is getting that child care and transportation to get people to/from home and work. Potentially having person from Nine Star present to EDC at a future meeting. Ms. Engebretsen suggested the presentation be at the Council level.
- "Long Trail" project; using existing trails and creating signage and connection points that creates one long trail from Fairbanks to Seward, maybe to Homer as well.

There was discussion on the various forum sessions, the comments made by Chair Marks and Ms. Engebretsen, and how the EDC can address some of these topics at future meetings and through their strategic plan. In response to Chair Mark's comments regarding job presentations at the high school, commissioners and Student Representative Pearson further discussed the Focus On Learning (FOL) classes for high school students where they learn about specific topics or careers. Some commissioners voiced an interest in giving future presentations.

11. INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- 11.A. Alaska's Economic Performance in National Context by the UA Center for Economic Development
UAA Handout, November 2022
- 11.B. Appointment of Gordon Pitzman to EDC
EDC Pitzman Appointment Application & Materials, November 2022
- 11.C. City of Homer Newsletter
January 2023 Issue
- 11.D. City Manager's Reports
CM Report for November 14, 2022
CM Report for November 28, 2022
- 11.E. EDC Meeting & City Council Report Calendar
EDC 2023 Calendar

Chair Marks noted the informational items in the packet.

Deputy City Clerk Tussey facilitated discussion on the EDC calendar to determine who would be reporting at upcoming Council meetings. She noted she will work with Economic Development Manager Engebretsen on updating the Annual Topic/Events column, and they can fill in the remaining Council Report openings at the next meeting when more commissioners are in attendance.

12. COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

13. COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Tussey shared information on the Special Mayoral Election that will be taking place February 14, 2023. Ms. Engebretsen clarified that would mean the EDC's February 14th meeting will be held in the upstairs Conference Room.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen commented it was a great meeting and thanked the commission for brainstorming on some of the ways she can help connect people and businesses in the community.

14. COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Perez announced he now has a happy healthy little girl.

Student Representative Pearson commented on the "long trail" project and how she thinks a lot of people she knows would be really interested in that idea. Chair Marks noted the Homer Trail Alliance would very much appreciate having additional input, particularly from younger people. Ms. Pearson suggested it be one of the Focus On Learning topics.

Commissioner Arevalo commented on how technology allowed her to join the meeting while driving to the meeting, and on the Homer Grown show on KBBI. The show interviews local business people in the agriculture realm or local scientists and other professionals who assist those on the Southern Kenai Peninsula regarding their food system businesses. Episodes can be found on the KBBI website or any podcast platform.

Commissioner Gamble spoke to Commissioner Arevalo's comments in relation to food security and how we are not producing enough food in our area. He agreed with Student Representative Pearson's point that they cannot go after seniors for work/job recruiting because they already have plans for post-graduation; they should be directing job training efforts towards freshman and sophomores. He commented on the "long trail" project and how it was an extremely large undertaking, is glad to hear there's a lot of local resources and activity, but it's important to advocate for it on a State level. In response to Commissioner Gamble's inquiry on where they were at with meeting with the Chamber, Ms. Engebretsen confirmed with the commission around when they would like to hold a worksession. Commissioner Gamble congratulated Commissioner Perez on the birth of his daughter.

Chair Marks remarked on Commissioner Arevalo's comments on technology, setting a worksession with the Chamber possibly in April or earlier, and on the Outlook Industry Forum topic of broadband. Commissioner Arevalo had spoken to it earlier and things are seriously moving forward on it at the Federal level.

15. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. and scheduled to be held in the City Hall Conference Room and via Zoom Webinar.



RACHEL TUSSEY, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: February 14, 2023