

**CALL TO ORDER**

Session 23-06 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:06 p.m. on August 8, 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.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS MARKS, AREVALO, BROWN, KIM, GAMBLE

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS PITZMAN, PEREZ & STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PEARSON

STAFF: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER ENGBRETSSEN, DEPUTY CITY CLERK PETTIT & CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

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**

Billy Day was recognized by the Chair to speak about the Diamond Creek Recreation Area Multi-Resource Management Plan and the upcoming Sterling Highway Realignment Project. Mr. Day was asking for the Commission's support in advocating to the City Council to open a dialogue with the Department of Transportation to lobby for the construction of the pedestrian underpass. Mr. Day was adamant that he wants to see more communication between the City of Homer and the Department of Transportation.

**RECONSIDERATION**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS**

A. Homer Housing Conversation Report; Ryan Foster, AICP, Karin Marks

City Planner Foster and Chair Marks provided a synopsis on the Homer housing crisis to the Commission. They addressed the various community organizers, background research conducted in regards to housing, outreach efforts including the March 25<sup>th</sup> event at the Christian Community Church, findings of the report, thematic analysis, preliminary survey results, and the next steps for tackling the issue.

Mr. Foster facilitated discussion on the following:

- Actionable timeline the City is looking at in order to address this issue
- The capability of developers in the Homer area
  - o Labor and material costs
- Timeline for the Comp Plan and updating the zoning code
- Changes and the impact those decisions will have on Homer

## STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. EDC Staff Report for August

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen provided a verbal report on the following:

- STIP List
  - o Urged commissioners to go onto the state website and voice their opinions on Kachemak Drive if that is a road they would like to see improved
- Wayfinding Update
  - o Materials, price variances between different types of materials, best practice for installing the signs, locations of the signs, and the allocated budget for wayfinding updates

### B. Chamber Director Report

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen reviewed the Chamber Director Report. Ms. Engebretsen directed the Commission to the information provided in the supplemental packet by Brad Anderson:

- Slower summer than normal
- No update on the future work session with City Council

### C. Homer Marine Trades Association Report

Chair Marks noted that there were no minutes included in the packet. There was no one present to provide further information from the Homer Marine Trades Association.

### D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report

Chair Marks noted that there was no Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Report due to the fact that the Commission meets quarterly. She did briefly outline the Kenai Peninsula Regional Mariculture Meet Up on August 9, 2023.

- An engaged process for the \$25 million grant that the federal government issued to Southeast Alaska and the Kenai Peninsula to work on the Maritime Culture Business Growth

### E. Port Expansion Project

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen noted that the next public forum is going to be held on Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### F. Guiding Homer's Growth Group

Commissioner Kim outlined the plans of the group for the foreseeable future:

- Panel conversation from October 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> that represents the various major groups in Homer
- Advocating for a two-day training in November where they are looking to include as many different groups as possible in order to have conversations that lead to building community

The group will meet again Tuesday, August 22 at 5:30 p.m. at Grace Ridge Brewing. Mr. Kim will report back to the group after the next meeting.

G. HERC Update

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen covered the following:

- Limited, hazardous materials assessment of the big building in addition to a detailed report of the small building
  - o Asbestos, lead paint, and PCBs in concentrations that currently cannot be disposed of in the state.
  - o Economic Development Manager Engebretsen will meet with the City Council for a work session on Monday, August 14 to discuss the results.
- Results of the assessment are posted on the City's website for the public to view.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**PENDING BUSINESS**

- A. Housing Update  
Memorandum EDC 23-030

Discussion on the housing update took place earlier in the meeting when Chair Marks and City Planner Foster conducted their slideshow presentation.

- B. EDC Mission Statement  
Action Item Report EDC 23-031

Chair Marks directed all commissioners to review the draft of the mission statement provided by Mr. Perez. The Commission decided that the statement needs some revising, which Mr. Kim and Ms. Arevalo agreed to edit together.

- C. EDC Bylaws

Chair Marks reviewed the changes to the wording of the bylaws, including:

- "The City Manager shall assign a staff liaison to the commission."
- Changing "APPROVAL OF MINUTES" to "CONSENT AGENDA" on the agenda.

**BROWN/AREVALO MOVED TO ACCEPT THE CHANGES TO THE BYLAWS**

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Ordinance 23-40  
Agenda Item Report EDC 23-032

Chair Marks provided an overview of the recent work session with the Planning Commission regarding Ordinance 23-40 and this Commission's role in considering the economic impact of the changes in the ordinance. Economic Development Manager Engebretsen reviewed her memorandum in the packet and explained the purpose of Conditional Use Permits and how the rules apply to different zoning districts.

After in-depth discussion regarding 4 dwelling units on a lot for residential districts and 4 buildings on a lot in commercial districts, Economic Development Manager Engebretsen concluded by saying that the Commission had reached a consensus that it doesn't want to treat all zoning districts the same. The Commissioners were in agreement that they had differing opinions on the subject, and the Commission felt that it needs to have a broader discussion at a future time. Ms. Engebretsen added that she would write a memo to share with all of the Commissioners, in addition to sending it to the City Council.

B. City of Homer Draft 2024-29 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)  
Memorandum from Special Projects and Communications Coordinator

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen welcomed discussion about which projects the commission felt should be of highest priority. The Commission was in general consensus from the start of debate that the Slope Stability & Erosion Mitigation Program was the project of highest priority. Ms. Arevalo then went on to say that she felt the A-Frame Water Transmission Line Replacement was the project of next highest priority, followed by the Steel Grid. The Commission agreed with both of these opinions, and Ms. Engebretsen added that they could submit more than just their top three priority projects to City Council. The Commission then determined that they also wanted to add the Pioneer Avenue Gateway Redevelopment project to the list in addition to the Homer Harbor Critical Float System Replacement project.

GAMBLE/BROWN MOVED TO SUBMIT TO THE CITY COUNCIL THEIR TOP FIVE PRIORITY PROJECTS IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER:

1. Slope Stability
2. A-Frame Water
3. Steel Gird
4. Pioneer Ave/Gateway
5. Floats

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

C. Recommendation to City Council on a Sterling Highway Underpass at Diamond Creek

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading the title. Ms. Arevalo then gave a little more insight on the proposal, saying that the DOT is already planning on redoing the stretch of road from Anchor Point to Homer in addition to widening the culver that exists at Diamond Creek to accommodate wildlife. She

then explained that the Homer Trails Alliance is simply proposing to add a pedestrian underpass walkway to the intersection given that the intersection is already going to be torn up due to road reconstruction anyway. It would make sense to implement that now while construction is going on rather than waiting until later if ever to have the work constructed.

AREVALO/GAMBLE MOVED THAT THE EDC IS IN AGREEMENT WITH THE HOMER TRAILS ALLIANCE AS WRITTEN IN THEIR LETTER TO THE EDC, AND THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD PUT ITS FULL SUPPORT BEHIND THIS UNDERPASS WALKWAY AND MAKE THESE RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

- A. City Manager's Report for July
- B. City of Homer Newsletter – July and August 2023
- C. 2022-23 EDC Strategic Plan – Final
- D. EDC 2023 Calendar
- E. Commissioner Attendance at 2023 City Council Meetings

Chair Marks noted the informational materials and volunteered herself to take Commissioner Pitzman's spot at the City Council Meeting for Report on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in hopes of relieving Mr. Pitzman of some of the pressure.

### **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

There were no comments of the audience.

### **COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF**

City Clerk Jacobsen reminded everyone that it's not necessarily the goal of the board to obtain consensus on any matter, but rather to make motions that can then be voted on and recorded in the minutes as to what the result of that vote was. She added that motions are very valuable in keeping discussions more concise and focused, in addition to giving everyone the opportunity to vote their conscience and what they feel is the most appropriate way that they want to see things move forward. Ms. Jacobsen then thanked the Commission for a good meeting.

### **COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Arevalo stated that she was very excited about both the Kachemak Sponge Project and that the City's working with the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust to secure lands up in the Bridge Creek Watershed.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers and via Zoom Webinar.

*Zach Pettit*

ZACH PETTIT, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I

Approved: *Sept. 12, 2023*