



City of Homer

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Memorandum

Agenda Changes/Supplemental Packet

TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
FROM: ZACH PETTIT, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I
DATE: AUGUST 8, 2023
SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

B. Chamber Director Report

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August 2023 HCOC EDC Report

Here is a summary of this summer's activities:

- In June we introduced some new events around the Homer Halibut Festival theme, Halibut Derby, Big 'But Ball, and Summer Solstice Festival. The goal was to promote this important industry and attract more economic activity during the shoulder month of June. This year was mainly an attempt to see how people would respond to the event and work out the logistics. They will be back in 2024 in a larger fashion.
- The 4th of July parade was the biggest to date. The new start time of 3 pm received many positive comments and the turnout of spectators was very strong.
- The Peony Celebration Event was extended into August because of the slow start to the growing season from all the rain in early July. Reports from the growers seem to be very positive and at the Visitor Center, there are visitors and calls every day wanting to attend the different activities and to learn more about the industry.
- On July 11 we received a call from representatives of HighGold Mining who were in town to talk with local business leaders about a mining project planned for the Johnson Track on CIRI land across the inlet near Lake Clark National Park. Officials at CIRI contacted their mining company to do some testing on a site that was identified back in the 70s as having a strong potential for mining Gold, Silver, and Copper. The project is several years out still and they are currently working on logistics to expand the runway so they can more effectively conduct the testing to determine the project's potential. They were unaware of the port expansion plans of Homer Harbor so that seemed to get a positive reaction to help with using Homer as a potential base of operations. The Chamber is looking at having them as a luncheon speaker this fall so the community can learn more about this project.
- I had the chance to talk with several of our members about their tourist businesses this year vs prior years, and almost everyone is seeing a much slower year than the last two years. Most are comparing it to pre-pandemic 2019 numbers. Homer is now competing with a very strong cruise ship industry which is the primary source of people visiting Alaska. Our new May and June events will be a big help in adding visitor potential to those shoulder months.
- In 2024 there are currently 10 cruise ships that have made plans to stop in Homer, 3 will arrive before Memorial Day and are much larger ships. The smaller, higher-end cruise ships that visited Homer this year were the type of visitors who bring more economic activity to Homer. The Henseatic Nature ship will be here again on 8/8 with the 150+ passengers who start getting off the ship at 6 AM and many will go out on full-day excursions.
- This fall the Chamber will once again host the Pioneer Ave Trick or Treat event on October 31. The response from Pioneer Ave businesses was overwhelmingly positive from last year and it brought residents into many businesses that they had not visited before. This year we will be closing down Pioneer Ave between Main and Heath Streets from 4-6 PM so it is safer for the kids and allows for more events to take place.
- For 2024 the Chamber is looking at putting together a Business Resource Directory that would be both online and printed. This will be directed at local residents and people wanting relocation packages,

who are looking for references for local services such as plumbers, electricians, home builders, building supplies, professional services, utilities, telecommunications, and retail businesses.