



MEMORANDUM

Parks, Art Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission Recommendation for Proposed Location of a New Community Recreation Center –Town Center Lots

Item Type: Informational Memo
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and Homer City Council
Meeting Date: June 25, 2025
From: Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission

Background

The City Council requested the Parks, Art, Recreation, and Culture Advisory Commission (PARCAC) to review a potential location for a new Community Recreation Facility on a City owned lot south of Pioneer Avenue. PARCAC discussed the location at their May 15th and June 19th meetings. The Commission was asked to consider three questions:

1. Do you support this location as the preferred location for a future community recreation facility?
2. What are the existing concerns against using this location for this project?
3. What are the potential positive attributes for using this location for this project?

Response

PARCAC unanimously supports the Town Center location for a recreation center. However, the Commission did have additional questions regarding access, parking and wetlands.

Comments

- The site is centrally located that is primary criteria for identifying an ideal location especially for walking, biking and local youth accessing after school.
- This location, already owned by the City of Homer, therefore reducing the cost of the overall project, with not having to purchase additional land, presenting a savings of \$700,000 to \$1 million dollars.
- The location will help spur economic development and connectivity between Pioneer Ave and the Sterling Highway with additional foot traffic and parking opportunities especially for the businesses on Pioneer Ave.

- The site is large enough to plan for additional expansion of other indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities if the need were to arise in the future.
- The development of the site would address utility infrastructure for the overall town center properties that could encourage complimentary and collaborative development by the privately owned lots.
- The Commission would like to see additional access to the lot from Main Street and/or the privately owned lots if possible in addition to the Pioneer Avenue access point.

Action

Informational only.

Attachments

Minutes for May 15, 2025 and June 19, 2025 regular meetings

CALL TO ORDER

Session 25-02, a Regular Meeting of the Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Lewis at 5:30 p.m. on May 15, 2025 in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS ARCHIBALD, LEWIS, HARRALD, KEISER, PARSLEY & ROEDL

STAFF: RECREATION MANAGER ILLG, STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE OSTROM, LEAD PARKS TECHNICIAN FELICE, & DEPUTY CITY CLERK APPEL

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Lewis introduced the topic.

ARCHIBALD/PARSLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA (3-minute time limit)

Kevin Lahaie, city resident, expressed interested and a need for a more updated and safe skate park to be built at the new Recreation Center location.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS (10-minute time limit)

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Unapproved Meeting Minutes – April 17th Regular Meeting

HARRALD/ROEDL MOVED TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS (5-minute time limit)

A. Parks Monthly Report

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to Lead Parks Technician Felice, who provided the following summary:

- Electric is back on at the batting cages in Karen Hornaday
- Mobile restrooms at Jack Gist are installed and usable

- New ADA path installed at disc golf course
- Mowing
- Special Event Fees
- Serve the City

B. PARCAC Staff Report

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading the title and deferred to Recreation Manager Illg. Mr. Illg recapped his report summarizing actions of City Council including a Resolution to support the interests of pedestrian safety, a resolution to amend the fee schedule, and a resolution for the City to establish a community recreation building non-endowment field of interest fund with the Homer Foundation.

C. Community Recreation Report

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to Recreation Manager Illg, who provided a report on the following:

- Working on MOU with the School District
- Free drop-in youth soccer program for the summer
- Zumba Kids
- New youth basketball program
- Safe and Healthy Kids Fair
- Youth voucher program
- HERC Building Update

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Policies and Procedures- Recreation

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading the title and deferring to Community Recreation Manager Illg. Mr. Illg discussed the Youth Protection Policy, which was found lacking in detail and potentially requiring legal input. The Commission opened discussion within the entire Policies document with suggestions to add and remove certain sections.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Location for New Rec Center

Chair Lewis introduced the topic and deferred to Community Recreation Manager Illg. Mr. Illg explained the background history of the project and the directive from City Council for the Commission to comment on this preferred location. The Commission had questions including:

- How would someone enter the building- from what side
- The owner of the lot coming off main street, where the right of way would be
- Is the lot potentially be too small
- What would the potential square footage of the building be

- Could an adjoining lot be purchased by the City
- Do utilities currently exist
- Amount of parking available

The Commission decided to postpone the topic for the next meeting when more information could be provided.

B. Silhouettes for NOMAR Wall

Chair Lewis introduced the topic and deferred to Lead Parks Technician Felice. Mr. Felice explained the silhouettes, the artist, and what groups were sent letters to submit potential names to make the list of selections. The Commission agreed it would be most fair to put all the names into a bag and draw four names from the Adult bag and four names from the Youth bag, with two extras from each as alternates, in case the original four were not interested. The Commission drew names from the bags and asked Lead Parks Technician Felice to make the phone calls to notify the individuals.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Annual Calendar 2025
- B. City Manager's Report
April 28, 2025 City Council Meeting
May 12, 2025 City Council Meeting

Chair Lewis noted the informational materials included in the packet. Commissioner Archibald volunteered to deliver the Commission's report at the next City Council meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE (3-minute time limit)

Kevin Lahaie, city resident, expressed safety concerns about the current condition of the skate park, particularly the deteriorating metal ramps and blacktop.

Rae Krakowski, city resident, added to think of the skate park as a separate entity from the HERC building. She stated she feels the skate park is put on the back burner due to its proximity to the HERC when it's unrelated.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Appel thanked the Commission for the fun meeting and announced that the meeting in June would be her last meeting as the Clerk

Public Works Technician Felice thanked the Commission for the meeting.

Community Recreation Manager Illg thanked everyone for the meeting and encouraged the Commission to attend the Safe and Healthy Kids Fair.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/CITY COUNCIL

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Student Representative Ostrom said it was a good meeting.

Commissioner Keiser said she would like to see the skate park on the agenda as a new business item. She also mentioned the transportation safety action plan and whether Public Works was successful in putting that together.

Commissioner Stephano thanked everyone for the awesome meeting as well as the art tour worksession.

Commissioner Archibald stated Chair Lewis makes a meeting fun. He commented that he felt like they accomplished something at this meeting.

Commissioner Harrauld suggested doing a park walk through of the skate park.

Commissioner Roedl said Commissioner Harrauld had said it all.

Commissioner Parsley thanked everyone for the great meeting and mentioned the Kachemak Bay Running Club had an amazing 5k race with about 150 people showing up.

Chair Lewis adjourned the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Lewis adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m. The next regular meeting is **Thursday, June 19, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.** All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

Ashley Appel, Deputy City Clerk I

Approved: _____

CALL TO ORDER

Session 25-02, a Regular Meeting of the Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Lewis at 5:30 p.m. on June 19, 2025 in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS ARCHIBALD, LEWIS, KEISER, PARSLEY & ROEDL

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS STEFANO, HARRALD

STAFF: RECREATION MANAGER ILLG, STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE OSTROM, & DEPUTY CITY CLERK APPEL

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Lewis introduced the topic.

KEISER/ARCHIBALD MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA (3-minute time limit)

Jason Davis, city resident and City Council member, stated he was in attendance to listen to the discussion of the proposed location for the new Community Recreation Center.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS (10-minute time limit)

A. City of Homer Port & Harbor- Bryan Hawkins

Port and Harbor Director, Bryan Hawkins, spoke to the Commission regarding possible CIP items to update and upgrade the campgrounds on the Spit.

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Unapproved Meeting Minutes – May 15th Regular Meeting

ROEDL/KEISER MOVED TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS (5-minute time limit)

A. Parks Monthly Report

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title. Report was provided in the packet.

B. PARCAC Staff Report

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading the title and deferred to Recreation Manager Illg. Mr. Illg recapped his report summarizing actions of City Council including Memorandum 25-166 in regard to the trails at Karen Hornaday Park. He said the trails discussion would likely come to the Commission in the August or September meeting.

C. Community Recreation Report

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to Recreation Manager Illg, who provided a report on the following:

- Haz-mat discovered at HERC
- Public Works working with the State to fix HERC findings
- MOU for school district will be presented at the next City Council meeting

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Policies and Procedures- Recreation

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading the title and deferring to Community Recreation Manager Illg. Mr. Illg discussed the updates to the Youth Protection Policy as well as the previously suggested changes to the Policies and Procedures document. The Commission suggested adding a signature line on the back of the finalized document for employees to sign once reviewed.

B. Location of New Community Recreation Center

Chair Lewis introduced the item by reading the title and deferring to Community Recreation Manager Illg. Mr. Illg provided background information surrounding the proposed location and insight into what other Advisory Bodies had commented on. Commission carried discussion including the following topics:

- Currently owned by the City of Homer
- Central location in town- checks box as asked by the public
- Size of lot to allow for future expansion
- Project has been on the City's CIP list for a long time as the #2 project
- Walkability/accessibility from the schools
- Proposed lot should have scored higher on the original matrix
- Hope to provide space for creative use/multipurpose
- Mindful of water running through property during development
- Cost of HEA property and if the size of that lot is even sufficient for the rec center needs

Shelly Erickson, City Council member, was invited to speak on the topic. She brought up points including:

- Property being large enough to expand for future development

- Center of town- accessibility
- Relatively easy to get utilities installed
- Potential to work with private developers in a public/private partnership
- The potential to have a space large enough to bring a year round market of tournaments to Homer-boosting the economy
- Homer Foundation has set up an account so the public can donate for all the hard assets of the building and equipment.

Jason Davis, City Council member, also commented on the rec center stating that he and Council Member Aderhold would be introducing a funding proposal related to a new sales tax as a funding mechanism to start accumulating money for a new building.

The Commission unanimously agreed for Staff to draft a memo and present it to City Council in support of the proposed location.

NEW BUSINESS

A. CIP Process: Parks, Rec, & Camping Projects

Chair Lewis introduced the topic and deferred to Community Recreation Manager Illg. Mr. Illg explained the CIP list and asked for the Commission to start thinking about projects they would like to have potentially added to the list. The Commission carried discussion on some ideas including the following:

- Ball fields at Jack Gist
- Bathrooms at Bishop's Beach
- Expansion of the shoulder on Kachemak Drive
- Expansion of the shoulders on both East and West Hill Roads
- Trail connecting East End Road and the Spit via Kachemak Drive
- Trails behind Karen Hornaday Park
- Skate park

B. Budget- Allocation of PARCAC Funds

Chair Lewis introduced the topic and deferred to Recreation Manager Illg. Mr. Illg explained that the previous discussion for a city map wasn't feasible, but the Commission could move forward with a QR Code sign linked to a site managed by Bunnell Street Art Gallery. This QR code would provide information and locations of existing art in the City.

KEISER/ARCHIBALD MOVED TO APPROVE THE SPENDING OF THE COMMISSION'S ALLOCATED \$500 FOR A QR CODE SIGN PRODUCED BY BUNNELL STREET ART GALLERY.

There was no discussion

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

A. Annual Calendar 2025

Chair Lewis noted the informational materials included in the packet. Commissioner Roedl volunteered to deliver the Commission's report at the next City Council meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE (3-minute time limit)

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Appel thanked the Commission for the meeting and stated she appreciates the Commission's patience during the learning moments.

Community Recreation Manager Illg thanked everyone for the meeting, making note of how much he appreciated the Council members being in attendance. He also thanked the clerk for all the work done.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/CITY COUNCIL

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Student Representative Ostrom said he is excited to talk about the Karen Hornaday trails in August.

Commissioner Keiser thanked the clerk for her service to the Commission. She asked Staff to talk to Public Works about the possibility of leveling some campsites at Karen Hornaday. She also asked that Staff stay in contact with the representatives for the skate park so their needs could be addressed.

Commissioner Archibald stated Chair Lewis gives a good meeting. He suggested that moving forward, the Commission decides who will do the Council report at the beginning of the meeting so they can be actively taking notes.

Commissioner Roedl said it was nice working with the Commission.

Commissioner Parsley thanked everyone for the meeting. He said he is grateful to be on this Commission and able to have these conversations.

Chair Lewis thanked the clerk and said it was a good meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Lewis adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m. The next regular meeting is **Thursday, June 19, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.** All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

Ashley Appel, Deputy City Clerk I

Approved:_____