

Session 12-14 a Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was called to order on October 25, 2012 at 5:38 pm by Vice Chair Dave Brann at the Homer City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS BRANN, BELL, LOWNEY

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER BREMICKER (UNEXCUSED)

TELEPHONIC: COMMISSIONERS ARCHIBALD, LILLIBRIDGE

STAFF: JULIE ENGBRETSSEN, GIS/PLANNING TECHNICIAN
MIKE ILLG, RECREATION SPECIALIST
ANGIE OTTESON, PARKS MAINTENANCE COORDINATOR
RENEE KRAUSE, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Brann requested a motion to approve the agenda.

LOWNEY/BELL – MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was a brief discussion requesting the Web Page review to after Staff report from Angie Otteson.

BELL/LOWNEY - MOVED TO PUT ITEM B UNDER PENDING BUSINESS UP ON THE AGENDA AFTER ITEM C UNDER STAFF AND COUNCIL REPORTS.

There was no discussion.

The amended agenda was approved by consensus of the Commission.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES *(Minutes are approved during regular meetings only)*

A. Meeting Minutes for the Regular Meeting on September 20, 2012

Vice Chair Brann requested approval of the minutes.

LOWNEY/BELL – SO MOVED.

The minutes were approved as amended by consensus

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There was no public present for comments

RECONSIDERATION

There were no items for reconsideration.

VISITORS

A. Todd Schroeder, Homer Soil & Water Conservation District, Diamond Creek Plan

B. Brianna Allen, People's Garden in Old Town

Ms. Allen stated that she was invited to speak to the commission regarding what they are planning to do in Old Town between Bunnell Street and the Bakery is to plant edible berry plants. The have been

granted with a People's Choice Grant of \$5000. This holds a match requirement such as benches, donations, volunteering, what is really coming from this is that Old Town is expanding in pedestrian culture and Old Town is not really accommodating in this format. Ms. Allen stated that they are seeking to make pedestrian travel safer along Bunnell near Two Sisters and Bishops Beach. They have also been Street Painting.

The Community as a whole is very supportive and they are in the early stage discussions regarding a walking path, along with maintenance and attention paid to Bishop's Beach.

Commissioner Lowney commented in favor of the actions of the citizens group for Old Town. She noted a few hazards along major roads into Old Town. She asked if there is group working on the path they are proposing.

Ms. Allen outlined an overall vision for pedestrian safe walking paths from Fat Olive's and the Visitor Center. She commented that the next step will be getting permission for placement of the proposed benches. She reported that Marianne Aplin was at the last meeting and had extended an invitation to attend the next Public Arts Committee meeting to speak about the project especially regarding signage. She has also been told about the HART program.

Ms. Engebretsen responded that she would have to consult with the City Manager.

Old Towne Streets are very skinny resulting in the necessary easements so it will be difficult to have a walking path with the easements since there are ditches.

Vice Chair Brann offered some advice on how to possibly design the paths, and that he supports the street painting and glad the City did allow that.

Ms. Allen responded they do not have regular meetings and currently they are not advertised but by word of mouth. The next meeting will be at the end of November however she did not have a date at this time. Commissioner Lowney agreed and stated that any recommendations and concerns that her group could bring before the Commission would be really helpful.

Ms. Allen stated that there would not be many trees and they would be scattered it will mostly be berry bushes since they only received \$5000. She would love if the paths could accommodate bikes but did not think it possible.

Further advice from staff and the commissioners regarding communication with the public, keeping the crab apple tree, trail connection to existing trails, maintenance, and a one way road system within Old Town and the reaction with getting easements from property owners; and finally how to approach easements with the property owners.

Ms. Allen provided a broad outlook on how she perceived the process would be developed.

The Commissioners provided overall encouragement to continue her work and to provide updates to the commission.

STAFF & COUNCIL/COMMITTEE REPORTS/ AND BOROUGH REPORTS

A. Community Recreation – Mike Illg

Mr. Illg provided a brief description on the awards that the Alaska Recreation and Parks Association bestowed on Karen Hornaday Park for Facility Excellence and the Parks and Community Recreation Program was recognized as Outstanding Organization for 2011-2012. He noted that these are community based awards. Mr. Illg stated he was having a booth at the Rotary health Fair and could use some volunteers to help man the booth throughout the day. He reported that the HERC building was listed as number five in priority on the City's CIP list. He felt that was encouraging. Lastly he reported on expanding the program over the weekend and he has been considering changing his working hours to accommodate the demographics but will also hinge on the school district.

Commissioner Lowney commented on the teen involvement and comments coming forward regarding more opportunities for involvement with adults and teens programs. She further noted that she submitted his name as a recommendation to be on the Homer Prevention Project because of the number of teens involved. She noted that the teens are addressing the needs that programs outside of sports related are needed.

Mr. Illg commented on the possible immediate cancellation of programs and opportunities for successful programs.

Congratulations were expressed by the commissioners.

B. Staff Report – Julie Engebretsen, Planning Technician/GIS

She noted that she was busy with the gas line stuff and meetings and they will be short staffed through mid-December and all of January in Planning department. She did report that the presentation on Diamond Creek plan will be next year.

She commented on a question regarding the gas line and easements.

She will review the budget items later in the agenda.

C. Parks Maintenance – Angie Otteson

Angie Otteson reported that camping season officially ends on October 31st and revenues are down approximately 10-11% compared with Seward it is represented as a trend since 2005. July was the slowest month with the impacts to fishing with the Lagoon being dredged. She noted that there were lots of things accomplished the past several weeks from the removal of the red shed and junk debris clean up from Karen Hornaday. She noted that there were several large logs remaining.

Mariner Park will be getting new fire rings and they will be reviewing the layout over the winter since the entrance has been relocated.

The Fishing Hole Campground pavilion needs attention and will be reviewed this winter too.

The trees have been caged and some have been cut down to the base since they were dead. She did have some contact with the public regarding the trees being cut down. The Clerk noted the number of phone calls received regarding the removal of the trees along Pioneer Avenue.

Commissioner Brann commented on the progress and improvement and looking forward to moving the end of the bike trail to Mariner Park and that it may be a good thing for the Adopt a Park program which he has recommended the Rotary adopt another park again. He commented on the bench that has finally been installed and noted that people have been ice skating already. He intended to place some firewood there for the public use.

Commissioner Lowney commented on the community taking ownership and responsibility on the trails and parks. She has introduced the Adopt a Trail/Park Program to the Homer Prevention Program who is seeking ways to address teen drinking in the community. She also believes this commission should take the lead in this program too. Mr. Illg commented on the Adopt a Trail program with HOWL and that there is interest in the community. Commissioner Lowney continued discussion on success of a community getting involved by relaying an example in Springhill Parks. She believes if areas are targeted it would be beneficial.

Ms. Otteson related a recent event of a very well established and camouflaged campsite just off of the Poopdeck Trail and the Library.

There was a continued discussion on allowing the community to trim up trees in areas that need additional oversight for this type of thing.

Commissioner Lillibridge joined the meeting telephonically at 6:22 p.m.

Commissioner Lillibridge reported on complaints received regarding owners not cleaning up after their dogs in Karen Hornaday Park.

There was a discussion regarding educating the community to be responsible for their pets.

Commissioners commented on the Fall Clean-up today and appreciated the pizza.

There was no further discussion.

D. Kachemak Drive Path Committee Report – Dave Brann

Commissioner Brann did not have much to add that was not in the minutes in the packet.

F. Karen Hornaday Park Committee – Robert Archibald

Commissioner Archibald stated there was a meeting at the Park and there were several recommendations that maybe Julie may be able to enlighten them. The committee kicked around the idea of another picnic shelter or a new shelter.

There was loud interference from Commissioner Lillibridge' connection that made the comments from Commissioner Archibald inaudible.

Commissioner Lowney did not have any further comments other than the committee should come up with a preliminary design and priority list.

PUBLIC HEARING

There were no items for public hearing.

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Karen Hornaday Park Day Use Recommendations

Ms. Engebretsen submitted the following from the Committee and she will review those recommendations and reference the map on the wall.

She noted that the new parking lot is completed and there was a new gently sloping area and the road to the ball fields has been reconstructed to about the fence line.

Day Use Recommendations were as follows:

1. Place topsoil and hydro-seed lawn area, where dirt work was recently completed. May need to be fenced off for a season to keep people off the new lawn until established.
2. Build a New Picnic Shelter north of the existing shelter.
 - large enough for 6 tables
 - Divide the space so there is room for multiple groups
 - Requires a wind break
 - Include a fire pit or fire place
 - Build on a concrete slab
3. Relocate existing picnic shelter
 - move to a location between the two upper fields

- place on a concrete slab and install rain gutters
- replace roof, paint fascia boards
- reconfigure the grill set-up
- 4. Paint restrooms, repair roof as needed, replace fascia boards
- 5. Continue landscaping efforts so the park looks a little more loved
- 6. Continue working on drainage concerns
- 7. Allocate some money for a camp host location
- 8. Clean out ditches along north side of the baseball fields
- 9. Clean out drainage ditch north of playground
- 10. Clean up exterior of the connex between ball fields
- 11. Explore options for Little League storage. At minimum paint concrete block building.

Long term consider finding a new location for Concert on the Lawn so it is not held on a ball field. A lot of work has gone into improving those fields and the event is very hard on the turf. We would never hold a community event of that size on the new track at the high school. Maybe revamped Day Use area would be more appropriate.

Next steps the committee will be working on the area between the playground and the picnic shelter HoPP has stated they have funds for one more piece of equipment; Public Works is arranging for basic drainage surveying to be done; the committee will meet again in December and may have another round of recommendations in time for the January meeting; creating a windbreak within the pavilion; relocating the existing pavilion between the two fields and if the field that is accessed by the Highland Games would be large enough for Concert on the Lawn; using funds to cutting the slope back somewhat making it less steep, this may reduce the area in between the fields; making sure there is enough run-out for the proposed sledding hill; adding the snack shack for discussion in December with the Committee; invite KBBi to inspect the T-Ball field.

Commissioner Lillibridge stated she had to excuse herself from the meeting at 7:20 p.m. She would be back on in 20 minutes.

LOWNEY/BELL - MOVED TO SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE KAREN HORNADAY PARK COMMITTEE IN ROUND ONE.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Webpage Review

Mr. Illg reported that he has been trying to update the pages and make them more informative. He has been trying to add and include pictures and information as suggested at the last meeting by Commissioner Lowney.

Ms. Krause indicated that a Link can be provided on the pages to Map Quest for users to know the location of the parks or trails very simply in response to his statement regarding this aspect.

Mr. Illg further noted that if they have a trail map they could upload would be great to provide an overview of the route.

Commissioner Lowney commented that if they could have a picture and description of what a visitor may find or expect to find if they visited that park or trail would be great especially for out of area visitors.

She noted that further if there is nothing going on for a topic through Community Recreation Program then they should provide a link to community alternatives or should not even have it available.

Overall staff noted that this was a work in progress and they cannot get in the business of advertising a business but they do try to help with Non-Profits. Mr. Illg answered questions from commissioners regarding certain yearly events such as the Spit Run; events relevant to the Parks and Recreation; the website is for city sponsored or city events and meetings; there are other avenues for community events; eliminating blank pages on topics; researching what other municipalities are doing on their websites.

Vice Chair Brann requested this to be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Further discussion ensued on what staff could do with the website and comparing our city website with other local cities on the peninsula. Mr. Illg will check with the City Manager to get some clarification on the boundaries with other entities.

Mr. Illg left the meeting at 7:00 p.m. for another commitment.

C. Budget Update

Ms. Engebretsen provided a Budget update on the status of the recommendations from the Commission. She noted that she provided information on how each Councilmember submits items and deducts from the budget. These forms are included in the packet on the December meeting.

Ms. Engebretsen further noted that Mr. Zak has submitted a recommendation to reinstate the sales tax on food.

Commissioner Lowney recommended that Staff provide the talking points for Commissioner Lillibridge when she goes before Council.

Vice Chair Brann inquired if the Commissioners should offer support or lobby for the additional help. Staff explained that if they approached the request to council with back up support it would provide them the necessary information to make a decision. Ms. Engebretsen also noted that you do not want to recommend taking funding away from another department. Further discussion on the importance of having the funding for a half time person especially since staff will have more duties with the additional restrooms; question whether these restrooms would be open year round; basic services provided by the city; provide how much time and effort by maintenance staff is needed to clean the additional restrooms.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Elections

The Vice Chair asked for guidance from the Clerk on the Election process.

Vice Chair Brann open the floor for nominations of Chair.

Commissioner Bremicker was nominated Commissioner Lowney. Seconded by Commissioner Bell.

There were no further nominations.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Bremicker retained his position as Chair.

The gavel was passed to Commissioner Archibald as the senior commissioner in attendance.

Commissioner Archibald called for nominations for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Lowney nominated Commissioner Brann. Commissioner Bell seconded.

There were no further nominations.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Brann retained is position as Vice Chair.

B. Diamond Creek Plan

This item was postponed until a meeting in 2013.

C. Dog Park

This Item was postponed until the next meeting since Commissioner Lillibridge still had not returned to the meeting.

D. November and December Meetings

There was a brief discussion on the Commissioners attendance for the November meeting and scheduling a Special meeting or worksession for December.

It was agreed that the November 15, 2012 Regular meeting would cancelled now due to lack of a quorum.

After further discussion it was agreed to schedule a Special Meeting on December 20, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. since the Committee will be meeting and if more recommendations are submitted the January commission meeting will not be timely for Council's approval.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Reappointment of Robert Archibald to the Commission
- B. Approved Kachemak Drive Resolution 12-079(S)

Vice Chair Brann inquired if there was any discussion. There was none. If stated that since Commissioner Lillibridge still had not called back in they will put the Dog Park item on the December agenda.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

There was no audience present.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

There were no staff comments.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER *(If one is assigned)*

There was no councilmember present.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Bremicker was not in attendance.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Lowney commented that she visit s the different site and marvels at the work that has been accomplished. She enjoys working with everyone and praised the hardworking and dedicated staff and Commissioners. She provided some additional information also on the work that needs to be done by the community to make it safe and the benefits of the Adopt a Park & Trail program and how it fits in with MAPP. It all just feeds together.

Commissioner Bell provided an update on the MAPP progress and the work that they are doing is already identifying the additional need for Teen activities or related events.

Commissioner Archibald agreed that they have a great small town with lots going on they have the great parks, ball fields, equestrian association and now we're going to have the water trail. Thank you all for the hard work.

Commissioner Brann commented that he appreciates the reports provided by the staff and everyone's hard work; he believes the City does a great job supporting them; he appreciate the multiple levels of interest; he notified that there will be public meetings the week of November 12, 2012 on the Water Trail. He is very excited on the progress with Mariner Park and still would like to see the reduced speed limit and a painted crosswalk.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission Vice Chair Brann adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m. The next Special Meeting is scheduled for December 20, 2012 at 5:30 pm at City Hall Cowles Council Chambers 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

Renee Krause, CMC, Deputy City Clerk I

Approved: _____