

Session 13-01 a Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was called to order on January 17, 2013 at 5:39 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, LILLIBRIDGE

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER BREMICKER (UNEXCUSED)

TELEPHONIC: COMMISSIONERS ARCHIBALD

STAFF: JULIE ENGBRETSSEN, GIS/PLANNING TECHNICIAN  
MIKE ILLG, RECREATION SPECIALIST  
RENEE KRAUSE, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

#### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Vice Chair Brann requested a motion to approve the agenda.

LILLIBRIDGE/LOWNEY -MOVED TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO ADDRESS THE DOG PARK UNDER PENDING BUSINESS ITEM C. AFTER COMMITTEE 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 Special Meeting on December 20, 2012

Vice Chair Brann requested approval of the minutes.

LILLIBRIDGE/BELL - MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

The minutes were approved as amended by consensus

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no comments on the agenda.

#### **RECONSIDERATION**

There were no items for reconsideration.

#### **VISITORS**

Ms. Ginny Espenshade, Homer Prevention Project, thanked the commission for having her on the agenda tonight. Ms. Espenshade provided a brief summary on the creation of the Homer Prevention Project which received a \$1 million dollar grant over three year period and is focused on reduce underage drinking and adult binge drinking problems.

Ms. Espenshade noted that they are in the strategic planning portion, and training, and addressing issues on what drinking does to your health; looking at activities for young people; creating a virtual teen center and having outreach to area businesses and resources; some groups have created dances due to the school reducing dancing; creating a youth council; parks would also focus in the activities but there is a negative aspect to the parks in the area youth as they are places where drugs are done; such ideas are support from area groups such as Rotary or Bay Club. One idea would be the school

district sharing their facilities. Ms. Espenshade also informed the commissioners on an upcoming Youth Court event of Capture the Flag.

Vice Chair Brann thanked her for coming and although the commission may not be able to do anything but individually may have contacts within their peers that can assist their efforts.

There was a brief question and answer period regarding the grant and requirements.

#### **STAFF & COUNCIL/COMMITTEE REPORTS/ AND BOROUGH REPORTS**

##### **A. Community Recreation - Mike Illg**

Mr. Illg commented on receiving an email from an interested party for the camp host position; he announced the Telluride Film Festival on January 24-26, 2013; a Ski Equipment Swap; he has updated the park webpages with maps; there are new classes available upon school district approval; he reported that the outlook is not good for the HERC, there are major problems; if the Fire Marshal issues a waiver of liability the Boys & Girls Club would be able to continue and the Community Recreation programs that are being conducted in the building; he has received comments from members of the HoPP group and he additionally offered comments on the importance and need for a community recreation center.

Vice Chair Brann noted that the preliminary report is available online. He added that if you tried to fix everything that was needed it would be cheaper to build a new building. He commented on fixing up the ADA requirements and the Gym and getting rid of the rest as another avenue of thought.

##### **B. Staff Report - Julie Engebretsen, Planning Technician/GIS**

Ms. Engebretsen stated that the City Council will be talking about the HERC building, looking at the big picture when to you chooses to build a new building if the cost is \$10 million. The Council will also be discussing the Pier 1 parcel. This worksession is on Monday January 21, 2013 at 5:15 p.m.

She also noted that the survey for the park was completed; she has recommended including a landscaping contractor in recommendations for the Day Use areas; her cost will come out of the funding for the Day Use Improvements.

Commissioner Archibald spoke about using caution when spending the funds for the Day Use, he noted that they only have so much money and does not want to spend in on engineering.

Ms. Engebretsen explained that the \$50,000 was used to complete an as-built survey including elevations; Nelson Engineering is completing a survey on the road layout and parking design a basic cost estimates.

She provided a brief summary on the restrooms and Spit Trail design. She noted that it will probably take two years to complete this project due to limitations on the Spit in the summer. She will talk about Mariner Park when they discuss the Budget.

She responded to questions from the commission on the expense of items regarding the HERC building.

##### **C. Parks Maintenance - Angie Otteson**

Ms. Otteson was not in attendance at this meeting.

##### **D. Kachemak Drive Path Committee Report - Dave Brann**

Commissioner Brann provided a brief summary update regarding the survey and a meeting with Gary Nelson.

##### **F. Karen Hornaday Park Committee - Robert Archibald**

Commissioner Archibald reported that the committee discussed the overall park design, proposed dirt work, remove and relocate the existing pavilion and construct a new pavilion. Complete finish work and seeding after all dirt work and construction is complete; discussed proposed trails; application for the Soil Conservation grant; the camp host will be very important this year to keep an eye on things and getting utilities installed for the proposed camp host site.

Commissioner Lowney commented on relocating the existing shelter and the Pavilion Design Task Force will be meeting on January 23, 2013. She reiterated on the decision to wait on the seeding and grassing until after the new pavilion is completed.

Commissioner Archibald noted the funds in the amount of \$9000 that is being held for the construction of the Woodard Creek Trail. He also noted the location and condition of the Snack Shack including one on wheels.

Ms. Engebretsen provided additional information on the engineering and design that the \$50,000 will be used for and where the landscaping designer would come in good use. Ms. Engebretsen fielded additional questions from the commissioners on the engineering.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING**

There were no items for public hearing.

#### **PENDING BUSINESS**

##### **A. Budget Update**

Ms. Engebretsen provided a summary on the approved Budget that affected Parks and Recreation. She noted that the following amounts and purposes were approved. She noted that there were two budgets approved by Council. It is unclear whether the Vault Toilets were funded. The Commissions requested for increased funding was approved. The \$1000 signage amount for Jack Gist Park was approved. She noted that the amount in the depreciation reserves was up to \$100 thousand dollars however they did have approximately \$70,000 in projects, repairs, etc.

Vice Chair Brann queried about the cemetery in regards to cost, maintenance and related expenses. He would like to know how it comes under the Parks & Recreation purview.

Ms. Krause responded to several of his questions regarding cost and maintenance, opening and closing gravesites and related costs. She noted that Dan Gardner handled most issues related to the cemetery.

Mr. Illg also noted that in most cities the cemeteries are under the Parks and Recreation Departments.

Commissioner Lillibridge departed the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Commissioner Lowney inquired on the process for the expenditure of the money for signage at Jack Gist and also impending issues with trails. Ms. Engebretsen explained that process now and how the money will be spent. She further noted that Ms. Otteson will need to be involved in that decision.

Commissioner Lowney clarified that there are two different issues on the table regarding signage one was the overall uniform sign design for City of Homer Parks and Recreation and a sign for Jack Gist signage.

Ms. Engebretsen commented that with the gas line construction she is not sure about trail building until this is completed since they do not want to get in the way of the gas line. She noted that the first year of the gas line they should see downtown completed.

**B. Dog Park Presentation & Discussion - *Continued Postponement from the December 20, 2012 Special Meeting***

Commissioner Lillibridge provided a summary on her proposal to create and establish an enclosed adult supervised Dog Park in the downtown area. She noted that she doesn't see a lot of loose running dogs but has received some positive feedback on creating a dog park. Commissioner Lillibridge stated that it is inexpensive and would not require a lot of effort to create. She noted the further benefits and amenities as follows:

1. Signage and Rules
2. Community Buy In
3. Unleashing Area
4. Agility Section within the Main Area
5. Owners required Clean-up after their Dogs
6. Trash Containers provided
7. Toys such as Frisbees and Balls that are provided by Owners who use the Park
8. Opportunity for Elderly residents who live in the or near the Downtown area to socialize and get out
9. Provides Area for Apartment Dwellers
10. Location Recommended at this time is close to the Vet's Office
11. Central and Visible

Commissioners commented on the proposed location near the HERC building; a suggested alternative location was the Town Center location; the recommended location is very visible to the Public; a large group use the soccer field now and do not clean up after their pets; accessible and ample parking; providing a space that is accessible to the older residents for year round use; research what other communities are doing; exactly how much area is required; the uncertainty of the HERC building or future use of the land; the green space is utilized by the Boys & Girls Club during the summer season; the idea and concept is great but the different location; accessing the other areas around the HERC building.

There was a brief discussion on creating a committee to review and investigate this issue. Vice Chair Brann requested Commissioner Lillibridge research the total land required to adequately house a Dog park; review additional areas around the downtown core; the expense of installing a dog park; talk with the Boys & Girls Club and interested parties. Commissioner Lillibridge can provide the information for the February meeting, she will not be available for discussion during the March meeting and the commission as a group can make a decision at the April meeting.

There was a brief discussion on the viability of the Town Center area. Vice Chair Brann requested staff to provide a map of the area. Mr. Illg will meet with Boys & Girls local Unit Director. Mr. Illg also noted for the record that Ms. Otteson did not think this was the best use for the location.

Additional comments on having a dog park were made by the commissioners on the benefits of a Dog Park for this specific user group and it would benefit a large number of people young and older. It was noted that the area was already heavily used; more information is needed; this proposed dog park is needed downtown not outside or at the beach.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Strategic Planning - Postponed from the December 20, 2012 Special Meeting**

Ms. Engebretsen reviewed the current strategic plan and briefly explained how she normally does this and recommended just focusing on the 1-2 year projects and 3-5 year projects.

The commissioners reviewed and discussed adding projects in detail. The following was agreed upon by consensus of those in attendance:

- Remove Establish a Campground Host at Karen Hornaday Park
- Remove Support Playground Improvement Project at Karen Hornaday Park
- Remove the Mariner Park Driveway Access

- Advocating for Creation of a Parks and Recreation Department
- focus on department only
- need information on what a department comprises
- need information on what other cities have departments and budget, personnel information
- Talking points required for Commissioners to speak to Council with assurance

Add to 1-2 year projects the following:

- Develop a Kayak launch
- Develop and Create a Dog Park
- Diamond Creek Recreational Improvement Plan
  - Next Steps, criteria for trails, parking, trail heads, etc.
- Woodard Creek Trail

Using the information from the survey, with the private funds available and the possible funding from the grant it is believed a trail should be accomplished that would satisfy those interested parties.

Add and/or modify under 3-5 year projects the following:

- Develop and Plan Trails and footpaths in the Town Center area
- Community Recreational Center Development, Research and Planning
- Remove Document current and Historical trails, create pamphlet...this is being done by outside group from the Commission
- Advocacy for a Recreational Service Area - this is addressed by the Borough- staff can provide information for review and discussion at a meeting - Seldovia has recently accomplished this.
- Continuing the Existing Bike Path to the Entrance to Mariner Park
- Mariner Park Site Improvements - leveling the parking, delineation of Day Use Area from Camping Area, define campsites for increased revenue, relocating the kiosk

Under Goals of the Commission add

- Better Public Outreach

Commissioner Lowney inquired about adding a walk-through of town center area in May - June. It may be possible to complete in April as well depending on the weather. Commissioner Archibald advocated for March since he would be able to participate. Vice Chair Brann requested staff to add to the Annual Calendar.

B. Kachemak Drive Path Committee - Postponed from the December 20, 2012 Special Meeting

Vice Chair Brann noted the information provided by Ms. Krause and requested a motion to postpone action on disbanding the Kachemak Drive Path Committee until Chair Bremicker is in attendance. It is assumed that Chair Bremicker will be back for the February meeting.

BELL/LOWNEY - MOVED TO POSTPONE THIS ITEM UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING.

There was no discussion.

The motion was approved by consensus of the Commission.

#### **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

A. Commissioner Attendance at Council Meetings 2013

B. Commission Annual Calendar 2013

There was no further discussion.

**COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

Ginny Espenshade, community member and dog owner commented on the proposed dog park. She spoke in favor of the idea of a dog park. She finds that as she gets older it is her dogs that get her out. She recommended that the commission consider an area near or inclusive of water; not limit it to Adults Only but responsible Dog Owners. The commission should consider the youth and even consider coordinating with the Animal shelter. The other issue of Camp Host is a good idea although some summers she finds that the same type program is used and abused by business owners; she noticed one outfit was from Sterling running their Charter business. She suggested building a cabin and using local people. They could offer it as a Scout build project.

**COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF**

Ms. Engebretsen expressed thanks for a great job.

Ms. Krause expounded on the availability of a student representative on most of the standing Commissions, Committee and Board. She noted the lack of limitations regarding age and if they are 18 or older they can apply to be appointed as a commissioner or board member.

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

There was no councilmember present.

**COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR**

Vice Chair Brann commented on the availability of openings on the Commission and even for a student or youth member. Mr. Brann thanked everyone for their hard work and attending the meeting tonight.

**COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Archibald expressed his thanks and it was a good meeting. His ear was a bit tired. He commented on the Pavilion Design Task Force.

Commissioner Lowney thanked Robert for hanging in there and it was a good meeting. They have a great agenda for 2013. She reminded those present about the meeting on the pavilion design on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January.

Commissioner Bell echoed Ms. Lowney sentiments on a great meeting agenda lineup for 2013 and it was a good meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission Vice Chair Brann adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2013 at 5:30 pm at City Hall Cowles Council Chambers 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

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Renee Krause, CMC, Deputy City Clerk I

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_