

Session 13-06 a Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was called to order on August 15, 2013 at 5:34 pm by Vice Chair Dave Brann at the Homer City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS STEFFY, LOWNEY, BRANN

TELEPHONIC: COMMISSIONER ARCHIBALD, LILLIBRIDGE

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER BREMICKER (UNEXCUSED)

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

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

Vice Chair Brann requested a motion to approve the agenda.

LOWNEY/STEFFY - SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

The 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 June 20, 2013

Vice Chair Brann requested approval of the minutes from June 20, 2013. He noted for the record that there was no meeting for July.

STEFFY/LOWNEY - SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

The minutes were approved by consensus of the Commission.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA** *(Three minute time limit)*

Vice Chair invited any public comments on items on the agenda and noted the three minute time limit.

Jack Wiles, resident, commented on the recently approved resolution regarding planning and spending funding on projects for the HART fund and recommended various trails and thought it was a great opportunity to be at the table and to talk about trail connections, construction, long range planning, completion of trail projects. This is to be done on an annual basis and is a great opportunity to be at the table. He distributed a copy of the resolution.

There were no further comments.

#### **RECONSIDERATION**

There were no items for reconsideration.

#### **VISITORS**

There were no visitors scheduled.

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

### A. Staff Report - Julie Engebretsen

Ms. Engebretsen reported that she wanted to have the commission work on prioritizing trail priorities, next projects over the winter; need to discuss expending the remaining funds in the 2013 budget since these funds do not roll over they need to consider expending funds for the adopt a park/trail program, reimburse for some expenses of the groups that have adopted parks; she also noted the potential vacancies on the commission; welcomed the newest commissioner; she inquired if any commissioners will be present for the October 17, 2013 commission meeting. It was determined that the October meeting would be canceled since there would not be a quorum. Both Robert and Dave would be absent.

Ms. Engebretsen confirmed that the funding sources for the HART Fund are used specifically for construction of new trails. This is not for parks. It may be able to use some funding to rehabilitate a trail though depending on the amount. It could even be used to develop trails located in easements or through privately owned parcels. She also confirmed that the funding designated for previous projects was still available. Ms. Engebretsen responded that they have three years to get the projects completed from the year of the request before the funds revert back to the main HART funds. She provided an example for the commissioners.

Ms. Engebretsen will be submitting later this fall to the state the approved plan regarding Diamond Creek. The city can apply for grants also.

### B. Park Maintenance - Angie Otteson

Ms. Otteson provided a report on the recent worksession with the Public Arts Committee on uniform signage and it was determined that there was enough funding to possibly getting signage for eight parks. The group made a tentative decision on the design and contents to be determined based on the cost from the select company. The following parks were selected to get new or replacement signage:

1. Bayview Park - currently small wood sign
2. Ben Walters Park
3. Bishops Beach - definitely requires a sign
4. End of the Road Park - will need to check if some funding in the construction budget
5. Jeffrey Park - signage is missing
6. Karen Hornaday - Separate design in the future
7. Louie's Lagoon
8. WKFL

Discussion ensued on the directional signage for parks and creative signage; using signage created from recycled plastic materials; City logo on all signage; universal symbols on signage;

Commissioner Lowney commented on the necessity to clear the trails due to the recent events on Poopdeck Trail and recommended putting some of the remaining budget if necessary to hire someone to get that done. Ms. Otteson responded that will be in her budget request is additional personnel with all the added facilities it is getting more difficult to maintain what is needed such as clearing trees from trails.

Ms. Krause explained that no formal approval was needed to expend the funds. Ms. Engebretsen explained that the Commission submitted a request for \$1000 for signage for Jack Gist and Council responded by increasing the annual budget of the commission by \$1000 forever. The commission can use the funding as they see fit.

Commissioner Archibald inquired about the condition of the grass at the Karen Hornaday Park and if additional funding was needed to augment that. Ms. Otteson stated the grass was coming in great and things are really starting to take off and grow. He also fully supported the budget request for additional personnel.

**C. Community Recreation - Mike Illg**

Mr. Illg reported that there has been an increase in indoor activities; increase in participation in pickle ball and basketball and volleyball. The recent water main break has stopped any activities at the HERC. The group working on the new trails map will be starting back up coming this fall. There is a group that is meeting to implement a Recreational Service Area and will be visiting the commission soon. The relationship with the School District is still restrictive however he reported communication seems improved. Mr. Illg reported that he would be applying on behalf of the runners club to have Homer named a runner friendly community. This will bring further national attention to Homer.

Vice Chair Brann commented on the possibility of having a field trip to Sterling to visit the new Community Center and meet with officials there to get some information on how they achieved the funding and construction. He additionally asked if anyone knew if there was anyone participating in Geocaching.

There was no information on geocaching available.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

There were no public hearings scheduled.

**PENDING BUSINESS**

**A. Commissioner Attendance at Council Meetings**

Vice Chair Brann introduced the item for discussion. He provided a brief explanation on the process for new Commissioner Steffy.

Discussion ensued on the commissioner's availability and Commissioner Steffy offered to fill in for the October and December Council meetings, explaining that he should be up to speed and comfortable enough to represent the Commission before council.

August	Commissioner Brann
September	Commissioner Archibald
October	Commissioner Steffy
November	Commissioner Lowney
December	Commissioner Steffy

Vice Chair Brann indicated that all commissioners were welcome to attend the Council meeting in December when the budget is decided.

**B. Changes to Bylaws - Meeting Time Deadlines**

Vice Chair Brann introduced the item for discussion and provided a brief explanation on the previous discussion and reasoning for setting a time limitation.

STEFFY/LOWNEY- MOVED TO AMEND THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION BYLAWS, REGULAR MEETINGS, ADDING ITEM 5. MEETINGS WILL ADJOURN PROMPTLY AT 8:00 P.M. AN EXTENSION IS ALLOWED BY A SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE OF THE COMMISSION; WITH THE PROCEDURE AS FOLLOWS: THE CHAIR WILL ENTERTAIN A MOTION TO EXTEND THE MEETING TO A SPECIFIED TIME. AFTER THE MOTION HAS BEEN SECONDED, THE COMMISSION WILL VOTE YES TO EXTEND THE MEETING UNTIL THE SPECIFIED TIME. A NO VOTE WILL REQUIRE THAT THE CHAIR CONCLUDE THE BUSINESS AT OR BEFORE 8:00 P.M. AND IMMEDIATELY PROCEEDS TO COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE, THE COMMISSION AND ADJOURNMENT.

There was a brief discussion on the proposed process.

VOTE. YES. ARCHIBALD, LOWNEY, STEFFY, BRANN

Motion carried.

#### C. Rescheduling Park Day

Vice Chair Brann introduced the item for discussion.

Discussion was held on having the event and the commissioners being available to organize and run the event. After much discussion it was determined that the commissioners did not have the available time to organize and hold the event this year. It was determined that they would use the funding to have a large thank you advertisement in the local papers thanking all the groups who adopted a park or trail and the volunteers who have worked this past year by name if possible. Staff will work with the Clerk's office to get the advertised thank you completed.

LOWNEY/ARCHIBALD - MOVED TO CANCEL THE ANNUAL PARK DAY

There was no discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

LOWNEY/STEFFY - PUT AN ADVERTISEMENT IN BOTH PAPERS ACKNOWLEDGING THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE ADOPTED PARKS AND/OR TRAILS AND THE MANY VOLUNTEERS AND ALSO INCLUDE RECRUITMENT AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO ADOPT A PARK OR TRAIL.

There was a brief discussion on the number of entities, HoPP, Rotary, Public Works Personnel, and that Ms. Otteson will be able to work with Ms. Krause on getting this advertisement done. Then there was a brief discussion on the cost being around \$225 or more for one paper. This ad will be run in one paper one week then in the other paper the next week.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Mr. Illg recommended posting a copy of the ad in the next community recreation catalog and putting it online. The commissioners agreed by consensus that was a great idea.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### A. Discussion and Status Update on City Wide Projects

1. Road Projects - Intersection of Kachemak Drive and Spit Road/Sterling Hwy.
2. Trails
3. Construction

Vice Chair Brann read the title into the record.

Ms. Engebretsen stated that the State of Alaska Department of Transportation (AKDOT) held a Public open House on state road projects and one of them is moving the crown of the road on Ocean Drive/Sterling Highway and adding two six foot wide shoulders not quite wide enough to call a bike lane but will allow for cyclists on each side of the road.

They (AKDOT) will also be doing the following allowing for funding availability:

1. Putting in a crosswalk at Kachemak Drive and the Spit Road intersection
2. Putting in a crosswalk at where the road curves and the corner of Lake Street
3. Rebuilding Pioneer Avenue 2016

4. Rebuilding Lake Street in 2015-16
5. Sterling Highway and Main Street - reviewing costs on Stoplight versus Round-about
6. Main Street and Pioneer Avenue will be a 4 way stop with crosswalks
7. East End Road (from Redden Marine) to Waterman Rd will be paved with a separated pathway starting next year
8. Paving McNeil Canyon to the Russian Village in the next few years
9. Installation of a blinking red light and 4-way stop with crosswalks at the intersection of Sterling Highway and Milo Fritz/North Fork in Anchor Point.

There will be no trail development on any of these proposed projects with the exception of East End Road.

There was a brief discussion on lowering the speed limit and the crosswalk for the entrance to Mariner Park; establishing crosswalks will mean that the speed limits will be reduced; proposal to install a road and loading/launch dock for Beluga Lake.

Construction for the shelter has been awarded, bids came in much higher. Volunteer labor will be needed on various aspects of the project. There is no project timeline at this time. Rotary will be donating \$4000 for the bench/fire pit area.

A brief discussion on the Old Town project using \$98,000 of HART funding to create Charles Way and install safety features and signage, paving of Bishops Beach parking lot and providing a paved shoulder along Bunnell Avenue; a lot of pedestrian improvements. Staff has showed up for meetings and the city has expended very little staff time.

Commissioners were very supportive of the improvements presented by the Old Towne Group, but were very surprised that it did not get a formal review and final recommendation from the commission. They did not have any problem with the decisions made but expressed concern on what value did the commission have regarding groups being able to come in, make a presentation directly to council and take a piece of the pie. It was expressed that the Commissioners felt they were circumvented.

Staff stated that any group can submit a request for funding since it was Council who gave the final approval and will try to keep the commission abreast of any similar projects or proposals so they can offer their recommendation also.

Concern was expressed regarding how and when funds are dispersed, following the processes for all entities and preserving the "brand".

There was no further discussion.

#### B. Budget 2014

Ms. Engebretsen explained the typical budget processes to the commissioners. She recommended completing the Phase II of the West Homer Trail - Forest Glen to the Middle School. Other than trail funding is recommendation to hire additional parks maintenance personnel.

Vice Chair Brann inquired about requesting funding for Diamond Creek. Ms. Engebretsen explained that project is large enough and the HART funds are available anytime so she recommended setting that as a topic on another agenda. Vice Chair Brann supported asking for additional personnel.

Discussion ensued on the trail around Karen Hornaday Park, status update the trail projects they previously recommended. Commissioner Steffy commented on different routes and connections then the Phase II of the West Homer Trail in relation to comments on safe routes to school and getting the kids off the road.

Staff recommended asking for funding for Forest Glen or waiting to entertain discussion at another meeting. Additionally, Ms. Engebretsen recommended scheduling a discussion on connection trails to schools at another meeting with maps.

Commissioner Archibald asked about requesting funding for improvements to fields and drainage at Jack Gist Park. A brief discussion on drainage issues at Jack Gist Park ensued.

The next item recommended was requesting funding for a Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment in the amount of \$50,000. A brief discussion on the value this assessment to recreation and parks followed.

The commissioners were in consensus on adding this item to their budget requests for 2014.

Vice Chair Brann then brought forth the reminder about the new picnic pavilion for the Per One Parcel to replace the one that was removed this summer. It was noted that the City Manager did comment on having it in his budget earlier this summer but has not heard anything further.

Commissioner Steffy inquired on the funding and personnel issues on the recreation side of things. Mr. Illg related the long standing issues with a permanent place or venue to hold their recreational programs and the problems he encounters with last minute cancellations by the Borough on the ability to use school space. He further stated that there are many times he could use help as the recreation programs are gaining in popularity but he would rather have the Needs Assessment conducted first.

Commissioner Lowney brought up relocation of the farmers market to Town Center and opined that the city would be interested in that issue. She further cited the safety and liability issues regarding parking and access on Ocean Drive.

Ms. Engebretsen noted that the current farmers are not interested in being located on city property. She would favor the idea however the Farmer's Market is not interested since there is no parking, visibility, and access along with how the city would pay for those improvements.

A brief discussion ensued on the Farmer's Market expanding in the existing location and there are not many locations. The biggest attraction is the location. A point was made that there is not the required parking in that location.

There was no further discussion.

Commissioner Lowney wanted to inquire about the funding for signage from the remaining commission funds.

Ms. Engebretsen stated she could provide a summary of the funds available and expended at the next meeting.

#### C. Discussion on Zoning Changes for the Homer Spit to Accommodate Recreation and Park

Vice Chair Brann read the title into the record.

Ms. Krause explained that Commissioner Lillibridge had requested this item on the agenda. She wanted to entertain changing the zoning to Parks and Recreation. Vice Chair Brann noted that at one time parks and recreational areas were in Marine Industrial zoned areas. Ms. Engebretsen stated that currently all areas allow parks and recreation.

There was no further discussion.

#### D. Recruitment Efforts for New Commissioners

Vice Chair Brann read the title into the record. He then stated that if Rotary decides to do something at Ben Walters Park he will ask them to include an item on recruitment. Ms. Engebretsen stated that Commissioner Lillibridge term expires and she has indicated that she will not be renewing. Ms. Krause also confirmed that the Commissioner Bremicker and Brann's terms were also expiring in October.

Commissioner Brann stated he did plan on continuing his time on Commission and would send in his request next month. He will continue unless he gets kicked out.

Ms. Krause confirmed that this commission was allowed up to three non-residents on the commission.

Commissioner Lillibridge called in at 7:14 p.m. Vice Chair Brann asked if there was any problem allowing Commissioner Lillibridge to offer her comments on any topics that were on the agenda tonight.

The Commission agreed by consensus to allow Commissioner Lillibridge to speak.

Commissioner Lillibridge commented on the importance of the Parks and Recreation mandate, that even though they had to cancel Park Day, they should not lose sight of their capital agenda and should provide input to Council.

Ms. Engebretsen responded that the commission did make some recommendations and requests and can provide that information to her. She confirmed that it is a worksession on Saturday and is open to the Public so they commissioners are welcome to attend but they would not be allowed to speak until probably the very end of the meeting and that it was scheduled to be an all-day affair.

There were no further comments.

#### **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

- A. Commissioner Attendance at Council Meetings 2013
- B. Strategic Plan 2013
- C. Commission Annual Calendar
- D. Letter to Airport Manager Re: Authorization to Remove Trees on City Land Adjacent to Airport from City manager Wrede dated July 8, 2013

There was no discussion on the informational materials.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

Jack Wiles, resident, stated that he would like to review the Karen Hornaday Park Master Plan and present a draft outline of priorities to address Phase Two of the Master Plan. He will be gone for a road trip around the Lower 48 that he expects will take approximately one year and will be unable to assist in the next steps of implementing the Master Plan so he would like to work up a draft prioritized recommendation for the committee to present for approval by the full commission. He believed there were many items in the works and also multiple items that needed to be address such as relocating the road and a perimeter trail. He also noted that he would not be available to make contacts with the stakeholders but he would hope that what he leaves with them will bring them to the discussion.

He additionally offered his comments on the needs assessment plan and related costs being as high as \$60,000.

The commission agreed by consensus that this was something that the Karen Hornaday Park Committee should undertake and thanked Mr. Wiles for his offer.

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

Ms. Engebretsen responded to questions regarding the park pavilion project and established timelines for that project. She thanked the commissioners.

Ms. Krause confirmed that the Karen Hornaday Park Committee would meet on September 5, 2013. She explained that they can pick a date or two but let her know so it can be advertised and depending on the number of people the city car may be able to be used also.

Mr. Illg thanked everyone for their time and will concentrate on recruiting a new commissioner and a High School student.

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

There was no councilmember present.

**COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR**

The chair was absent from this meeting.

**COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Lowney commented good meeting Dave, Thanks. Great to have you here Matt; great job everyone, very busy summer and she was actually looking forward to fall and winter right now.

Commissioner Steffy was glad to be here and taking part. Looking forward to working with everyone but feel free to ask him anything or offer any information since they have all been here much longer than him. He is an information junkie so feel free to pass on any pertinent information they feel he should know.

Commissioner Lillibridge stated she was really sorry for missing the major portion of the meeting; she will be out of town August 21 to September 6th; really wants to see Karen Hornaday Park completed and looks forward to the new pavilion going up.

Commissioner Archibald commented that he gets tired of holding up the phone but appreciated the commission for putting up with his participation telephonically. It was a good meeting. He looks forward to meeting Matt.

Commissioner Brann thanked everyone and staff for their hard work and efforts. He also wanted to arrange the visit to the Sterling Community Center and speaking with the group to get some ideas and directions on how Homer can get a facility constructed too. He is looking forward to things being completed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Vice Chair Brann adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m. The next meeting is a Thursday, September 19, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall Cowles Council Chambers 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

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Renee Krause, CMC, Deputy City Clerk I

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