

Session 14-03 a Special Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was called to order on March 6, 2014 at 5:30 pm by Chair Matt Steffy at the Homer City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS STEFFY, LOWNEY, MACCAMPBELL, AND ARCHIBALD

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS LILLIBRIDGE AND BRANN (EXCUSED)

STAFF: WALT WREDE, CITY MANAGER
JULIE ENGBRETSSEN, PLANNING TECHINCIAN
MIKE ILLG, COMMUNITY RECREATION SPECIALIST
RENEE KRAUSE, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

PARC MEMBER: GAIL EDGERLY, HOMER COUNCIL ON THE ARTS & HOMER ARTS AND CULTURE ALLIANCE

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Steffy requested a motion to approve the agenda.

MACCAMPBELL/LOWNEY - MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

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 February 20, 2014

Chair Steffy requested approval of the minutes from the February meeting.

LOWNEY/ARCHIBALD - 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)*

Chair Steffy invited the audience to offer comments on items on the agenda.

There were no comments from the audience present.

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Needs Assessment
1. Introduction of Members
 2. Project Overview
 3. Project Timeline
 4. Q & A/Discussion

Chair Steffy stated they are almost ready to submit the Request for Proposal (RFP) for advertisement. Ms. Engbretsen confirmed it should be finalized for release end of March first of April.

Chair Steffy stated that they have a diverse representation of user groups represented. Some of the groups are as follows:

- Hockey
- Arts
- Snow Machiners

- Community Recreation

Great communication and volunteers giving up 1-2 hours of their time to get this developed. Through this process they have developed a set of goals or outcomes that will be included in the RFP. The main goals they have are as follows:

1. Identify existing and potential resources
2. Survey what programs and facilities are desired by the community
3. Conduct a GAP Analysis between haves and wants
4. Measure community values for art, recreation, and quality of life
5. Funding Mechanisms

Chair Steffy explained the components of the first goal -

- How do people use their spare time?
- Program resources: who offers what, when and how often?
- Identifying locations and facilities used
- How are existing programs funded?
- List the City responsibilities such as parks, maintenance, campgrounds, budget, and income
- identify volunteer efforts

The second goal is where the desires will be spelled out and what the community really wants.

The third will provide future demographic trends, identify any barriers that there may be whether it is time, money, space/facilities, lack of information and the consultant will be asked to provide an analysis on the trends, observations and the patterns of the results

The fourth goal will provide the level of importance that the community places on the availability of these services and tell us if they are essential services that should be provided and available to all income levels.

The last goal will provide some options on how these structures in new programs could be funded.

Chair Steffy asked for questions.

Commissioner Lowney inquired how the information already gathered by MAPP would be used by the Consultant selected. Chair Steffy responded that the language will either reflect require or encourage the use of accumulated information. Ms. Engebretsen stated that the MAPP information covers from Ninilchik south and their survey will cover from Anchor Point to Fritz Creek so while the information is useful not all of it would be pertinent to what the City would like to see. MAPP is one of the 7 represented groups so they are very much involved. Chair Steffy stated they also have software that will tease out certain details so they will be able to provide certain information within specified parameters. He recommended visiting the website, MAPP of the Southern Peninsula.

Commissioner Lowney also had a concern regarding compliance. She wanted to know how they were going to get people to respond to the survey in order for them to get the information they need. Chair Steffy stated that would be the responsibility of the consultant. The committee has discussed what the City could do to offer incentives for responding to the survey. They really hope the people that get paid the big bucks will have the ideas and ways to encourage the greatest number of responses.

Commissioner Lowney still had concerns regarding an educational component that should be conducted before the survey takes place so that the community knows what the goals of the survey are. She stated that it is almost leading the public to respond how they want which is how great and important parks and rec is...she wants to public to understand the magnitude of the survey that it means more than parks and recreation.

Chair Steffy commented that they had many discussions on the value of having cohesive efforts between arts, culture and recreation. He stated that what the community does during the hours you are not at work or at school.

Gail Edgerly responded that the actual naming of the committee and assessment, Parks, Art Recreation and Culture it is in the very wording.

Commissioner Lowney still felt that the very organizations involved should spread word to their members and to start that process right now so they will have a better chance of getting closer to 100% response. She stated that being involved with ReCreate Rec Kate Crowley has been consistently getting the message out to the people involved and that is the only group doing this that she has seen so far. Ms. Edgerly agreed and responded it was a good idea and they will bring it up at the next meeting to discuss out they bring this up to their own organizations.

Chair Steffy also noted that they discussed having a public meeting for the directors or heads of the organizations then a separate public meeting for members of those user groups.

Commissioner Archibald questioned if there will be some way to show what could happen or will result as they progress along in the process.

Chair Steffy stated that they will be bringing this as a monthly item to Council and the commission. He then went on to discuss the previous presentation to Council and what he plans to present at the Council meeting on March 10, 2014.

Chair Steffy further stated that they have a responsibility to articulate what they want to achieve by performing this needs assessment. Not just have someone say they need to eat better and exercise more.

Ms. Edgerly responded that it is important to note that the committee is determined that they are not deciding beforehand what they are getting out of this assessment but stated that it is a tricky balance to tell the public what they will get out it but not tell them what they will get out it. And give them the confidence that they are listening to them.

Further discussion ensued on getting the various groups to talk, the economic value to the community, how the needs assessment will report on the stability of the community, disseminate the information, the respondents are informed not reactionary, the art of asking questions, attitudes toward government and how to ask questions regarding the volatile stuff. There was also a suggestion to bring alternatives if the answer was no. It was noted that would be a discussion for after the needs assessment. Included in the discussion was the difference between essential services and non-essential services. Some may argue that all that is needed is the water/sewer, police and fire but some may argue that they do not use fire or police services so why should they pay for those and on the other spectrum others who would argue that it you could not have a vital, healthy community without good programs for the family. It was noted that need and want are two different languages and it would be a real relevant argument that will be coming up often.

Another aspect regarding relevant was determining the level of funding which the assessment will also flesh out.

Mr. Wrede commented on the work that the committee has accomplished and agreed that some education may be needed on how the arts and culture portion were included in the assessment. He recommended starting with City Council on Monday since the scope has been expanded. He stated that the Commission will need their buy-in. He did agree that they did not want to ask leading questions. He stated that they want Council to see that they reached out to everybody.

Mr. Illg commented on the fact that Community Recreation program offers art programs that includes dance. Recreation goes beyond the standard perception.

Chair Steffy agreed and agreed that it would be a valid point that they are already combining Art and Culture and it is really nothing new that they are undertaking to include. He went on to state that the press release was also included and really was a summary of the project overview. He inquired if there were any additional concerns, comments, or questions.

Ms. Krause confirmed that comments will be able to be made on the Needs Assessment under Public Comments so it was not necessary for folks to stay for the whole meeting.

Chair Steffy reiterated that they are on schedule and he is looking forward to getting the consultants responses to the RFP. In response to Commissioner Archibald it was noted that there were several companies and staff anticipated maybe 3-6 responses however the budget was small so that will put a limit on the responses they receive. There are some things that cost money so that is something that the commission should keep in mind.

Chair Steffy is hoping to have the assessment underway this summer and it should be completed in the first of the year.

Continuing discussion touched on that even though they have residents interested in recreation in the Caribou Mountains, across the bay, etc. It was pointed out that they do not expect to have this project awarded until the end of May and should be out to the residents no later than August. Concern was expressed that the survey be done when Homer residents are home. Further comment was made on the importance of outreach to the small business community to make them understand the economic benefits in supporting the needs assessment and in return the information that the assessment will provide them such as what type of recreational equipment or clothing should be stocked.

Commissioner Archibald expressed concern about when to have representatives from the various organizations attend a meeting. Ms. Engebretsen recommended that August they should expect to see something out August- September. She outlined a schedule that a consultant might make for this needs assessment so that would be the appropriate time.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

There were no comments from the audience.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

There were no comments from staff.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Chair Steffy thanked Julie and Mike for all there invaluable help with PARC.

Commissioner Lowney expressed how valuable she found this meeting and appreciates all their efforts and communicating with them on what the committee has been doing.

Commissioner MacCampbell stated he will miss the next meeting but he appreciated having this meeting to get the heads up on the information and where they were at, he believes he is caught up on where the commission is at now and wishes he was a bit more involved with MAPP with his other job. Thank you. He reported on recent research that indicated if you put the American Flag on signs they were not shot up.

Commissioner Archibald asked if anyone had anything specifically he will bring that before Council. Speed limit reductions, collaboration on signage with Public Arts, plus thanking the volunteer efforts were asked to be reported on at the council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Steffy adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m. The next **REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY MARCH 20, 2014** at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall Cowles Council Chambers 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

Renee Krause, CMC, Deputy City Clerk I

Approved: _____