

Session 15-09 a Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was called to order on May 21, 2015 at 5:35 pm by Chair Matt Steffy at the Cowles Council Chambers City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

**PRESENT:** COMMISSIONERS LOWNEY, STEFFY, BRANN, MACCAMPBELL, LILLIBRIDGE AND ROEDL

**TELEPHONIC:** COMMISSIONER ARCHIBALD

**STAFF:** JULIE ENGBRETSSEN, DEPUTY CITY PLANNER  
RENEE KRAUSE, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

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

Chair Steffy requested a motion to approve the agenda.

MACCAMPBELL/LILLIBRIDGE - MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Commission.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA**

Chair Steffy invited the public to comment and requested them to please sign in they will have 3 minutes. Deputy Clerk Krause explained that only items that are not under Public Hearing may be commented on at this time.

There were no comments from the audience.

Chair Steffy noted that they received several comments from the public that were provided in a supplemental packet for tonight's meeting.

#### **VISITORS**

There were no visitors scheduled for tonight.

#### **RECONSIDERATION**

There were no items for reconsideration.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Minutes for the Special meeting of May 4, 2015

Chair Steffy requested any comments, questions or corrections regarding the items on the consent agenda. Hearing none he requested a motion for adoption of the consent agenda.

LOWNEY/MACCAMPBELL - MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF MAY 4, 2015.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

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

**A. Staff Report - Julie Engebretsen, Deputy City Planner**

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen reviewed her staff report touching on the following items:

- Park Host Position at Karen Hornaday Park
- Council has a worksession scheduled on the draft recommendations for June 8th however 3 council members will not be in attendance so a worksession was also scheduled for the meeting of June 22, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.
- Council has introduced an ordinance to have a ballot measure on the October election to have a Bed Tax that will partially fund parks and recreation.

**B. Parks & Recreation Annual Conference Update - Matt Steffy**

Chair Steffy provided a status update on the planning for the conference that will be held in October for the Parks and Recreation Association. Mike Illg has put in a lot of time into the event since he can work on it throughout the work day. They expect to have the entire event sponsored by vendors so are receiving lots on funding through the vendors and exhibitors. They will be multiple days and most of the sessions are full. Kristin Beal will be the Guest Speaker for the conference and author of Dirt Work.

Chair Steffy called a recess at 5:35 pm IT was called in to fix a technical issue with the mics. The problem was the mic cords were pulled from the main (chair) mic. IT repaired the sound on speakers with the phone. The meeting was called back to order at 5:49 p.m.

**C. Community Recreation Report - Mike Illg**

There was no report submitted for this meeting. Staff was unable to attend.

**D. Parks Report - Angie Otteson**

There was no report submitted for this meeting. Staff was unable to attend.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**A. Proposed Changes to the City of Homer Beach Policy**

Chair Steffy read the title into the record and opened the public hearing for testimony.

Mike Warburton, city resident and owner of the Ocean Shores Motel, expressed concerned about the proposed fire pit to be installed at the end of Crittenden Road noting that there is a parking issue there and that the switchback path is on his property. He commented on the uniqueness of the city owning the beach property. He supported most of the recommendations the commission proposed. He expressed concerns with accessing the beach from that area.

Tom Zitzmann, city resident, stated he has reviewed the 2007 Beach Policy, he supported all of the recommendations made by the commission including placement of more public restrooms. He acknowledged the concerns expressed by Mr. Warburton and agreed that the fire pit placement may not be the best location after his testimony. He supported establishing ordinances to ban burning of driftwood, supported signage, and more public information efforts regarding the rules and property ownership.

Rick Vann, resident, was not in favor of the recommendations and believed that they needed enforcement of the existing regulations. He believed that better signage was needed. He advocated for better police response to calls. Mr. Vann related his efforts to prevent burning in the berm, trash pickup and enforcement of existing rules.

Andrew Tyler Bullock, resident, questioned property owners requiring access to their beach front property. Chair Steffy clarified that they are not prohibiting land owners from accessing their property.

Mr. Bullock commented that it is not a problem with having no rules, but enforcing the rules we do have, there is no signage stating what the rules actually are; enforcement is huge; he supported the beach patrol, did not fully support the fire pits, he supported public information and signage.

Nancy Hillstrand, resident and property owner, supported the ban on vehicles in area 1, she supports the recommendations and believes that there is a “disconnect” when it comes to wildlife and habitat and recreation. She felt it was important that they bring the science together and that people have to make a choice between fish or recreation. She appreciates what the Commissioners have done and supports the more information for the Public.

Mike Kennedy, resident, commented on the bed tax for recreation, wanted to speak on the western beach being beaten by the storms might be something in the tide pools did not think there was much life except in the mean low water, in regards to placing a fire pit at Crittenden there is no parking off Crittenden and to encourage that wouldn't be a good idea. He appreciates the attempt and it is hard to educate people and most are property owners. He questioned whether it was fair allowing property owners special privileges. He did not believe it would fly past the public gating off the beach to vehicle access.

John Bushell, city resident, commented in support of access to the beach for all people, doesn't like the idea of the fire pit on Crittenden believes that it will cause more problems. He doesn't like the idea he will not be able to drive down on the beach.

Sally Oberstein, resident, lives off Crittenden and commented on the lack of parking down there and the personal inconvenience not being able to get to her own residence. She commented on a fire ring being a good idea but not sure about the access there. She advocated for a curfew since they are kept awake frequently by loud noise and profanity quite often down there.

Lori Zitzmann supports all the work the commission has done, reported that on May 20, 2015 a man pulled up with his truck and chainsaw and proceeded to cut up the driftwood right under a nesting eagle and when confronted about being on private property scoffed and told her it wasn't private property and no one owned the beach. She supported a public information program.

Sam Young, resident and property owners on the spit, grew up here, and maintaining the rights to collect coal on the beach with his 4 wheelers, he commented that the majority of the complaints are against existing laws, commented on the rights of property owners versus non-owners. He supported ATV access to the beach and wants to continue that right. He supported the Public Information programs.

Derrick Sylvester, representing the Roehl's, family has lived here since 1943 and is native Alaskan, questioned if firewood would be provided, large logs are collected on the harbor rock wall, his family has always burned the driftwood and has traditionally held a bon fire on Memorial Day, this community was originally a fishing community and burned the driftwood logs as a safety preventative education on the driftwood and berms.

Rika Mouw, resident, commented on the diverse comments received during the process and supports the recommendations that the commission has done using the information and science regarding these issues.

Chair Steffy thanked the public and noted that there will be more discussions when it goes to Council.

## **PENDING BUSINESS**

### **A. Review of Recommendations made in Areas 8A and 8B**

Commissioner Roedl requested a review of the recommendations made for Areas 8A and 8B. He missed the meeting that the commission approved these recommendations and he just wanted to express his concerns that these recommendations will cause parking issues in an area already beset with parking issues.

Commissioner Roedl expressed the following issues if they are closing the beaches to vehicles:

- establishing additional parking
- Constructing a Stairway to offer protection of the bluff
- Did not support allowing the property owners access to the beach
- Addition of more trash receptacles

Suggestions offered by the commission to alleviate the worry of additional parking needs were shared parking with existing businesses that are typically not used on a daily basis the Elks Club, the catholic church, creation of a parking lot along Charles Way, purchasing land, use of the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center parking and accessing the new trail

Commissioner Lillibridge commented on the process, parking, access, and did not support changing their recommendations on the beach based on the testimony received and the information provided. They started this at the request of the community. She supported removing the fire pit at Crittenden.

Commissioner Lillibridge requested that they remove the Crittenden location from the fire pits location.

Commissioner Roedl asked if the commission will be addressing access improvements. Chair Steffy offered that it would be a HART eligible project and is budget related and could be put on the June meeting agenda since they have the budget on the agenda for that meeting.

Commissioner Lowney agreed with Commissioner Roedl on access but was unclear how they would provide that access and they do need to encourage the City to purchase land for the public to access the beach.

Further commission comments on the number of vehicles parked on the beach and the number of people that visit Bishop's Beach including school groups, the access and parking availability at Mariner Park, further support of parking at existing facilities who do not use their parking facilities, purchasing land that would offer access to the beach and parking, possible funding mechanisms to develop accesses and access by property owners to their beach front property.

Discussion ensued regarding allowing private property owner's access to the beach and their property and if the city and the private property owners could work out an agreement, allowing maintenance vehicles, in essence private property owners have their own public beach, the lack of response to calls from property owners.

Chair Steffy asked for additional comments on this item.

Staff stated a motion is required to make any changes at this point it is still just a discussion.

Commissioner Archibald tried to offer comment or question but it was inaudible due to extreme audio feedback.

Commissioner Roedl again tried to advocate the issue regarding vehicles on the beach and access. Chair Steffy responded that the city is providing the access to private land and critical habitat and this issue was brought to them regarding the issues of people on their private property. Commissioner Roedl argued that it was not the city's or Parks and Recreation responsibility to mark private property and keep the public from private property he agreed that the city was providing access but the property owners should call the police to deal with issues on private property.

Commissioner MacCampbell believed that they have come full circle, it has been agreed that they don't have enough education, the signs are poor, and there is not good enough enforcement and if the Police Chief is saying he doesn't have enough officers and the commission is saying they do not have the proper enforcement then City Council may have to hire additional officers and increase taxes to pay for them or Chief Robl is going to have to find a way to deal with the problems. It is just the few that spoil it for the rest. Further they need to work with the property owners until they have better

access and he was agreeing more with Commissioner Roedl that they should work toward closing the beach before they actually close it off.

Commissioner Lillibridge restated her reasons and that she disagreed with Commissioner Roedl.

Commissioner Lowney commented that it was not the issue of punishing someone and those they are growing and dealing with the issues. Vehicles are not benign they do damage to the beach and it is an issue of doing the right thing and are they up to that challenge to do the right thing to protect that resource.

Staff recommended that they decide if they are ready to make a presentation to the City Council or want to postpone the presentation to discuss a phasing plan.

BRANN/ROEDL - MOVED TO PRESENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL ON JUNE 22ND

There was a brief discussion regarding the issues.

Chair Steffy at the request of Commissioner Brann called for a recess at 7:30 p.m. The meeting was called back to order at 7:35 p.m.

VOTE. YES. ROEDL, BRANN, ARCHIBALD, STEFFY, MACCAMPBELL, LOWNEY  
NO. LILLIBRIDGE

Motion carried.

ROEDL/MACCAMPBELL - MOVED TO TABLE THE DISCUSSION UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING.

There was a brief discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Recommendation to Renew the City of Homer Membership in the Alaska Recreation and Parks Association

Chair Steffy read the title into the record and provided a brief explanation on the membership and cost.

BRANN/MACCAMPBELL - MOVED TO RENEW THE CITY OF HOMER MEMBERSHIP TO THE ALASKA RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Steffy inquired if they should have an accounting of the expenditures from the commission funds. Staff responded that they should be okay.

B. Karen Hornaday Park Playground

Chair Steffy read the title into the record and asked if Commissioner Lowney wanted to lead the discussion. Commissioner Lowney requested this item on the agenda as she received an email from Deb Cox regarding the maintenance on the playground equipment.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen stated that this item was requested to be added to the agenda on a Sunday before staff had the appropriate time to respond to the concerns expressed by Ms. Cox. She

further assured the commissioners that Ms. Otteson has contacted her and addressed any and all concerns regarding maintenance of the park equipment. The bigger issue is that the city parks maintenance and coordinating volunteer efforts to keep that stuff up and the funding to do so.

There was a brief discussion on the use of wood chips in the playground.

#### **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

##### **A. Commission Annual Calendar 2015**

Chair Steffy requested the commission to think about the different things that they wanted to budget for in 2016 for the June meeting.

##### **B. Commissioner Attendance at City Council Meetings 2015**

Chair Steffy confirmed that Commissioner Archibald would be attending the May 26th, Commissioner Lillibridge for June 8th, Chair Steffy for June 22nd and Commissioner Roedl for July 20th City Council meetings.

##### **C. Signage for Jack Gist Park, End of the Road Park and WKFL Park**

There was a brief notation on the funding expended and a Thank you to the Public Arts Committee for making the effort of getting signage for their parks.

##### **D. Upcoming Recreation Events - Homer**

Chair Steffy announced the premier event for the summer was the 2 day Kachemak Bay CeltFest June 19-20, 2015 at Karen Hornaday Park. Deputy City Clerk provided a brief description of the various highlights of the planned event.

Commissioner MacCampbell announced the Trails Day scheduled for Saturday, June 6, 2015

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

Tom Zitzman, commented on the process and the efforts of staff and do not believe they get the recognition they deserve. He agrees with the comments that they are the problem of the property owners however they have a joint relationship that is not a good one. The city has not fulfilled their requirements by following their policy. It is not entirely his problem. He also does not have the moxie that other property owners have in asking someone to leave that is on his property like the other gentleman here does. Unfortunately he has to press charges and go to court and do something that frankly he does not want to do. He really wanted to express the appreciation for the city staff and that they deserve a round of applause.

Andrew Tyler Bullock stated isn't the point of buying property the ability to use the property. He questioned the ability of having a bon fire on his property limited by his neighbor controlling his access such as the city shutting down the access. Mr. Bullock questioned how this is the city's problem? He stated that they are having some problems in 8A and 8B may be related to no one knowing the rules. He stated he moved here in 1998 and hadn't heard of problems before this and he only received noticed couple of weeks ago. Mr. Bullock stated he definitely supports more enforcement and closing down Areas 1 and 2 since there is not much use. He thanked the commission for their work.

Mike Kennedy commented that it is a very complex issue on the west side and how the material appears and disappears in one or two tides. If it was static he could understand. He also stated that once camping was banned at Bishop's Beach, which is when the problems started, people head west because they cannot be seen because they are doing things that they want to do get away. Police and the District Attorney do not have the time and resources to go after minor crimes, people burning driftwood, reality check if they think the police will enforce this. He questioned the Critical Habitat Area does have private property owners, City has control of the tides, Fish and Games does carry the ability to write citations Stairs going to the beach doesn't work get destroyed after a short time,

cutting off peoples access is not going to work, sometimes you just got to let the beach will take care of itself.

Nancy Hillstrand, commented on parking laws to either side of the road, lower the speed limit, build more parking around the green space she could not support, she supports the ban on vehicles her mother is 90 and walks 4 miles each day; she recounted how people used to do things. She then commented on Playgrounds - looking a different playgrounds clear cut and area and put in gravel, commented on kids used to play in and the effects of vehicles on the beach. If there is no parking there is no parking go to Islands and Ocean and access the beach by their new boardwalk.

Sam Young commented that it was a slippery slope because you are talking about property owners rights. A select group of people are talking about or commented on overstating the effects of erosion, he offered his own opinions on the effects of nature and human activities on the beach. A large number of people who use the beach are not represented here. He agreed that property owners have rights. People in this state have always shared the resources available.

Derek Sylvester requested a reading of the definition of berm. He stated that his family has historically removed driftwood from the beach in the area of the rock wall. The Roehl's have been here since 1940's and have lit a symbolic fire on the Memorial Day weekend. They have received worldwide recognition for their traditions. He also commented on the recommendations in area 4 and 6. He

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

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen asked if the commission wanted to have her flesh out the ideas, possible solutions and budget items in preparation for the meeting with Council.

Chair Steffy responded positively.

Deputy City Clerk Krause had no comments.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER** *(If one is present)*

There were no council members present.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Lillibridge requested clarification on meeting dates. She will miss the June 18th meeting and will try to attend telephonically.

Commissioner Roedl stated it was an interesting meeting and looks forward the next one.

Commissioner Brann agreed it was a good meeting that pointed out one thing: Education, Education, Education.

Commissioner Archibald commented on the comments received.

Commissioner Lowney commented on the upcoming meeting with Council having the students, trash pickup all around town, needing more garbage cans and discussion on other options for the town.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR**

Chair Steffy thanked the staff that there is a lot more than just these meetings that they are involved with he again thanked the audience for participating and reminded them to talk to their neighbors and submit their comments in writing to the Clerk's Office if they were unable to attend a meeting He thanked the audience for the different viewpoints.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Steffy adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m. The next **REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2015** 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: \_\_\_\_\_