

Session 15-11 a Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was called to order on August 20, 2015 at 5:32 pm by Chair Matt Steffy at the Cowles Council Chambers City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS ARCHIBALD, BRANN, LOWNEY, LILLIBRIDGE, ROEDL, STEFFY

STAFF: JULIE ENGBRETSSEN, DEPUTY CITY PLANNER
MIKE ILLG, COMMUNITY RECREATION
PATRICK LAWRENCE, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
RENEE KRAUSE, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Steffy called for a motion to approve the agenda.

LILLIBRIDGE/BRANN SO MOVED

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Miranda Weiss, city resident, commented on the Boat House Pavilion Project and Plaza on the Homer Spit as a new project to include in the Capital Improvement Plan. She described the project and location for placement where the old Harbormaster's Office currently stands and feels that this project will offer a community as well as welcome place for visitors to congregate, eat lunch, rest and view the harbor happenings. The building will be similar to the one over in Seldovia. Currently they plan to build it similar to the Karen Hornaday Playground project, fundraising through various avenues to raise the funds needed to build the facility.

Ms. Weiss fielded questions from the commission regarding parking spaces, if the Port and Harbor Commission was presented the idea. Assistant City Manager Lawrence commented that City Council could not accept the project unless it was supported by a commission.

VISITORS

Adele Person, Walkability and So Much More

Ms. Person spoke to the commission on the goal of making dedicated efforts to make the city walkable and bikeable. She has spoken to Councilmembers on spending some of the HART funds to accomplish some of those ideas. She explained that she has worked with Deputy City Planner Engebretsen, and community entities, they are working on the areas around West Homer Elementary, Homer Middle School and the Pratt area since these areas have small projects that could be completed and extension of the Soundview sidewalk.

In working with Julie she has pointed out the amounts to ask for from the HART funds; there is a

tremendous amount of support for these project. Ms. Person then described the proposed project for Heath Street with lane narrowing by putting bike lanes on each side of the road. There are funds; there is a plan so it should be simple. By using the funding that is available they can make a very big difference. She plans to encourage Council to expend the HART funds that they have on these projects. Next she spoke to the commission regarding have another symposium in October. She envisions more brass tacks where the community can point out where they want cross walks, bike lanes, etc. She is prepared to put her efforts for a Symposium in October if the Commission is so inclined

Ms. Person then introduced a project idea that Public Arts Committee was developing that if a business would contribute 50% and then it would be matched for Art Led Improvements specifically in the middle where it is a big concrete expanse with dilapidated storefronts and dead buildings. Soldotna has had success with its Storefront Program which is similar in context. Then if it develops a little further it may be a viable project for an ArtPlace Grant which was used for the project in Old Town.

Ms. Person introduced the idea of the Public Arts, and the Parks and Recreation Commission with possibly the Library Advisory Board combining to form a Parks, Art Recreation and Culture Commission. She emphasized the information that the needs assessment provided regarding consolidating the efforts to create a more powerful entity. She explained that the Public Arts Committee basically appoints committees to select art for a project, they have no funding and only meet quarterly so are not as effective as they could be; the Parks and Recreation Commission meets monthly, they have staffing, funding, and the Community Recreation program has art related programs, the Library has individual programs. She further provided other areas that would benefit the city and community overall by joining together.

Commissioner Archibald asked about the idea of purchasing the Jantzee property, Ms. Person was supportive of the idea leading that it would tie in well to connecting trails and believed it would be a wonderful use of HART funds if allowed.

Commissioner Lillibridge appreciated the overall energy and projects and felt it was very ambitious. She believed that it would take the community to make the change due to the economic climate.

Ms. Person responded that would be the idea of combining the efforts of the various groups because of the strength, she has presented the idea to the Public Arts Committee and they were supportive of the idea, the fiscal constraints upon the city now may possibly deactivate or reduce the meetings even more and that some of the benefits or actions are really staff responsibilities.

There was a brief discussion on waiting and having more discussion with all parties involved and that there is plenty of time and no discussion have been had regarding cutting of commissions, committees and or the Board at this time; the State project regarding Pioneer Avenue and the likelihood that will happen in the next 2 or more years; begin discussion on walkability; certain aspects is in the Planning realm and that body can take that on; that it was a good idea to work together and coordinate resources but there would be a hurdle on melding missions, how to address each groups projects and directives in one group effectively and efficiently. There was overall interest in the idea with hesitancy. Further comments on how other communities have libraries included into the Parks and Recreation.

RECONSIDERATION

There were no items for reconsideration.

ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes for the regular meeting of June 18, 2015

Chair Steffy called for a motion to adopt the consent agenda.

BRANN/ARCHIBALD - MOVED TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: 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 commented to the Commission on Ordinance 15-29, which Council plans to vote down at the next Council meeting, she further stated that the Commission will have to contact a Council member to get a resolution before council on the other recommendations that were submitted to Council such as the signage, etc.

Commissioner Lillibridge requested clarification on the recommendations that the Commission worked so hard for so long is dead in the water.

Chair Steffy commented that was what Deputy City Planner Engebretsen was just explaining that they will need to ask a Council member to support a resolution or ordinance to get approved.

The Commission and Staff entertained discussion on the results and discussions that happened at the last Council meeting.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen commented on the status of the city Budget which will entail more cuts and more taxes.

Further comments on the outcome and ensuing comments and emails resulting from the August 10th Council meeting ensued.

B. Parks & Recreation Annual Conference Update – Matt Steffy

Chair Steffy commented that all the commissioners are being drafted to help out at the conference. They are in need of drivers, and hand shakers. It is sort of like jury duty unless you are very ill there is no getting out of it. They are also seeking donations for the Silent Auction, which is a great way to advertise

a business so he asked the commissioners to solicit items from local businesses for the “Swag Bags” also.

Commissioner Lillibridge complimented the work and content of the conference and asked about dropping a donation off with the Clerk.

Chair Steffy did state that a number of participants are coming down the week before and staying after the conference so it means a lot of potential revenue making opportunity.

C. Community Recreation Report – Mike Illg

Recreation Specialist Illg commented on a Did You Know program available for all ARPA members which will be on advocacy training. He will check on the costs and information on the Did You Know programming and distribute it as soon as it is available.

Mr. Illg requested commissioners help on soliciting area businesses for goodies for the “swag bags” backpacks that will be given out at the conference. It was noted that items for 75 plus backpacks are needed.

Mr. Illg reviewed his report summary on the revenue provided by Community Recreation Programs, he would like to attend more meetings but he is kept really busy with all the programs they have which they cannot do without the volunteers that they have, he also requested the Commission to consider adding a Community Recreational Center to the CIP list even with the realization that the project would not be funded, one year it might. He cited the high percentage of responders to the Needs Assessment that is one of the things that is really needed.

He reported that they have the #1 Woman Pickle Ball players in the age bracket and 15 gold medals were brought back to Homer after the competition recently.

There will also be a Clothing Swap in September, but there will be more information posted soon. He provided the information that there is no monetary requirement, bring in one item, take home one item; donations will be accepted, age is so far up to 5 or 6 but may be extended to age 10. This will be the first time “Schwapping” event.

D. Parks Report – Angie Otteson

Ms. Otteson was not in attendance and did not provide a written report. Chair Steffy noted that staff was still very busy since the weather was great.

PUBLIC HEARING

There were no items for public hearing.

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Budget 2016

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen presented a summary of budget requests made for 2015 and denoted

what was funded and not funded. Staff recommendations were to request HART funding for the Soundview sidewalk from east of Forest Glen to Mullikin and stairs down from Main Street & Olson Lane to the beach. A motion will be required for any funding requests.

LOWNEY/STEFFY - MOVED TO REQUEST HART FUNDING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SOUNDVIEW SIDEWALK FROM EAST OF FOREST GLEN TO MULLIKAN, SIGNAGE, CROSSWALK AND STRIPING FUNDS AND THE CLAHOUN LOWER TRAIL MAINTENANCE FUNDS.

There was a brief discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

The commissioners discussed pros and cons for construction of stairs down to the beach at Main Street and Olson Lane, including but not limited to was safety, creation of a park in that area, improving private property without easements, actual costs are known, and that the direction Council will take with the beach policy at this time is unclear and the existing trail provided by the landowner. Staff noted that no work has been done on the viability of a project in that location. There was no further discussion on the stairs project.

LOWNEY/LILLIBRIDGE - MOVE TO REQUEST \$5, 000 FROM HART FUNDS FOR PRELIMINARY INSTALLATION OF WOODARD CREEK TRAIL IN KAREN HORNADAY PARK.

There was a brief discussion on matching funds and to contact the group and a councilmember for support and have a solid amount to request since there is a funding source.

Commissioner Lowney and Lillibridge pulled the motion from the table to be resubmitted at the October meeting so that a more fleshed out project an amount can be requested at the advice of staff.

Chair Steffy called for a 5 minutes recess at 7:15 p.m. The meeting was called back to order at

B. Capital Improvement Plan Recommendations

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen provided a summary and the changes. The Commission is requested to submit 2 top projects. There are two new projects one is the Boat House Pavilion on the Homer Spit and the Community Recreation Center, which can be drafted up quickly for presentation. Staff provided some information that the Needs Assessment provided on a Community Recreation Center.

BRANN/LILLIBRIDGE - MOVED TO SUPPORT THE SCOPING AND RECOGNISANCE PROJECT FOR A COMMUNITY RECREATION MULTIUSE FACILITY.

There was a brief discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Lillibridge commented on the benefits of supporting the Boat House Project and questioned if it was now or never decision. Staff provided some input that it is best to have a commission support a project, but not to feel pressured to include it, noting that it is not required to be one of this commission's top two projects either.

Commissioner Brann advocated adding the project fearing that if that parcel is used for parking that is all it will be used for in the future. Each commissioner offered their opinions on the project.

STEFFY/BRANN - MOVED TO INCLUDE THE BOAT HOUSE PAVILION PROJECT AS ONE OF THE COMMISSION'S TOP TWO PROJECTS.

Discussion on having this project as a top commission project was not fully supported by the whole of the commission, it was opined that they have consistently supported certain projects each year and to drop those for this project was at the recommendation of staff that they can submit a recommendation supporting the addition of the project a new motion was offered as follows:

STEFFY/ARCHIBALD – MOVED THAT THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION SUPPORTS THE INCLUSION OF THE BOAT HOUSE PAVILION AND PLAZA PROJECT IN THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

ARCHIBALD/LOWNEY – MOVED TO HAVE KAREN HORNADAY PARK PHASE II AS ONE OF THEIR TOP PROJECTS FOR THE CIP LIST.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

LOWNEY/LILLIBRIDGE – MOVED TO ADD THE BAYVIEW PARK RESTORATION PROJECT AS ONE OF THE TOP PROJECTS OF THE COMMISSION.

There was a brief discussion on the amount of work needed to complete this project.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

There was no further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Update on the Strategic Plan with Needs Assessment Information

Chair Steffy introduced the item and asked for Staff to provide a brief overview. Deputy City Planner Engebretsen provided comment on the commission's role in supporting and recommending projects. Additional items discussed were:

- A PARC related speaker at each future meeting to provide a synopsis to the commission on the projects that the community is working on so they can determine how to lend support and not duplicate efforts.
- This will facilitate taking advantage of opportunities and not losing them
- Maintaining the current amount of funding for parks and community recreation during this budget process is the most pressing issue.
- Amending the bylaws to return to having the chair approve or deny agenda items to facilitate staff support by providing succinct direction for the commission to focus. If a commissioner wants an item on the agenda, background material should be provided, why the commissioner is requesting the item on the agenda and the action they would like the commission to take on the item, such as a policy or budget recommendation to Council. Topics that are not defined should not be presented to the commission for consideration. There should be community buy-in and a group who can bring the idea to fruition.

Ms. Engebretsen would like to review the Strategic Plan at the next meeting since right now it is full of construction projects but in this era of "no money" they need to work in some of the policy ideas about how to move forward, how they will consolidate leadership or support other organizations that are providing the services, how to keep the restrooms they have open, she believes that they are going to have more conversation and it will evolve dramatically this fall.

Chair Steffy stated that the Needs Assessment will become more of a toolkit as they progress; the Commission wanted the Assessment and should use it. The PARC group will be changing somewhat since the City has expressed that they do not wish to be the lead in that due to existing cuts in departments and more possible. He spoke about the benefits of having a speaker at meetings to talk about projects.

Commissioner Lillibridge commented on using the assessment since most items are data driven and to keep the emotion out of the discussion and always bring it back to the data that is in the document. She stated that the Assessment can be used as a foundation document.

Commissioner Lowney recommended striking the items that have been completed, changing things from the 3-5 year and 1-2 year. Chair Steffy advocated for postponing that action to the September meeting due to the late hour. Staff agreed with that action since that is one of the changes that are required.

B. Woodard Creek Property Acquisition

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen explained that this project or idea has not been before the City Council or City Manager. She further explained that the HART funds have not been used to purchase property to be owned by another entity. Commissioner Archibald elaborated on the idea of purchasing the property

to daylight the Woodard Creek and provides trailhead for the trail system and offers the opportunity for connector route to Greatland Trail and the Middle School Trail. Staff requested the Commission to discuss the following:

Should HART funds be available for other organizations to purchase land for trail related activities within the city or on city lands outside the city?

Does the commission support using HART funds for the purchase of this specific property?

The Commissioners held a brief discussion on purchasing the parcel, other organizations that may be interested in purchasing the property but do not have funding, the City is currently putting all vacant parcels up for sale to get them back on the tax rolls; there may be other alternatives such as submitting a cost share proposal.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Commission Annual Calendar 2015
- B. Commissioner Attendance at City Council Meetings 2015

Chair Steffy noted that he plans to attend the next Council meeting. The commissioners joked about showing up in force with big guys with ear pieces. Commissioner Archibald wanted to pass on attending the meeting on Monday and Commissioner Lillibridge stated she would attend as her last act as a commissioner.

Chair Steffy will attend the September 14th and act as alternate for November and December meetings. Commissioner Brann will attend the October 12th and December 14th meeting. Commissioner Lowney will attend the November 23rd meeting.

- C. Fall & Winter Community Recreation Catalog

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Tom Zitzman, city resident, commented that there are many things he was unaware of that you can actually learn about by attending a meeting. He added that he believed they could find some wealthy Homer residents, and there are a lot of them, that would be interested in buying that land and donating it to the city for what they want to do, it would be really feasible to do as a charitable donation; he supported the Harbor Pavilion Project and believed it would be an asset to the Harbor and a place that people could enjoy the views of the Harbor. He congratulated Commissioners on receiving the award on the Water Trail; and then commented on the actions and comments at the Council meeting regarding Bishops Beach and the unprofessional-like comments from Council member Burgess that were directed to Mr. Steffy regarding his "rabid fervor". He hoped to never see that unprofessionalism at another Council meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen wished happy trails and happy retirement to Commissioner Lillibridge and MacCampbell. She further commented that what makes Homer, Homer is that typically they fight their way to consensus and it is not very productive most times; the community has changed some since the box store days, which was very contentious and took forever, and they did not want to talk about

box stores anymore, but she appreciates when people are constructive in their comments and looking for solutions and that those attribute will become more important as they talk about budget in the future; some days are more difficult than others in City Hall.

Recreation Specialist Illg thanked Commissioners Lillibridge and MacCampbell for their service; he spoke about needing sponsors to print the Trails Map again and the Community Recreation Catalogs has generated over \$1600.00 in advertising sponsors so the program is trying to be fiscally responsible as well.

Deputy City Clerk Krause commented on the idea of combining the commissions, committees and Board since there may be a possibility her position will be cut to part-time this will mean that there will not be the staff needed for meetings.

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

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Lillibridge handed in her resignation to the Clerk and commented that she will be relocating to Washington to be closer to her grandchildren, one being only 10 days old. So this will be her last meeting. She has enjoyed her tenure and working on the many projects. She will miss Homer but cannot miss the opportunity to be involved with her grandchildren as they grow up. She has learned so much about the Public process and was very thankful for all the support provided Renee, Julie and Mike. She enjoyed being able to say that she was a Commissioner! She wishes every one well and hopes that Arlington is not in the same fiscally constrained atmosphere as Homer.

Commissioner Roedl commented that it was a great working with everyone.

Commissioner Brann wanted to express his appreciation for the staff and that they could not do what they do with them. He wished the departing Commissioners well and thanked them for their service. Commissioner Brann then shared his thoughts he shared with the City Administrator regarding people do not like being taxed or told they “have to” pay so he suggested a voluntary view tax and that if people that enjoy their view they could pay a voluntary tax and maybe they will get enough to help get them through.

Commissioner Archibald thanked Trisha and wished her well and wherever Roger was hoped he was having fun too. He wanted to thank Renee and Julie as he was not sure they could manage without them and everything they do to keep them on track.

Commissioner Lowney thanked Trisha and it was fun, she was excited for Trisha and knew she was ready. Enjoy. She commented that Roger was at Salmonfest and he was having a great time, definitely enjoying his retirement. Commissioner Lowney commented on Ms. Person saying that they need to be creative with funding and not cut staff and positions; Commissioner Lowney agreed and she stated that if there was anything that they could do to help to let them know and she would gladly talk at Alice’s if it was easier; she spoke to Julie saying that they call her and Julie can turn that back to the commissioners and ask them to do tasks, just let them know she would be more than happy to help out if she can. She has pretty much attended every Council meetings since the beach policy went through and her greatest discouragement with the whole process is the direction that the conversation has gone and the

language to define it; she is not sure how to turn it around; and the language, the terms get thrown out and it creates a divide that cannot seem to be crossed. How do they get through this, she is not sure. She encourages the commission to have a second symposium and believes that it would be very beneficial to do this during the budget period. She will be gone for the September meeting in fact she leaves in a week and will be gone for a month to Spain.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Steffy thanked Tricia for all her time and efforts on the commission. He is anxious to see who fills the two positions on the commission. He also encouraged a youth to fill the student chair and it was noted that if they were 18 they would actually be able to vote and be a part of the full commission. He encouraged all the commissioners to write to the City Manager to share how staff enhances the commission; that this commission relies heavily on the expertise and assistance to make this commission productive and efficient. He will see everyone at the meeting on Monday; don't forget your tomato shields and dark glasses.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Steffy adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m. The next **REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2015** at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall Cowles Council Chambers 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

Renee Krause, CMC, Deputy City Clerk

Approved: _____