



# City of Homer

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## Memorandum

### Agenda Changes/Supplemental Packet

TO: PARKS, ART, RECREATION & CULTURE ADVISORY COMMISSION  
FROM: RENEE KRAUSE, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II  
DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2023  
SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL

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#### **NEW BUSINESS**

B. Amending Homer City Code to Create Departments

Public Comments received on Ordinance 23-49 since introduction by Council.

**pg 2-7**

Public Comments received since Agenda published.

**pgs 8-9**

**From:** [janie leask](#)  
**To:** [Mayor Email](#); [Rachel Lord](#); [Donna Aderhold](#); [Jason Davis](#); [Shelly Erickson](#); [Caroline Venuti](#); [Storm Hansen-Cavasos](#); [Department Clerk](#)  
**Cc:** [Holly Van Pelt](#); [Jim Lavrakas](#); [Paul Allan](#); [Holland Hill](#); [Kathy Vogl](#); [Shan Burson](#); [Jeff Sharp](#); [Janie Leask](#); [Christopher Mullikin](#); [Jeanne Parker](#); [Lawrence Radcliffe](#); [Malcolm Milne](#); [Eric Tutt](#); [Ian Reid](#); [Mike Flora](#); [Dick Dunn](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comments - Monday's Council Meeting  
**Date:** Sunday, September 24, 2023 12:50:21 PM

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### **To Mayor Castner and members of the Homer City Council**

I'm not able to personally attend Monday's meetings but did want to submit my comments on two items of concern - my neverending quest for a separate department for Parks & Community Recreation, and the future of a multi-purpose recreation center.

Reorganization/Consolidation of Departments.

The reorganization of City Departments is on the agenda for your work session. I reviewed the slides and explanation of the proposed reorganization, specifically moving Community Recreation under Community Development. I also read with interest the comments re: the merger of the Library with IT in which the City Manager stated "the proposal created some controversy and resistance from the Library Advisory Board." Subsequently, the proposed merger was abandoned. Although not as broad in scope as the Library Board, the Pickleball Club is not in support of the proposed merger of Community Recreation into Community Development. What will it take for us to get the attention and ear of the City Manager so that our voice also carries weight?

*(yes, we're willing to be part of a conversation of a larger "Friends of Community Recreation" group . . . see my comments below).*

In his overview and the slides, the City Manager made several statements:

\* that this reorganization "will help focus development in Homer, while also ensuring quality-of-life programming is integrated into our community's growth."

\* that "Community Recreation will benefit from having a dedicated director and additional staff support from the other divisions within Community Development."

\* that "In the long run, I could see this Department (Community Development) split into a Development Services and a Parks & Recreation Department, however, I strongly believe that move would be premature if it happened today."

I don't see a benefit for moving Community Recreation under Community Development and have yet to hear WHY it's not

possible to establish a separate Parks & Recreation Department now. I've heard the "timing" isn't right or that "this is the first step" and now I read that it's "premature" but haven't yet heard the reason WHY. Is it the cost of creating a new department? According to the City Manager, this entire reorganization will cost \$3,500. Community Recreation already has a staff and a Board (PARCAC) - what other expenses would it take?

As directed by Resolution 23-047(S), the staff is charged with developing a 10-year plan for the potential growth and development of a Parks & Rec Department. This plan is due back to the Council in November once it is reviewed by PARCAC. Will this be when this happens - less than two months away? If so, why not now? If not then, when?

As you know, and as I've stated in prior comments, the majority (68%+) of Alaskan communities our size and larger have a dedicated Parks & Recreation department. And, as I've stated before, I feel Community Recreation is being buried with this new reorganization.

Community Recreation is growing (and not just the pickleball program). Please explain just HOW this robust program will receive benefits from this reorganization when it seems like we're currently fighting to get city support every step of the way.

#### **The HERC/New City Recreation Center.**

As discussions move forward regarding a new multipurpose recreation center, there are several issues regarding the potential use of the existing site that need to be addressed - i.e. the contaminants in the HERC, costs/options for demolishing all or a portion of the existing building, and/or building a new facility in a new location. I know you have some answers regarding the level of contaminants.

What has the City done to explore using portions of the existing building, mitigating those portions that can be saved, demolishing parts that can't be, and building an addition onto the existing building vs. erecting a new building at a new location? Maybe it could be an addition that would be a cost-efficient metal building. But why not use the expertise and knowledge of user groups and community residents at the front end of this process. Why not invite them to the table?

Absolutely we'd love to have our dream building, but if we can't then use us to help you design/re-design a building that works. Maybe even one that could be added onto in the future. The existing HERC site truly is the gateway to Homer and is an important statement to residents and visitors alike that community recreation matters.

Furthermore, as a community with limited resources, let's figure out how our recreational needs can be maximized through the use of ALL available facilities including schools, existing buildings, and organizations like the SPARC.

I've heard from several Council members who've stated it would be helpful if there was an official "Friends of Community Recreation" formed. I agree. I see that as a necessary step toward having a multipurpose community center on the 2024 ballot. The Homer Pickleball Club would certainly be a part of any such group. I would love to have another meeting of the user groups to talk about this and any ideas groups may have regarding the existing structure.

Respectfully submitted,

Janie Leask  
Homer Resident  
President, Homer Pickleball Club  
Homer USA Pickleball Ambassador

**From:** [Jim Lavrakas](#)  
**To:** [Mayor Email](#); [Rachel Lord](#); [Donna Aderhold](#); [Jason Davis](#); [Shelly Erickson](#); [Caroline Venuti](#); [Storm Hansen-Cavasos](#); [Department Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Public comments for Monday council meeting  
**Date:** Sunday, September 24, 2023 1:45:34 PM

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Members,

I would like to second the comments made by Janie Leask regarding the future of Homer Community Recreation, a new Community Rec center, and the offer to join in the discussion concerning these issues.

Thanks.

+++++

Jim Lavrakas  
Homer, AK 99603  
907-299-8393 / cell

**From:** [mary.griswold](#)  
**To:** [Rachel Lord](#); [Caroline Venuti](#); [Donna Aderhold](#); [Storm Hansen-Cavasos](#); [Mayor Email](#); [Jason Davis](#); [Shelly Erickson](#)  
**Cc:** [Robert Dumouchel](#)  
**Subject:** Ord 23-49 New Departments  
**Date:** Thursday, October 5, 2023 3:38:40 PM

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I support creation of the IT and Library Departments as proposed in the ordinance. I support a new department called Planning and Community Development to be headed by a Planning Director. Bringing together planning, economic development, building codes and enforcement, and community recreation under one department as proposed by the City Manager is a good idea, but the department should be managed by a highly qualified Planning Director, not a Director of Community Development.

The Planning Director should meet certain education and performance standards similar to the Library Director meeting standards relevant to that department. Planning for successful community development includes some very technical procedures and an extensive knowledge base not necessarily required for more general oversight of economic and recreational development. Planning and a Planning Director need to be at the apex of this department.

**From:** [Jeanne Parker](#)  
**To:** [Department Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Community Recreation  
**Date:** Monday, October 9, 2023 1:01:56 PM

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To the City Council,

I am concerned with having Community Recreation combined into a bigger department encompassing a wider variety of interests. Community Recreation is very important, and I believe that it needs to be its own department, Parks and Recreation. Recreation in a community is vitally important. Do not delete it's importance by combining it with plans that may have conflicting priorities.

Thank you,

Jeanne Parker

Member, Homer Pickleball Club

Teacher for youth and Adult Pickleball

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Homer, AK 99603  
[rex.murphy.ak@gmail.com](mailto:rex.murphy.ak@gmail.com)

RE: Proposed Ordinance 23-49, to create a Department of Community Development and include Community Recreation under its umbrella.

Dear Members of the City Council, Mayor, City Manager and interested parties,

While I am not opposed to the idea of a Community Development Department, I am not in favor of including Community Recreation (CR) within the new department. All of the city departments, including CR interact with one another; rearranging the org chart to isolate CR away from its sister departments is not going to change the fact that CR still interacts with the other departments. Pooling CR in with Planning, Economic Development and proposed Building and Code Enforcement makes no sense at all. What does CR have to do with any of the proposed sister organizations? How would having a director who only spends part of his or her time working on CR further the long-term goals of Community Recreation? I suggest that Community Recreation should be a standalone department at the same organizational level as Admin, Finance, Police, Fire, Public Works and Port and Harbor.

Another way to look at inclusion of CR within Community Development is to ask yourselves what is the problem that this proposal solves? I suggest there isn't one.

Regards,

Rex Murphy



**From:** [Kathy Hill](#)  
**To:** [Renee Krause](#)  
**Subject:** PARCAC  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 15, 2023 6:31:35 PM

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Renee - please distribute to the PARCAC Commissioners and Mike. Many thanks!

PARCAC Commissioners -

I wish to comment on the absorption of Community Recreation into the proposed Community Development Department. I oppose this. I see that these two entities have different missions. I would assume that Community Development is the forward-thinking Department. I would think that growth, both economic and demographic, would be emphasized. Whereas, I think Community Recreation emphasizes quality of life for all ages and abilities. Community Recreation features play, learning experiences, exploration, etc.

For a community that touts itself as a recreation center, then make it one...give it is due credibility. It can easily be a stand-alone Department. In the best of worlds, it would be joined up with Parks.

It amazes me that it is to be tucked into Community Development, when at the present time, it is a part of PARCAC, one of the Council's important commissions.

Again, I favor Community Recreation being merged with Parks to form its own Department.

Thank you for your attention to the above.

Kathy Hill  
City resident

Sent from my iPad