

Session 14-02 a Regular Meeting of the Vessel Haul Out Task Force was called to order by Chair Howard at 3:35 p.m. on March 17, 2014 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: Howard, Pate, Stockburger, Carroll, Hawkins

ABSENT: Hoppe (excused)

STAFF: Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Howard called for a motion to approve the agenda.

LEWIS/STOCKBURGER SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

No public comments.

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF SYNOPSIS

A. March 3, 2014 Meeting Synopsis

Chair Howard called for a motion to approve the meeting synopsis.

LEWIS/PATE SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

VISITORS

STAFF AND COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOROUGH REPORTS

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of Large Vessel Haul-Out Facility - Potential Future Facility & Questionnaire

Harbormaster Hawkins reviewed that the purpose of the questionnaire is finding out what the market is for this endeavor and help justify it. He commented about a Town Hall meeting he attended where Senator Micciche commented about marine trades and his concern of duplication of efforts between different ports. Mr. Hawkins referenced the AIS vessel tracking system through the Marine Exchange of Alaska that he had up on the video monitors. He explained that it shows the cargo and tank ships and also fishing vessels that are in the Gulf of Alaska. The screen view can be adjusted to areas and it gives a snapshot of the market they could be servicing. The point of looking at this is that it isn't so much of an issue of duplicating efforts, but expanding services because Seward and Kodiak can only serve a limited amount of vessels at any given time. It is a fleet service and we have a fleet that wants to be able to do their work here in Homer, as well as others who may want to come here.

The group reviewed the letter to vessel owners and the questionnaire. Suggestions included:

- Adding pleasure boats under vessel type.
- Include a self-addressed stamped envelope for easy returning.
- Set up a .pdf form fill page for easy online submittal.
- Have it available on the harbor website.
- Contact processors as they have changing fleets all the time.

Regarding who will get it, Harbormaster Hawkins, explained that the harbor has a database with over 300 customers who have used the harbor. It could be advertised in a couple of publications as well. They could be sent by mail and by email. Advertisements in other publications could direct potential users to the online survey.

There was discussion of the length of time the group would consider taking feedback. One line of thought was to continue to receive feedback for as long as the group meets. Another was to give it as long as 60 days and work with the information from that point.

It was further suggested that the the line in the letter that refers to the beach landing/uplands area, located next to the Fishing Lagoon, available seasonally November through April be removed. It is confusing in that it might give the impression it's only be available seasonally. It should clarify the intent that the vessel-haul out will be available year round.

There was other discussion relating to locations and the activity at the seasonal barge haul out area near the fishing lagoon.

B. Ports and Harbors Create Economic Opportunity – A presentation from the 2010 AAHPA Conference in Wrangell, AK

Harbormaster Hawkins explained that this information is a published white paper that he received from Northern Economics. It was prepared for Wrangell at a time when they needed to find an economically

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viable solution of a marine haul out and boat repair facility when the timber industry closed down. He thought the information would work well for this group.

Discussion ensued relating to general funding concepts, like matching bonding money with private money and state business loan funding. Tax incentives are a tool that's widely used in other states for bringing in industry, but unfortunately that isn't something Homer can do at this time.

A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) seems like a good opportunity, but care needs to be taken that the public's facility and property are protected. This is a method that has been used elsewhere. The Harbor Enterprise would bring a lot to the project as providing space for the facility is a big thing. It could be that the City's participation would be to only provide the property, in an effort not to encumber the tax payers or harbor users. Private enterprise or a Co-op could come in with a long term lease arrangement and provide the service. There was brief discussion on ways to incentivize to help it be feasible and ways the city could participate in the process. Point was raised that it is competitive and the city has the opportunity to charge too much and kill it, or raising rates to the private people that cause business to go away, it has to stay competitive.

Chair Howard noted that the layout of this presentation will help guide them in preparing their report back to Council. She asked Harbormaster Hawkins if he would get some feedback from the Harbormaster in Wrangell about how they got it done. She would like something that helps them see how they used this presentation, how accurate was the assessment, where are they now, and what would they do differently, and those key types of questions. She asked that it be on the next agenda for the Friday, March 28th meeting.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Bill Choate, city resident, disagreed with the Harbormasters earlier comment that this won't take business from other facilities. He believes that it will as the boats that will come here are using those other facilities now. He also commented to the capacity of the yards in Seward and Kodiak and that there is only so much business to go around. As far as private industry running the facility, he thinks Pruitt runs Seward Dry Dock, so that is a place where some research could be done. He is curious what is meant about building an industry because we already have industry here. The bottom line is that he would use it if it were here.

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

None

COMMENTS OF THE TASK FORCE

Harbormaster Hawkins reviewed his to do list including talking to the Wrangell Harbormaster for notes and possible face time, amend the letter to clarify the barge haul out area, return envelope and form fill document on line, avenues for advertising, and include fleet managers in the mailouts.

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Mr. Pate commented that this is the easiest task force, with Bryan doing all the work. He thinks the cover letter and questionnaire are great and he is anxious for responses. He is glad that the group is open minded about ideas on how to make this work.

Mr. Carroll said it is important to keep Earl Brock in the loop and reminded that they will be hearing from him on April 7th. He will continue to try to get information from Toledo, Oregon on their facility.

Mr. Stockburger commented that a next step is asking people if they are interested in using this but at some point we need to collect data on what kind of income to expect.

Mr. Lewis had no comment.

Chair Howard commented it was a good meeting and we will meet again on Friday, March 28th.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Task Force the meeting adjourned at 4:41 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 28, 2014 at 3:30 p.m. at the City Hall Conference Room located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____