

1. CALL TO ORDER, 5:30 P.M.

Session 24-03, a Regular Meeting of the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission was called to order by Acting Chair Mark Zeiset at 5:30 p.m. on April 24, 2024 in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS FRIEND, PITZMAN, VELSKO, ZEISET & STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER SHAVELSON (EXCUSED) & COMMISSIONER SIEKANIEC

CONSULTING: PORT DIRECTOR HAWKINS, PORT ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISOR WOODRUFF

STAFF: PORT ADMIN ASSISTANT S. JACOBSEN

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Pitzman requested a motion and a second to approve the agenda as amended.

PITZMAN/FRIEND MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA (3 minute time limit)

William Roth noted that he attended the previous meeting. A young fisherman who has owned his boat for 10 years, he reflected on how difficult it was starting as a fisherman. Roth said that enforcing the skiff policy will adversely affect new and young fishermen. Roth approximated seiner's operating expenses are around \$150,000 to \$200,000 a year and that of the approximate 131 seiners in Homer that they provide approximately 26 million dollars a year of expenses to Homer businesses.

Megan Corazza, a local seiner since 2000, agreed with William Roth's comments. Corazza shares that she feels unwelcome in the Homer Harbor as it is expensive. Corazza felt that the fleet should not be charged the work seine skiff fee as it would be a nice gesture and a nicer environment without it. Corazza stated that she opposes the extra skiff tariff. Thanked commission members for their time serving on the board.

Gus Cotton, owner of a seiner and an operator in marine trades, shares that the Homer Harbor lacks amenities such as showers, laundry, or parking.

Lillian Connor, Homer local and commercial fisherman is now fishing out of Kodiak. Connor states that fisheries are facing a big shift and requested that Homer Harbor maintain the work skiff exemption to provide relief to fishermen and stand in solidarity with those who contribute to Alaska and its way of life. Connor thanked the commission.

Pete Alexson, owner of a seiner and seine skiff in Homer Harbor. Alexson supported Megan Corazza's comments that he does not believe he has been charged an extra fee for his seine skiff in other harbors in Alaska.

Scott Adams shares that he researched where the funds originated for the Fishing Hole and stated that he was unable to find the lot division that is shared in the agenda packet. Adams requested the commission to find where the money came from for the Fishing Hole. Adams also shared that he shared his opposition of the work skiff policy in October. Adams shared that he believes the pipes on the steel grid look great. He also questioned the commission if there has been a study or survey of the steel grid. Lastly, Adams requested that he would like to see American flags hung at the Harbormaster Office.

Evan Moore, owner of a seiner, reiterates William Ross's comment that Moore has spent over \$100,000 in repairs. He shares that the removal of the work seine skiff policy would be a financial burden for him. Moore shares that coming from Valdez, there is no extra charge for seine skiffs. Moore thanked the commission.

Brooke shared that she is the seine vessel's other owner with Mr. Cotten. Brooke shares that she feels the Homer Harbor is expensive and enjoys the tourists and community before fishing season. Brooke states that they try to remain out of the harbor due to high costs, as well as dry docking as it is inconvenient. She indicates she opposes the change in the work seine skiff policy. Brooke thanked the commission.

Garrity Fabich a Homer local that has been seining for the last 10 years and recently purchased his own boat. Fabich shares that everything in the fishing industry is becoming expensive and is difficult on new fishermen trying to establish themselves. He shares that no other harbor charges for seine skiffs. Fabich thanked commission for listening.

Amber Lukin and her husband have been commercial fishermen for over 20 years. They are both Prince William seiners and Copper River gillnetters and own a seine boat. She shares that their skiff is not designed to fit on their commercial fishing boat. Lukin shares that she opposes the seine skiff policy. Lukin thanked the commission.

Amy Stonorov and her husband Ivan own a seiner and fish out of Homer. She was less interested in her boat and more interested in the timing of the change of tariff and that it was unfair to other seiners, especially the young ones. Stonorov advised the commission to wait a year for the tariff and that she opposes the removal of the work seine skiff policy. Stonorov thanked the commission.

Christopher Clucas the owner of a seiner for 2 years. Clucas opposes the seine skiff policy.

Dan Miotke a local seiner, states that he opposes the seine skiff policy. Miotke recommended that the commission give all fishermen 4 weeks of free moorage for seine skiffs in the harbor. He indicated that many individuals have to also coordinate with Northern Enterprises to launch and load their skiffs and are not always timely. Miotke recommended that those who fish the herring fisheries could provide their permit to the harbor to receive an additional month of free moorage for the seine skiff. Miotke thanked the commission.

Ivan Stonorov, a local Homer harbor user and Prince William Sound seiner. Stonorov opposes the work skiff policy as it adds a burden to young fishermen and those entering the fisheries. Stonorov mentioned the condemned steel grid and shared that the steel grid offers a place for individuals to affordably work on their

vessels. He requested that the steel grid be included in the study along with the Harbor Expansion Project. Stonorov thanked the commission.

Mr. Veerhusen, a Homer local, states he is opposed to the seine skiff policy. He shares that he had utilized the harbor before the harbor existed. Veerhusen shares that the seine skiffs are not taking space where revenue could be made. He indicated the seine skiff policy was proposed at a bad time. Veerhusen requested a bulletin board to be placed on the restroom building near the Harbormaster office. Veerhusen thanked the commission.

Mystique Ross, a lifelong fisherman now has her own boat. She indicated that the current industry is difficult and that the policy change was frustrating. Ross shared that she is unable to load her seine skiff onto her vessel along with others with the same issue. Ross thanked the commission.

Theresa Ross is a local fisherman who owns 4 boats and shares she is opposed to the seine skiff charge. Ross shares that they are unable to load their skiffs on their seiner. Ross states that she has been in many harbors in Alaska and in other states and feels that commercial fishermen are not appreciated. Ross also shared that the steel grid is an affordable option compared to hauling out their boat. Ross thanked the commission.

Rich and Sonja Corazza on zoom shared that they have been fishing in Homer when there was no harbor. Sonja shares that over the last few years that the commercial fishermen have not felt appreciated. Sonja suggested the price fee should mirror the Kodiak fees as they do not charge seine skiffs in the spring in summer. Sonja requested that the seine skiffs should not receive an additional fee. Sonja thanked the commission.

4. RECONSIDERATION

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.A. Unapproved March 27th, 2024 PHC Minutes

FRIEND/PITZMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 27, 2024 MEETING MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

6. VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

6.A. City Council Champions – Harbor Expansions

Councilmember Lord presented a few updates for her and Councilmember Hansen. Councilmember Lord, Councilmember Hansen, and Jenny Carrol special projects coordinator are traveling to Washington D.C. to lobby on behalf of the City of Homer and primarily for the Homer Harbor Expansion project. They will be meeting with Dana Herndon with Senator Murkowski's office who is in charge of the congressionally delegated funds, Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, Representative Peltola, and Steve Kopecky with the corp. of

engineers. They will also be meeting with a Federal lobbyist to discuss if a lobbyist is needed for the General Investigation when the Homer Harbor Expansion becomes a federal project. Councilmember Lord informed the commission that if they have any questions to pass them along with her to take to Washington D.C.

6.B. HDR – Electric Possibilities Related to Float Replacement and Harbor Expansion

Ronny McPherson and KC Kent are HDR's coastal engineers and representatives for the Homer Harbor Expansion Project. McPherson discussed what electrification means to Homer Harbor and how providing shore power to vessels reduces emissions. He indicated that there is a lot of federal grant funding to assist in implementing electrification for port infrastructure. McPherson explained with the increase of electric vehicles, especially electric trucks pulling trailers, Homer Harbor may see an influx of need for electric vehicles. McPherson shared that the Homer Harbor already has more than 200 pedestals in the harbor for vessels, and indicated that the Homer Harbor is already ahead of the curve. Ending the presentation, McPherson left ideas with the commission to consider options for electric vehicle charging stations and renewable energy options for the Homer Harbor.

7. STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.A. Port Finance/Budget Report – FYTD Report for April 2024

Ms. Woodruff shared that wharfage from the Deep Water Dock has seen an increase in wharfage and the commission will see an increase in revenue shortly. Mr. Hawkins mentioned that the Homer Harbor is at 79% of the fiscal year as something to keep in mind for the commission. Ms. Woodruff discussed that the city of Homer is working on the mid-biennium budget and that the Homer Harbor has submitted changes for the next fiscal year. She shared that the harbor requested to raise categories in the operations budget and add a full-time seasonal position for the Ice Plant due to the additional ice being produced this year as the OBI ice plant is down for maintenance.

7.B. Port & Harbor Staff Report – April 2024

Ms. Woodruff discussed the Homer Harbor Expansion Project with an additional 1.15 million for the study, half is a local match that will be shared with the state and the request has been submitted to the state.

Ms. Woodruff shared that there will be two electric vessels that will be utilizing the Homer Harbor and will be sharing data with staff to learn about what that user group may need to utilize the harbor.

Ms. Woodruff shared that the Homer City Council is requesting the commission to share the Homer Harbor financial plan as well as to look at the plan for scheduling cruise ship landings. Other discussion topics included:

- Lease ordinances
- Scheduling an upcoming work session for May 2024
- Discuss time to meet with Agnew Beck in regards to the Homer Comprehension Plan Rewrite
- Awarding contract for ADA doors at Homer Harbor Master Office
- Fish Grinder design is complete and will request RFP soon be submitted

7.C. Homer Marine Trades Association (HMTA) Report

Commissioner Zeiset shared that HMTA has awarded \$4,245 in scholarship money towards marine-related courses at the local college. Zeiset shared that HMTA hosted a round hall meeting at the Homer High School (HHS) to show individuals what classes are offered at HHS. Student representative Rogers shared that FOLs about trades have been engaging for students.

8. PUBLIC HEARING(S)

9. PENDING BUSINESS

10. NEW BUSINESS

PITZMAN/VELSKO MOVED TO MOVE DISCUSSION OF WORK SKIFF EXEMPTION TO BEGINNING OF NEW BUSINESS.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

10.A. Work Skiff Policy

Commissioner Pitzman shared that the tariff rewrite began in the spring of 2023 and was implemented before immense public comment. He shares that with the large number of comments from this meeting from the public that he felt the topic to be reconsidered with the commission due to the current state of the industry.

PITZMAN/VELSKO MOVED TO RECOMMEND POSTPONEMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK SKIFF POLICY FOR THE PORT AND HARBOR TARIFF TO 2025.

Ms. Woodruff asked a clarifying question for Commissioner Pitzman if this was a postponement through 2025 to begin in 2026. Commissioner Pitzman confirmed that this movement is to be postponed to the end of 2024 and to be implemented in 2025. He added clarifying comments that the work skiff policy is to include all work skiffs and not just seine skiffs but would like to be responsive to public comments.

Commissioner Zeiset agreed with continuous discussion for policy change and postponing the policy change to the end of the year.

Commissioner Velsko agreed with Commissioner Pitzman's comment and that she is aware of the high cost of the commercial fishing industry.

Commissioner Friend supports the tariff change as well as postponing the policy change and was appreciative of the public comment received. He also commented that staff works hard to upgrade the harbor with limited funds but acknowledged the policy change was bad timing. However, he noted that the Homer Harbor is too small for the activity that takes place and that the policy change wasn't any animosity towards the commercial fishing business.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

10.B. Land Allocation Plan Annual Review

Ms. Woodruff prefaced with background information to the commission about the land allocation plan and that the commission has an opportunity to weigh in on those changes. Ms. Woodruff shared the suggested staff change of the removal of over-slope area 1 and change Lot 12, the concrete pad, to a long-term lease.

Mr. Hawkins agreed with the recommendation for the removal of overslope area 1. Mr. Hawkins disagreed with the change to a long-term lease for Lot 12, the concrete pad, as it has functioned well as being a short-term lease as it provides secure lay down for the Deep Water Dock services as well as the additional generated revenue.

VELSKO/PITZMAN MOVE TO REMOVE OVER SLOPE AREA ONE FROM LANDS AVAILABLE FOR THE LEASE PORTION OF THE LAND ALLOCATION PLAN

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

10.C. Land Allocation Plan – Large Vessel Haul Out

Ms. Woodruff referenced resolution 24-024 that the city council consider a change of the parcel where the Large Vessel Haul Out resides and discuss the pros and cons of a city-run or public-private partnership. Additionally, Ms. Woodruff shared that the commission will need to discuss the result of the Pier One Theatre. Ms. Woodruff shared the memorandum provided that designate what would be the campground area and the Large Vessel Haul Out Facility area, along with the revenue generated from the campground in 2023.

Commissioner Zeiset shared that it is worth considering a phase-out of the campsite while working towards the haul-out facility. In regards to Pier One Theatre, he shared that the building appears to be unrepairable.

Commissioner Pitzman shared that the option of a Large Vessel Haul Out or the temporary campground was not an equivalent comparison of options. He shares that modernization of the Large Vessel Haul Out would provide local revenue without vessel owners taking their work to another city.

Commissioner Friend shares his support for moving forward and modernizing the Large Vessel Haul Out and providing lighting to the area while camping remains temporary while phasing out. Commissioner Friend shares that the campground could still share a portion of the lot that could be improved with a new layout while providing access to the Fishing Hole. He discussed that any upgrades to the campground while phasing out next to an improved Large Vessel Haul Out would not be a great use of money.

Commissioner Zeiset indicated that it would be helpful to look into grant options for Pier One Theatre to assist in relocating the business as the Theatre is appreciated by the community. Commissioner Zeiset shares that he

would support the city in facilitating the Large Vessel Haul Out for vendors however would be concerned that a single vendor with a large fleet would lease the entire space without space for other vendors.

Commission Velsko shared that the city of Kodiak Haul Out has recently partnered with a private partnership that improved their haul out for its customers. She also shares that she would support Pier One looking into other options for the business. Commissioner Velsko asked Commissioner Pitzman his thoughts on what business would look like during the summer months for a Large Vessel Haul Out. Commissioner Pitzman shares that a majority of vessels would be working however there are emergency repairs during the summer.

Commissioner Friend asks Commissioner Pitzman his thoughts on if the Large Vessel Haul Out had power it would be more attractive in the summer. Commission Pitzman agreed it would be more attractive as customers wouldn't have to run generators and burn diesel for a better working environment and the public, with less noise pollution.

Mr. Hawkins shared experience and conversation about city owned haul outs and private companies operating a haul out. He discussed the revenue the facility would bring to the community but not much of the revenue would return to the Port.

PITZMAN/VELSKO MOVE TO RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL THAT THE CITY LOOK INTO THE PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO RUN THE LARGE VESSEL HAUL OUT.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

10.D. Steel Grid Replacement Study

Mr. Hawkins shared that he had discussed with Commissioner Pitzman about having an engineer inspect the grid to see if a specific tonnage could still use the steel grid. Mr. Hawkins is under the impression that with the condition of the steel grid, it will be deemed non-operational.

Commissioner Pitzman would like to see an engineer deem a specific tonnage for small vessels if possible and potentially repair some of the damage that would allow a safe working environment. Or to ultimately tell the commission that the steel grid is non-operational.

Commissioner Velsko discussed that she agrees it would be a good idea to have an engineer inspect the steel grid.

Mr. Hawkins discussed that cathodic protection is not an effective tool for a grid as it needs to be submerged consistently to protect the grid and equipment.

PITZMAN/VELSKO MOVE TO RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROPRIATE FUNDS FROM PORT RESERVES TO COVER COST OF HIRING A MARINE ENGINEER TO EVALUATE THE STEEL GRID.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

10.E. Amendments to Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Bylaws

Ms. Woodruff discussed that the bylaws are to be considered every twelve months and that she does not have any requests for any changes.

10.F. Election of Officers

A unanimous decision was made to postpone the election of officers as Commissioner Shavelson and Commissioner Siekanic were not present and to discuss at next month's meeting.

11. INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- 11.A. April 2024 Port Operations Report
 - March 2024 Statistics
 - Q3 2024 Statistics
 - Memorandum to City Council re: Cruise Ships and Homer Spit Parking
 - Memorandum for Port Director as backup

Ms. Woodruff shared the staff report, monthly statistics, and memorandum were additionally shared with the city council. She noted the cruise ship memo will likely arise again at the next meeting. Ms. Woodruff noted the summary of parking changes to the commission members. Mr. Hawkins outlined in detail to the Commission where parking changes took effect.

- 11.B. April City Newsletter
- 11.C. April City Manager's Reports to Council
 - CM Report for April 8, 2024
 - CM Report for April 22, 2024
- 11.D. Catalytic Cities Decarbonization Fund – Final Report Memorandum from Councilmember Lord as back up
- 11.E. Financial Policies for the City of Los Angeles Harbor Department – Port of L/A/ Memorandum from Councilmember Lord as backup

12. COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE (3 minute time limit)

William Roth, noted that the Homer Harbor had not ever charged for the seine skiffs until the tariff change and the Homer Harbor was still profitable. Roth shares that the commercial fishing fleet is only in the harbor temporarily. Roth thanked the commission for the additional 1-hour parking and asked why a parking pass is not included in harbor fees.

Richard Roth, a local fisherman in Homer questioned why the commission removed the seine skiff policy. Roth shares that he supports the Large Vessel Haul Out as it would bring business to the Homer Harbor.

Scott Adams shared that if the Port does not have the funds to pay for grid inspection the commission should take it to the city council. Adams discusses that he is unable to locate the funds for the fishing hole and haul-out property and advises the commission to look for where the original funds came from. Adams shares that camping should still use haul-out facilities during summer while boats are gone fishing.

13. COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Ms. Woodruff reminded the Commission to let her know about Work Session dates. Ms. Woodruff thanked commission.

Mr. Hawkins discussed a new tug and barge that has arrived in town and is excited for the business. Mr. Hawkins informed commission that 18 finger floats have been rebuilt by Port Maintenance staff. Mr. Hawkins thanked commission.

14. COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR

15. COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Friend thanked all public comments.

Commissioner Pitzman appreciated the public turnout and reminded the public that the commission only makes recommendations to the city council and advised the public to attend City Council meetings.

Commissioner Velsko acknowledged the consolidation of the commercial fisheries and vessels. Commissioner Velsko encourages the public to attend meetings and talk with Port and Harbor Staff about why recommended changes are happening.

Commissioner Bradshaw looks forward to discussion as a new commissioner and thanked the commission.

Student Representative Rogers agreed that she appreciated the public in the audience. Rogers thanked the Commission.

16. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commissioner Zeiset adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is Wednesday, May 22nd, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

Samantha Jacobsen, Port & Harbor Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____