

Session 12-09, a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order at 6:00 PM on November 13, 2012 by Chair Sarno at the Homer City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS SCHMITT, SARNO, WAGNER, FAULKNER  
COUNCILMEMBER: ZAK (ABSENT)  
STUDENT REP: DAVIS  
ABSENT: KRISINTU (EXCUSED)  
STAFF: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR KOESTER  
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Sarno called for a motion to approve the agenda.

FAULKNER/WAGNER – SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Bumppo Bremicker, city resident, member of the Kachemak Bay Wooden Boat Society, to speak about the Agenda item A under New Business the Pier One Parcel. He stated he talked to Rick Abboud, City Planner, in September 2012 regarding a place for the Wooden Boat Society. Mr. Bremicker proceeded to read a statement regarding the previous attempt to lease a 10,000 sf area of that parcel, the current intent to use it as a Barge Haul out; reviewed the area being suggested for use by the Kachemak Bay Water Trail Group; of the value the Wooden Boat Society has brought to the City over the last 20 years; and the amount of money saved, almost \$20,000 towards constructing a permanent building. He outlined what the Wooden Boat Society proposal for the space. Mr. Bremicker distributed a handout to the Commission entitle "Summer 2014". Mr. Bremicker went on to state that the Wooden Boat Society has been in discussions with the Kachemak Bay Water Trail group and are considering joining efforts since each group can work with the other.

Dave Seaman, president of the Wooden Boat Society, spoke on petitioning the City for a Lease and that they have always held their festival on the Spit. He explained that to haul their boats too far would cause a problem and he advocated the site that they have recommended. Mr. Seaman further noted the areas that they have been directed away from the water and pointed out the area that provided the best access. He did mention that he would be in favor of over-slope however there would be a higher cost to implement. He described how they move in and set up and as the years have gone by they have accumulated more equipment so would definitely appreciate a fixed spot for a permanent home. He noted that they are more a social and learning club and not in business to profit. He would like the support of the EDC.

Mr. Bremicker stepped up to provide a more detailed description on the selected or preferred location using the overhead aerial on the Pier One Parcel in response to questions from staff.

Mr. Seaman proceeded to explain that there is a preference to be closer to the Harbor since it is more protected, however will accept the alternatives, as outlined by the Wooden Bay Society and using the area recommended by the Water Trail and joining forces with them would be adequate to accommodate their intents. He thanked the Commissioners for their time.

Jim Lunny, Vice President, Wooden Boat Society, was present to advocate for the commissioners support by expressing the value he feels the Society offers and brings to the community as a whole; he reiterated comments that have been provided by other members of the Wooden Boat Society. Mr. Lunny added that the annual festivals attract a number of visitors and that could grow with the opportunity of a more permanent place to house the equipment. He further noted that having a more permanent home would open up the opportunity to teach also. Mr. Lunny pointed out that Port Townsend and Lake Union in Washington with a population base 200 times Homer each have separate events on the same bay, both well attended and what value is added to their respective communities.

Mr. Wagner commented that it is all Economic Development and hopefully it can be brought together and approved by the City.

Mr. Faulkner questioned the proposed water trail and commented on the Wooden Boat Society providing more revenue than has been proposed. He did acknowledge that it was an out of the way corner. He thanked them for coming to the meeting.

### **RECONSIDERATION**

There were no items for reconsideration.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Unapproved meeting minutes of August 14, 2012

Chair Sarno called for a motion to approve the minutes.

FAULKNER/SCHMITT- MOVED TO APPROVE.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **VISITORS**

There were no visitors scheduled.

Ms. Koester noted that Mr. Brann had requested to be a visitor and a conflict arose and he could not attend.

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

STAFF REPORT -

*Marketing Homer to High Tech Business -*

Ms. Koester reviewed her report and recommended that the commissioners if interested in pursuing this further to schedule a worksession to discuss the topic informally with industry representatives. She further recommended that they could outline questions and who to invite.

There was a brief discussion and the commissioners agreed that a worksession would be preferable over a regular meeting. Commissioner Wagner recommended inviting Michael Haines and offered to contact him. Staff requested the Commissioners email her with further questions and recommendations. A date after the holidays would be preferred for a worksession.

*RV Parking in Downtown -*

Ms. Koester reviewed her report regarding the lack of RV traffic on Pioneer in the summer season, there is plenty of RV's visiting the Spit. There is a lack of parking designated for RV's in downtown and this is outlined in the CEDS also. Ms. Koester commented that the Commissioners could work with the Chamber and land owners to designate a couple of locations in downtown. Of course the landowners would have to provide consent for this temporary parking.

She asked if the Commissioners thought this idea had merit and were interested in taking it on and that Planning Staff Dottie Harness-Foster has stated that she could present to the commission on the legalities.

Commissioner Wagner commented on the value to have the RV Parking. Chair Sarno also stated she would contact the property owners too. Commissioner Faulkner inquired if the RV's could park at the High School noting that there were few parking lots capable of parking RV's. Staff responded that several other areas would be accessible for parking around town but she had not approached the school.

*New State of Alaska Loan Programs -*

Ms. Koester provided a brief synopsis on the availability of the new programs resulting from HB312 and that she had worked on this when working with Representative Seaton's office. Ms. Koester did have brochures with her if the commissioners were interested. Chair Sarno commented on the need and opportunities offered by having these micro-loans; and agreed that it would be good to have the Alaska Division of Economic Development to present on the new loan programs at the next meeting. She then commented on items percolating on the internet regarding sea salt businesses and the success of those businesses. Staff indicated that questions like that would be appropriate to ask of the DEC representative.

*Kenai Peninsula Economic Development Industry Forum to be Held in Homer*

Ms. Koester commented that forum will be held in Homer instead of Kenai on January 31-February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. This is a great opportunity for Homer and the area businesses. She noted that it will be held at Land's End Resort and participants are typically the oil, gas, mining and support industries. The two day event will even have the Governor attending and the City is a co-sponsor of the event. Ms. Koester wanted the EDC to be aware of this economic event.

Chair Sarno commented on her wish to include participation of local small businesses not just the gas, oil and mining industries to diversify the agenda a bit. Staff explained this was an annual forum that was specifically for those industries and the City Council had approved a resolution in support of having the annual forum here. It is an opportunity to bring visitors to Homer in the winter. She did note that there was some discussion regarding a Tourism panel, etc. since it is Homer.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

There were no items for Public Hearing.

**PENDING BUSINESS**

There was no pending business on the agenda.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Marine/commercial district zoning on Spit - Pier One Lot Planning**

Chair Sarno read the title into the record and stated that she may have a conflict being a member of the Wooden Boat Society.

Staff deferred to the Clerk. Ms. Krause stated that having declared a possible conflict it would be the commissioners present to vote if she actually did have a conflict.

There was a brief discussion and the commissioners determined that Chair Sarno did not have a conflict.

The discussion that followed made the following points:

1. Attendance by the City Planner to speak on behalf of the enclosed memo and information would have been preferred.
2. The background on the money that purchased the land and for what purpose and how and when they get their money returned.
3. Harbor users paying higher fees to support the arts.
4. The \$1 per year does not adequately pay back the value to the Enterprise Fund.
5. They are not a theater company they are a harbor. They have the responsibility to earn money for the Harbor.
6. Competition for existing Kayak Rental companies.
7. Discussion may be needed with existing businesses and the Water Trail group.
8. The location selected by the Water Trail/Wooden Boat is appropriate.
9. The Barge Basin is full and employing local residents a barge Haul out has been discussed long term and will provide earning potential for the community.

After further comments Chair Sarno inquired if the Commission was ready to issue a recommendation or wanting to postpone a decision until the next meeting. For the most part all commissioners were in favor of the idea having the Water Trail and the Wooden Boat Society there but wanted more details on the proposed plans.

Ms. Davis, responded to Chair Sarno, that the proposed Water Trail/Wooden Boat usage would be very good for the younger residents of the area offering an opportunity to work with adults.

Staff noted that they could have all the parties available for discussion at the next meeting if desired.

The commission agreed by consensus to postpone further discussion to the next meeting.

The commissioners did not discuss other prospects or recommendations as outlined in Staff Report 12-53 dated September 14, 2012 from Rick Abboud, City Planner in any further detail.

There was no further discussion.

B. Discussion on roles and responsibility of Advisory Economic Development Commission and the City of Homer in promoting Economic Development.

Chair Sarno introduced the item into the record.

Ms. Koester explained why this item was in the packet. She noted that one of the actions the commission could do was review the Bylaws and possibly update them since the last update was in 2006.

There were no comments or recommendations from the commission.

Chair Sarno thanked Staff for putting the information together for their review.

C. Rescheduling December meeting

Chair Sarno stated that she will be leaving on December 11<sup>th</sup> and asked to have the meeting rescheduled earlier so she can attend.

Staff deferred to the Clerk for the question regarding procedure.

Ms. Krause provided the conditions that warrant rescheduling a meeting.

It was determined that the remaining members of the commission would be available on the regular meeting date therefore the quorum requirement would be attained.

Chair Sarno noted that she would be absent for the December and January meetings.

Ms. Koester did state that when reading the by-laws the commission should have had Elections on this meeting agenda. She recommended that item should be added to the December agenda.

It was noted in discussion that the commission preferred to address this when the chair was in attendance. The Clerk nodded in agreement when the question of a motion being needed was raised.

**FAULKNER/WAGNER – MOVED TO DEFER ELECTIONS TO THE FEBRUARY MEETING UPON THE CHAIR’S RETURN.**

There was no discussion.

**VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.**

Motion carried.

**D. Draft Resolution Establishing the 2013 City Council and Advisory Body Meeting Schedule**

Chair Sarno introduced the item to the floor for discussion.

There was a brief discussion regarding changing the meeting date.

The Commission approved keeping the 2013 Meeting Schedule as presented in the Draft Resolution by consensus.

**INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS (for discussion only)**

A. Chapter 8 Economic Vitality of 2008 City of Homer Comprehensive Plan.

B. Resignation of Councilmember Beth Wythe from Commission due to election status as Mayor.

C. Appointment of Bryan Zak as City Council Representative to the Economic Development Advisory Commission

There were brief comments on the informational items.

**COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

Mr. Bremicker commented on parking in downtown Homer and he identified a large parcel of property that is owned by the City that could be used as a central parking lot and even noted that the individual parking at businesses downtown could be minimized. Next Mr. Bremicker commented on the purpose of the Wooden Boat Society and offering the opportunity to the people to build and sail their small wooden craft along with the kayaks. They have no intention to offer competition with any other existing business. They want to work together with everyone and they do have a plan.

He noted that at \$0.50 per sq ft for \$1875.00 commercial rate they may be able to negotiate for that; putting the Wooden Boat out near the road would not work for their needs, Mr. Bremicker recommended using it for other businesses and knocking down the existing building as it was unsafe.

Mr. Seaman commented that they are not in the boat livery business, but would be amenable to maybe working with existing businesses; however they have no intention of performing that service; he commented that they did a tour of the Spit in kayaks a few years back with Dave Brann and it was very interesting and had a great time. Mr. Seaman commented on the proposed Barge Haul out and that it would not impair the camping in the summer.

Mr. Larry Sloan, city resident, commented on RV parking, not clear what is meant by temporary, questioned if it is over-nite or day use; Legislation available for business start-up general regarding Charter and Halibut fishing, he is reading that there are too many operators and not enough product;

he suggested recommending the forum reschedule to a few weeks earlier before the Council meeting on January 25, 2012 since Council will be making a decision on natural gas in regards to the availability of adequate gas for the City. Since gas and oil were to be to major attendees this would provide some very relevant information for Council. In regards to the Wooden Boat Society, he stated he was in agreement with the comments on commercial operators and the social aspect of some value but not enough to counter the necessity of paying the operations and maintenance of the Spit. The commercial aspects have to have priority.

**COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF**

Ms. Koester stated she has her marching orders for the next meeting and invited the commissioners to contact her with items for the agenda and thanked the Chair for all the works she does to help formulate the agenda.

**COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR**

Chair Sarno thanked staff and the commissioners; reminded them she would be gone the next two meetings; she encouraged the commissioners to come forward with a recommendation that will bring it to Council so that something can come forth this summer.

**COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Wagner commented on including a Business Plan in their Proposal or simple Budget may help. He also is glad the Commission is back meeting again.

Commissioner Faulkner commented that Mr. Seaman meet with Mr. Brann before the next meeting to clarify their intent. He did state it was his intent to attend the Water Trail meeting. He also encouraged the Commissioners to come up with someone to fill his seat.

Commissioner Schmitt commented that it was always very interesting being on the commission; it gives a good perspective of both the community and the local government on what is going on; he did appreciate the Wooden Boat Society has enjoyed working with wood and sailing wooden boats; he definitely wants to see them on the Spit and they need to work it out so it benefits them and the existing businesses; it is all part of the process. He looks forward to hearing the rest of it at the next meeting.

Ms. Davis thanked the Wooden Boat Society and has certainly been a fan and agrees with everyone on the commission that clear lines need to be drawn and should not impede on existing businesses but believes it is a great idea.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Sarno adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m. Next regular meeting is scheduled for December 11, at 6:00 p.m. in the Homer City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

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RENEE KRAUSE, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_