

NOTICE OF MEETING  
MEETING AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
3. PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA
4. RECONSIDERATION
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES  
A. January 8, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes Page 1
6. VISITORS  
A. Kyra Wagner, Local Food
7. STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/ BOROUGH REPORT
8. PUBLIC HEARING
9. PENDING BUSINESS
10. NEW BUSINESS  
A. Election of Chair and Vice Chair  
B. Recommend to City Council adoption of: A Resolution of the City Council of Homer, Alaska approving seasonal day use parking at the Homer Education and Recreation Center parking lot and authorizing the City Manager to work with the State for signage as needed. Page 5  
C. Follow up on 1-10-13 EDC Work session on Marketing Homer to High Tech Entrepreneurs. Page 9
  - i. Next steps - Survey
11. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS  
A. Entrepreneur Meetings - Commissioner Wagner Page 13
12. COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE
13. COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF
14. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER
15. COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR
16. COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION
17. ADJOURNMENT/NEXT REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, March 12, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Ave, Homer, Alaska.



Session 13-01 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Wagner at 6:00 p.m. on January 8, 2013 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONER FAULKNER, ROSS, SCHMITT, WAGNER

ABSENT: SARNO, KRISINTU (both excused)

COUNCILMEMBER: ZAK

STAFF: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR KOESTER  
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

### **AGENDA APPROVAL**

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Commission.

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

### **RECONSIDERATION**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. December 11, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented by consensus of the Commission.

### **VISITORS**

A. State of Alaska DCCED Division of Economic Development New Loan Programs

Sandee Holst from the State DCCED reviewed three loan programs offered through the State. She explained the criteria to be able to apply for and receive the loan funds. There was discussion about some different scenarios and loan options for commercial charter operators.

B. Councilmember Bryan Zak Triple Bottom Line Tool

Councilmember Zak provided a brief introduction to the Triple Bottom Line tool from the University of Washington. The tool doesn't just look at financials it integrates quality of life, value to the community, and social value. He said he could provide more information through Mrs. Koester and they can do a more in-depth discussion at a future meeting.

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

A. Staff Report: Gas Line Update

Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester reviewed her staff report, noted the public meeting that Enstar will be doing on the 9<sup>th</sup>, and the public hearing dates for Homer City Council.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**PENDING BUSINESS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

A. Downtown Vitalization – Brainstorm Ideas, Potential Visitors, Follow-up

Vice Chair Wagner suggested inviting Michael Haines as he is very involved with businesses and has a lot of history. He also suggested Derotha Ferraro to give some insight into the hospital and an overview of the other medical things going on in town.

Mrs. Koester commented that she sees downtown as Pioneer Avenue, but the downtown district could also include Old Town. There was discussion about the city center and the need for infrastructure and determining what will pay for that infrastructure. Walkability of a town has a lot to do with economic development as well, and maybe we are missing things like benches, bathrooms, and more visible crossing areas on the road. It was suggested that preparing a gravel parking lot in the town center area would be a low cost alternative and easy to remove when needed. Mrs. Koester said she will bring the CIP request and maps of the area to look at what has been proposed for the area.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

A. RV Parking in Downtown Update: Commissioner Ross

Commissioner Ross and Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester reviewed the information about RV parking downtown in an effort to bring more interest to Pioneer Avenue. A group met to talk about available options for downtown parking areas and came up with the HERC parking area for the west side of town. It is a city owned space and would be a good space for a pilot program type area. City Manager Wrede seemed supportive of the concept as well. The issues that need to be addressed include signage, advertising, and enforcement of day use only parking. Using the HERC area for the first summer will allow them to work out any kinks and provide a model to bring to business owners to help get them involved and help with expanding options.

There was discussion of using the high school parking area for the east side of town. It is something that could be brought up to the school district, but concerns they have with that area is maintenance and insurance. It is also tucked away so it's not as visible to rv's. It was noted that a little signage would resolve the visibility issue, and it is just a short walk to Pioneer from the lot.

B. Resolution 12-102 Re: Regular Meeting Schedule

**COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

Larry Slone, city resident, commented in support of parking at the high school. It is public property, but might be a challenge since it isn't city owned. A benefit in relation to enforcement is that it is located in close proximity to the Police Department and since it is a wide open space, people may be less likely to push the limits.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 8, 2013

**COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF**

Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester thanked everyone for a good meeting. She asked them to let her know if they have packet ideas. At the next meeting they will have elections for Chair and Vice Chair.

**COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER**

Councilmember Zak commented that CIRI is a property owner in the town center area and they may be a potential partner. Also with the legislature in session, maybe something will come from there.

**COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR**

Vice Chair Wagner commented that it might be worth inviting CIRI to a meeting to talk about options for the area. He reminded everyone of the worksession on Thursday at 4 in the conference room.

**COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Ross said he appreciated the comments about the police station in relation to parking at the high school. That input makes him see it as a good option to pursue.

Commissioner Schmitt commented that the loan information was really interesting. Back when he fished he had interest in pursuing a boat, but the loan process was a real headache to get through. It was good to hear about new options.

Commissioner Faulkner and Student Representative Davis had no comments.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 12, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

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MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_





CITY OF HOMER  
CITY HALL

# MEMORANDUM

To: Economic Development Commission  
From: Katie Koester, Community and Economic Development Coordinator  
Date: February 12, 2013  
Re: Seasonal day-use RV parking at the HERC building

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EDC Commissioner Ross, Karin Marks (Chamber member), Planning Tech Dotti Foster-Harness, Brianna Allen of Old Town and myself met on December 14<sup>th</sup> and on February 6<sup>th</sup> to explore options for providing **RV day-use parking in Downtown Homer** for the 2013 tourist season.

The "RV group" has identified two sites. Both provide sidewalks to Downtown and Old Town Homer. First, the Chamber parking area will serve the Old Town businesses; second, the Homer Education and Recreation Center (HERC) parking area will serve the business district along Pioneer Avenue. The HERC parking area will require City Council approval.

RV parking would be for the summer only (second weekend in May to Labor Day), from 8am to 9pm. It would be advertised on the Homer map that is published by the Homer news and other appropriate publications. The deadline for the map additions is the end of February.

This project aligns with Homer's Development and Economic Plans to "Provide parking for RVs in downtown Homer with signage to make it easy for drivers to locate the parking" as written in the 2011 Homer Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Implementation strategies for Homer's Comprehensive Plan include "Support Pioneer Avenue/Downtown business and other year-round businesses. Effort should be made in the future to have more tourists visit downtown Homer to support year round businesses." Resolution 12-041, which prioritizes elements of Homer's CEDS, designates "Downtown vitalization" as one of many strategies to improve economic growth in Homer.

The RV group discussed potential problems and has researched solutions. The RV group welcomes any guidance in addressing perceived potential problems. Starting small, as in two sites, will allow us to easily monitor and resolve problems that may arise. If successful, additional parking areas could be explored for the 2014 season.

Signs: Both the Sterling Highway and Pioneer Avenue are State maintained roads, but the State does not install tourist directional signs. Therefore, a volunteer with business interests

may install the signs on the existing posts. The estimated cost of the signs and the State permit is approximately \$750. This includes five direction signs: three on the Sterling Highway, Pioneer Avenue and Ohlson Road, plus two signs in the parking areas "RV Angle Parking 8a-9p" "Park at your own risk; Not responsible for lost or stolen items." "No littering" and "BYOB Bring Your Own Bag."

Keeping the HERC parking area litter free: RV's have trash receptacles, so the need to provide trash receptacles in the parking area may not be necessary. A sign in the parking area will indicate "No littering."

Insurance: The City's existing liability insurance policy covers all of the City's actions, so there is no additional insurance cost. Assessing the risks and deciding if the reward outweighs the risk is prudent. The City's agent suggests signs in the parking area that warn travelers: "Park at your own risk; Not responsible for lost or stolen items." Two of these signs are included in the proposed budget.

Advertising: If approved by City Council on Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, both the Chamber and HERC site will be identified on the "Homer Map" which the Homer News publishes at no cost to the City.

Future goals: By intention the RV Group has started small, two sites. This gives us the opportunity to resolve issues on a small scale. If successful, the RV Group would like the business community to take the lead for the 2014 season and beyond.

Parking enforcement: On occasion, overnight RV parking happens in the larger lots in town. If necessary, the RV traveler is provided with information as to the location of RV camp grounds and the issue is resolved. Again, starting small will allow us to monitor this.

Budget from \_\_\_\_\_

Signs	\$750.00
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**NEXT STEP RECOMMENDATION:**

The "RV group" recommends that the EDC forward this proposal to the City Council for adoption. See attached resolution.

**CITY OF HOMER  
HOMER, ALASKA**

City Planner/City Manager

**RESOLUTION 13-0XX**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA, APPROVING SEASONAL DAY USE PARKING AT THE HOMER EDUCATION AND RECREATION CENTER PARKING LOT AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO WORK WITH THE STATE FOR SIGNAGE AS NEEDED.

WHEREAS, The Homer Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) identifies the need to “Provide parking for RVs in downtown Homer with signage to make it easy for drivers to locate the parking”; and

WHEREAS, The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategies include “Support Pioneer Avenue/Downtown business and other year-round businesses”; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 12-041 prioritizes elements of Homer’s CEDs, and designates Downtown Vitalization as a strategy to improve economic growth in Homer; and

WHEREAS, A working group made up of a Planning staff member, an EDC member, a Chamber member, and an Old Towne representative, has explored options for providing RV day-use parking in Downtown and Old Towne Homer for the 2013 tourist season; and

WHEREAS, Two sites have been identified to serve the RV day use parking need. The Chamber of Commerce parking area, because it provides sidewalks to Old Town and the Homer Recreation and Education Center (HERC) parking because it provides sidewalks to downtown; and

WHEREAS, RV parking would be available from the second weekend in May until Labor Day from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m., would be advertised on the Homer map published by the Homer News, and other appropriate publications; and

WHEREAS, Both the Sterling Highway and Pioneer Avenue are State maintained roads and Planning staff will work to get “RV Day Parking” signs permitted; and

WHEREAS, The City’s existing insurance covers all the City’s actions. With appropriate signs, the risks appear to be minimal.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Homer City Council approves a seasonal day use parking area at the Homer Education and Recreation Center parking lot and authorizing the City Manager to pursue to work with the state for the needed sign permits.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of Homer, Alaska this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2013.

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CITY OF HOMER

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MARY E. WYTHE, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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JO JOHNSON, CMC, CITY CLERK

Fiscal note: Account #\_Cost \$750.00; and Staff Time

On January 10, 2013 the Advisory Economic Development Commission held a work session on the topic "Marketing Homer to High Tech Entrepreneurs." A summary of the meeting follows.

**Present:**

- Richard Webb, KPC (also builds on line managements systems, gaming co)
- Bryan Zak, EDC Council Rep
- Nick Poolos, IT Manager, COH
- Taz Tally, Grapic Design, photography (via teleconference)
- Aaron Larson, SpitwSpots
- Katie Koester, EDC staff
- Neil Wagner, EDC Commissioner
- Nantia Kristniu, EDC Commissioner
- Adi Jo Davis, EDC Student Representative
- Nick Schmidt, EDC Commissioner
- Brad Faulkner, EDC Commissioner
- Monte Davis, Homer Chamber of Commerce
- Larry Sloane, City Resident

**a. Define what type of individual/group Homer is looking for.**

Examples of Companies in Homer: Alaskan areal technologies (produces training systems for Bowling);

-maybe high tech is not the right industry for Homer. – maybe what we are talking about is work from home businesses. They use the internet, but are not 'high tech' necessarily (lesser demand for really powerful internet).

-There is no big industry, but there a lots of little industries. Individuals working from home, they are coming here because this is where they want to live.

-this should not be about attracting made talent. have to talk about growing our own. the home grown talent and the already made talent are synergistic.

-who we are attracting, younger kids, want to by able to skype. need video conferencing.

- make small competitive

Redefine - "*work at home entrepreneurs*"

**b. Asset Valuation. What are Homer's strong points?**

- High quality of life.
- Developable space in a good location. What about a high tech village developed in city centre?  
Would need to talk to CIRI, what about fibre?
- Gas Line
- Internet Access.

- world class restaurants.
- Connectivity. Homer is on the road system
- academic centre
- reputation. Homer has a pretty good reputation.
- highly educated, engaged community

Look at what Homer already has - are able able to do some serious things with the connectivity that Homer does have.

### **c. What are Homer's Challenges**

-Internet connectivity: some providers providing really good services, but have heard of acs tanking business models because acs has not been able to turn people 'up' in time.

-transportation/fuel cost.

### **d. What do we need to do?**

- Brand Homer as a high tech place. A place where you can live a relaxed life without all the craziness but still be connected.

-within Alaska Homer has a great reputation, what can we do with what we have.

-Get people connected. Form a group of that regularly meets. get people connected. Get people talking. a place people want to come to bc I can make something happen here.

-grow a population of small interconnected businesses. making sure that the conversation is engaged and keeps going. when you get groups of really interesting people together, really amazing things happen.

-Fibre. Homer could compete if we could get an off ramp. The coverage goals in 20-20 are 90-95% coverage both directions, don't see infrastructure coming to Homer. Homer does not qualify for grant funding because we are on the road.

-need to do a better job at providing internet. Taz Tally, who does most of his business online, says he needs a minimum of 2 megs which he could not get for 4 years. Just this year he was able to ratchet up business, now am getting 6 but 10 should be available. Spit spots is the only company that has been able to deliver for Taz. Online entrepreneurs (work at home) need symmetrical band with - not just down load - for communications with the outside world.

-need to leverage what it means to have an academic centre the community.

-need to think seriously about having a specialization in high tech at our university. longer term, but not too early to start doing that.

-customer service at the City of homer. permitting.

-develop some sort of prize program for really innovate entrepreneurial ideas (biz idea?).

### **e. Marketing**

-Chamber of Commerce could play a larger role in advertising quality of life in Homer (Adi Jo Davis is working with the Chamber on website).

-if looking at attracting people who work from home. - advertising assets of homer.

- should have really up front and ready something that shows internet providers, housing info, highlight things that are in our favor. the things that make homer a nice place to live.

-schools are really important if you want people to move here. advertize as a great place to grow a kid.

-market to anchorage.

-great health care. for a town this size, alternative health care. a lot of that can be done on the chamber.

-add a rotating success story to Chamber's website. testimonial. we don't share that enough.

-most of the marketing that goes on about homer is fishing. One of things that attracts people to homer is the highly educated, engaged community. people don't have that sense that a small Alaskan community can have that people there.

- emphasize winter sports. could make it a more appealing place to live.

-No other community has the density of viable non-profits, for ex. just inside city limits have 100 non-profits. 5-6 art galleries.

-the nature of our community will attract our people. "not just about fishing and nature, but the nature of the community."

- could play with google ad words -looking for one offs, free lancing, working from home. enough to drive a google add.

-could city government do something to incentivize a new business to move into city limits. discount if a type of industry moves there.

-seward has an open for business add in the alaska business monthly.

-concentrate on winter economy

-small business capital of alaska

**Who is our target?**

-once you define your market, you just have to change your add to fit that market.

-can we define the high tech person. is it definable? people don't even know about the people who already here. Devise a small survey, online, survey monkey.

**Potential Survey Questions:**

-Why did you come here?

-Where are there problems?

-are you hopeful that the city would help your business or fearful that the city would help my business.

-what kind of businesses would your support - give them 10???  
would be useful marketing information.

-survey should paint a picture of who we are, not who we want to be

-take an honest look at where we are or are not. if we are not, we need to take a look at that.

**f. Potential Follow-up:**

- a) Chamber website emphasis on quality of life
- b) Form an informal networking group of entrepreneurs
- c) Devise and online survey. Question? How would you get people to respond? Who would you send it to?

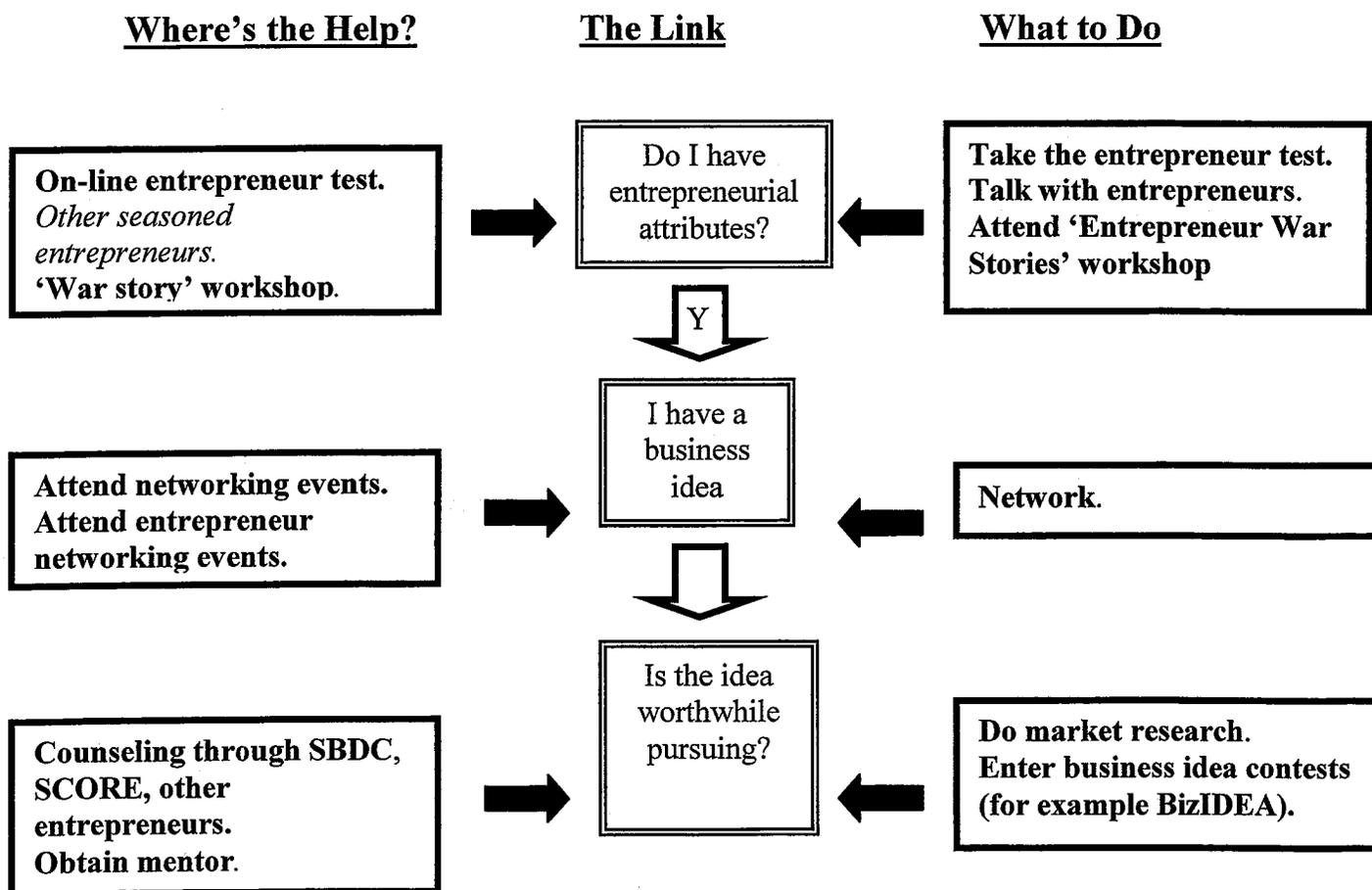
## E-Pod Entrepreneurial Success Chain For Small Communities (Homer, AK Example)

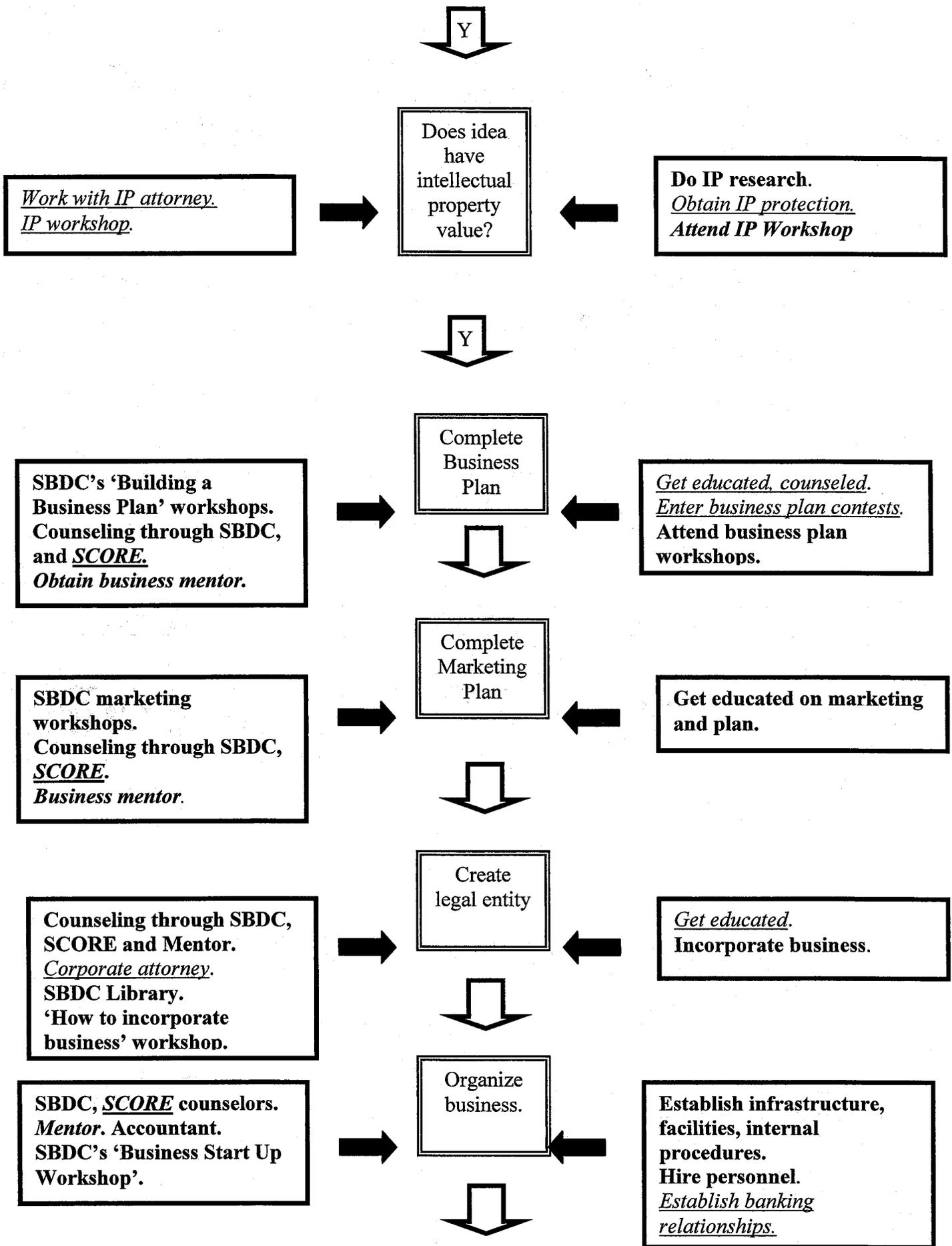
Revised July, 2010  
Michael Haines

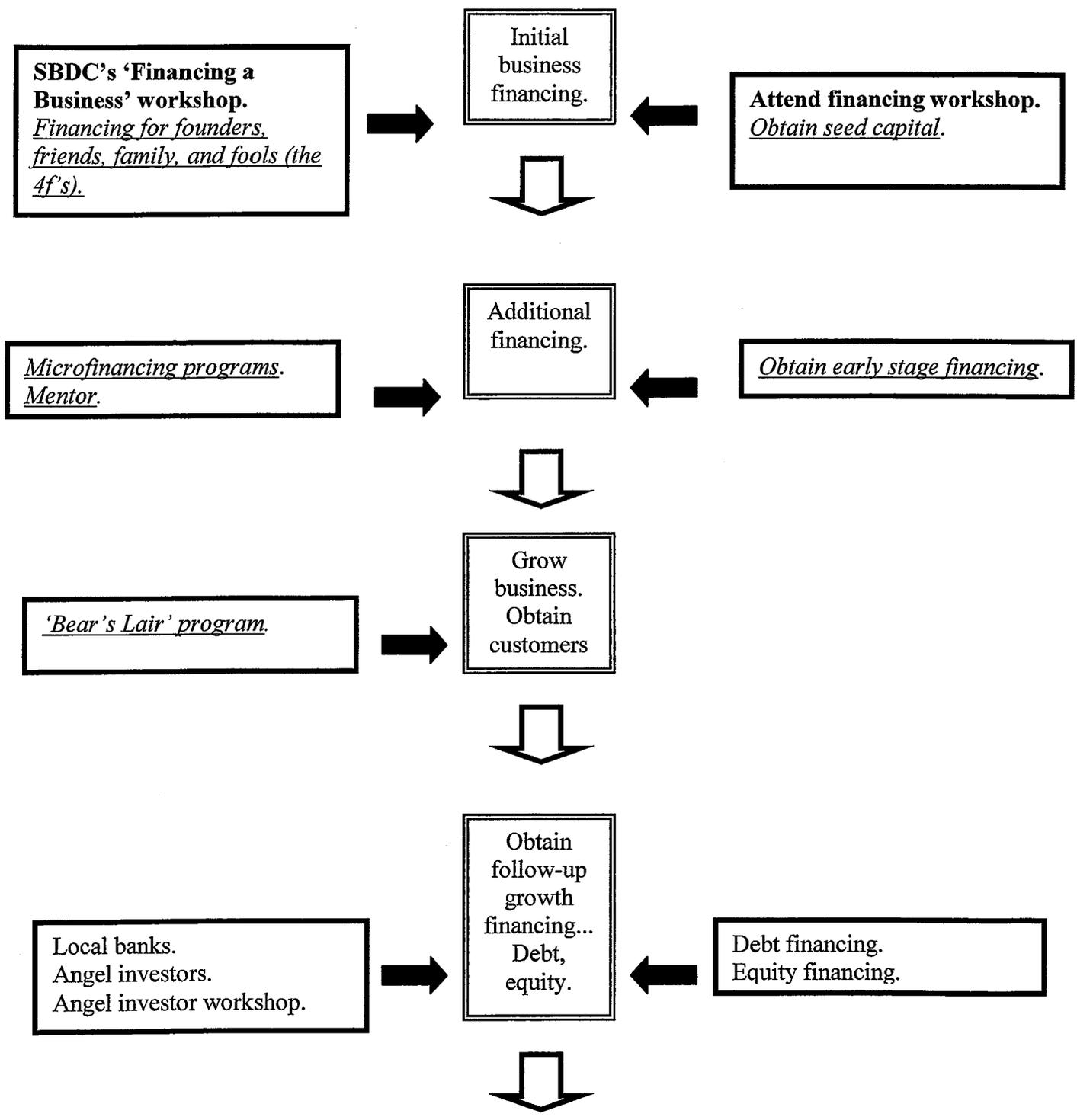
Having a business, product, or service related *idea*, regardless of how innovative, does not guarantee success for an entrepreneurial endeavor. The *idea* is just the first 'link' in a process called the 'Entrepreneur Success Chain'. It takes a number of such 'links' to complete the chain and to achieve a sustainable business.

Using Homer, AK as an example of an E-Pod, this Entrepreneur Success Chain consists of the following primary 'links', where:

- Bold type represents a program/service already available within the E-Pod, for example '**Counseling through SBDC**'.
- Italic type underlined represents a program/service available with the assistance of the E-Community, for example 's'.







## **Overview of Programs/Services Identified Above**

### **Programs, Services Provided Within the Homer E-Pod**

- Networking events.
- SBDC counseling.
- BizIDEA contest.
- 'Building a Business Plan' workshop.
- SBDC's, and Homer Public library.
- Marketing workshop.
- 'Business Start-up' workshop.
- 'Financing a Business' workshop.
- 'Entrepreneur War Story' workshop.
- SCORE counseling.
- Online 'Am I an Entrepreneur' test.
- Identifying local entrepreneurs as mentors and advisors to new entrepreneurs.
- Entrepreneur networking/activity events.

### ***Programs, Services Provided by the E-Community***

- Identify IP attorney willing to donate time.
- Create IP workshop.
- Business plan contest.
- 'How to Incorporate Business' workshop.
- Identify corporate attorney willing to donate time.
- Angel investor workshop.
- Microfinancing program.
- 'Bear's Lair' program.

**‘E-Pods’ and ‘E-Communities’:  
An Economic Development, Entrepreneurship-based Solution for  
Rural, Isolated Communities:**

**By: Michael Haines**

**alaskaentrepreneur@yahoo.com**

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More than 80% of the US job growth is created by its small, entrepreneurial businesses. The US Small Business Administration estimates there are over 10 Million small businesses nationwide. Each was started by an entrepreneur.

It is important, then, to insure that entrepreneurship is encouraged and stimulated so that the economy continues to grow and prosper. This is especially true for small, rural communities. For many years, these rural communities have been geared to traditional enterprises such as commercial fishing and related industries. In many areas, these staple industries are in decline and a new stimulus is needed to help their economies reach their full potential.

An increased focus on entrepreneurship will:

- Create more jobs
- Increase the wealth of the community
- Make the community less dependent on government subsidies
- Provide a local community ‘multiplier’ ..... entrepreneurs depend on local businesses to provide products and services to make them successful
- Increase the local tax base
- Increase philanthropy into the local community
- Improve the quality of life
- Help arrest ‘migration’ of talented students from the region

**What We Know About Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship**

From history, experience and success stories, the things we know about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship are:

- Entrepreneurs develop locally.
- Entrepreneurship is typically local in nature.
- Entrepreneurs rely on both local and regional resources to be successful.
- Both the public and private sectors need to play major roles in creating an entrepreneurial culture.
- Classroom education cannot alone create entrepreneurs.
- Entrepreneurs fail .... Failure is part of the journey.

- Entrepreneurship does not discriminate.
- Each entrepreneur is unique and different.

### **What We Don't Know About Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship**

There are many things we don't know about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship. These include:

- Who, specifically, they are.
- Where they are.
- Which ones will succeed or fail.
- When the 'light bulb' shines ... you can't schedule innovation.

### **It's the Culture that Counts**

Statistically, 9% of the population has the ability and drive to become successful entrepreneurs. But, while entrepreneurship itself is important, it is far more important to create an environment (or culture) that stimulates and creates an entrepreneurial environment for the long term. Communities should not attempt to 'create' entrepreneurs, but it can establish an entrepreneurial culture that allows entrepreneurship to grow and flourish.

Creating the culture will allow and encourage entrepreneurs to rise to the top, which is what entrepreneurship is all about. For small rural communities with no history of entrepreneurship and no role models, creating the culture can be difficult. This is especially true when starting from a zero base, but entrepreneurs (and capitalism) depend on trust and cooperation to be successful. This has been used as the base for creating any entrepreneurial culture.

### **Making the Culture Work .... Understanding Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship**

There are things that we know and don't know about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship

- There will be 'winners' and there will be 'losers' .... 'Winners' and 'losers' in the sense that some ideas will work and some will not. The successful entrepreneurs are those who know 'failure' (that is, have created a 'loser'), and have rebounded to create a 'winner'.
- No entrepreneur program or system can guarantee picking the 'winners' and 'losers'.
- The culture must allow the 'losers' to be culled... the best entrepreneurs rebound.
- The entrepreneurs create the ideas, but the market dictates which ones will succeed. The culture must help the entrepreneur distinguish between the better ideas and the not-so-good ideas.
- The culture must understand that the great entrepreneurs have PASSION and confidence, but that over confidence can be a deterrent to success.

- Entrepreneurs need support and mentoring.
- While many entrepreneurs know (or believe) that they have the ability to be successful, many other potential entrepreneurs have no idea of their abilities to become successful. An entrepreneurial culture must establish or encourage programs that understand this.
- The best entrepreneurs need diversity to become successful ... including diversity of funding sources.

### **Rural, Isolated Communities**

Small, remote, generally isolated, and non-mainstream communities have special needs when community wealth is driven through economic development and growth. These communities may not (and usually do not) have the monetary and personnel resources, nor the charisma to attract new, leading-edge, state-of-the-art industries from outside. Locally driven, grass-roots, entrepreneurial endeavors are usually a more attractive approach.

But, unlike larger and more established regions, most of these small communities have limited access to entrepreneurial support services. Each community is generally unique, with its own special needs, and specific means to achieve success. Yet, where a community has a common bond with other communities either geographically, economically, socially, or through genetic ties, a system of shared resources and values can be established within these groups of communities.

### **E-Pods, E-Communities**

For economic development purposes, each community can be identified as an 'Entrepreneurial Pod' (or 'E-Pod'). Multiple E-Pods make up an 'Entrepreneurial Community' (or 'E-Community').

The basic concept of an E-Pod is that entrepreneurship is a natural occurrence and an outgrowth of the talents within the E-Pod. Entrepreneurship cannot be forced. But, an entrepreneurial culture is developed within each E-Pod to cultivate the entrepreneurial endeavors of the community residents. An E-Pod can also be looked at as a 'Community Business Incubator', where the remoteness of each E-Pod represents the 'physical walls' of the business incubator, and the interconnection between each E-Pod within the E-Community represents the 'virtual' aspects of a virtual incubator.

Entrepreneurship is, by nature, local. Hence, the need to focus on the creation of an entrepreneurial culture within each E-Pod. But, some of the services required to support these independent entrepreneurial cultures must be shared within the E-Community.

E-Pods lie within a community with a common bond, either geographically, or economically (or both). The number of 'pods' that make up an E-Community is based on an analysis of the needs of the overall community.

An entrepreneurial culture is created in each E-Pod, with the strengths of each 'pod' driving the entrepreneurial base. 'Local' entrepreneurial needs (such as creating the original ideas, business idea competitions, business plan contests, technical support, networking, etc.) are contained within the specific 'pods'. Entrepreneurial needs that are regionally based (such as an entrepreneurial business financing, additional technical support, marketing, more extensive networking) are developed so that all 'pods' within the E-Community have access to them. This approach keeps the entrepreneurial culture 'local', but allows each E-Pod to have access to regional resources and ideas from the E-Community.... 'local' control, with the strength of shared, regional resources.

See attached 'E-Pod Entrepreneurial Success Chain' for Homer, AK as an example of an E-Pod within an E-Community.