

Session 12-15 a Special Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Brann at 5:30 p.m. on December 20, 2012 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONER ARCHIBALD, BRANN, BELL, LILLIBRIDGE, LOWNEY (in at 5:50)

ABSENT: BREMICKER

STAFF: ANGIE OTTESON, PARKS MAINTENANCE COORDINATOR  
MIKE ILLG, RECREATION SPECIALIST  
KATIE KOESTER, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR  
CAREY MEYER, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR  
MELISSA JACOBSEN, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

### **AGENDA APPROVAL**

The agenda was amended to allow Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester to speak first under staff reports and Todd Schroder with the Soil and Water Conservation District after Staff Reports. The agenda was approved as amended by consensus of the Commission.

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

None

### **RECONSIDERATION**

There was no reconsideration scheduled.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. October 25, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Brann commented that Todd Schroeder was not at the last meeting and he should be removed from the minutes on page 5.

The minutes were approved by consensus of the Commission.

### **VISITORS**

None

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

A. Community and Economic Development Coordinator – Katie Koester

Community and Economic Development Coordinator Koester talked to the Commission about the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Application for Karen Hornaday Park. The City Manager believes

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that Council will support a \$75,000 match so if the grant is awarded the City will have \$150,000 to work with. The staff report from Planning Technician Engebretsen suggests the following projects:

1. Access Road extension to back ball field, loop around picnic shelter location
2. Drainage along the back side of the ball fields
3. Create a camp host site. Provide electricity
4. Level campsites, improve drainage, and improve access road

Her staff report also included a walking trail along ball fields, and little league storage area/coach connex removal/block building TLC, as projects to think about, but they might not fit in the application and project timing at the park.

Mrs. Koester asked the Commission for guidance when she finalizes the grant application as to whether they would like to see the grant monies be spread out over all four projects or focused on one or two projects. She explained that she reviewed the four items with Public Works Director Meyer who thought it would be fair to tackle a little bit of each of these four items with a \$150,000 appropriation. The Commissioner's agreed that they are all good projects and most were of a mind that it would be better to use the funds to complete one or two of them, rather than have four that are half done. Most expressed support for improvements to the campground. There was discussion of the need to work on the Woodard Creek Trail. Mrs. Koester and Mr. Meyer explained that the Woodard Creek Trail wouldn't be the best fit for the this particular grand because of the drainage work necessary for the area and ADA accessibility will be challenging with the grade of the area. Mrs. Koester reminded them that ADA improvements are part of this grant, and there are other funds that can be used for Woodard Creek Trail. She reviewed the timeline for the grant process. The Commission's recommendations of the four project priorities were: Bell 3&4, Lillibridge 4 & a safety trail, Lowney 3&4, Brann 4&2, Archibald never stated a preference. Mr. Meyer talked to the Commission about the proposed projects commenting about the drainage, work that has already been done, and the access road.

Mrs. Koester summarized her understanding of the conversation that the campgrounds are a major priority, including accessibility, drainage, and leveling. Items 1 and 2 need to be incorporated to some extent, but the focus of the grant will be on camp grounds.

Public Works Director Meyer commented briefly regarding Woodard Creek Trail.

B. Community Recreation – Mike Illg

Recreation Specialist Illg reported that the Health Fair was well attended this year and he thanked Parks Maintenance Coordinator Otteson for staffing the parks booth at the event. He said he is planning a meeting at the end of January or early February with community stake holders who are interested in producing a trail and parks map and work on raising funds for it. He advised the Commission that the preliminary report for the HERC building is not promising and somewhat discouraging and is not sure what will be happening next. There is an estimated price tag of \$10 million, so if the City is going to have a community center we should build our own. He is aware of a proposal for a dog park in the HERC area and he suggests holding off on creating a park in the area until they know what is going to be done with the space. Heading into the spring schedule it is becoming more discouraging as we are running out of space for the recreational program activities and there is no compromise. The program will suffer, as there will be angry parents and disappointed children in our community.

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In response to questions Mr. Illg commented that there has been some talk with a local church about using their space for youth wrestling, but it will cost a lot, and it's not guaranteed. They lost 25 kids in the program last year due to scheduling changes. The Boys and Girls Club is hesitant to share their space due to programs they are offering. He discussed the challenges of working with the school district, noting that the City pays to use the space, but still gets bumped if a school need comes up. He wished the group Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

C. Staff Report – Julie Engebretsen, Planning Technician/GIS

Planning Technician Engebretsen was absent.

D. Parks Maintenance – Angie Otteson

Parks Maintenance Coordinator Otteson said she didn't have a report tonight. She noted the park and trails map that was on display at the Health Fair booth is available on the City website. She commented that she loves the idea of a dog park but is hesitant about doing it in the HERC area. She thinks they can continue to look for other suitable locations. She thanked everyone for their work this year and wished them Happy Holidays.

In response to questioning about the camp host Ms. Otteson explained that she thinks they can get someone into a camp host spot before the hook ups are in. It is a new program for the City and it may take a little time to get people who are interested. The application is available on line and she encouraged them to spread the word to people who may be interested in being a camp host. She also let them know that Rotary has agreed to adopt Ben Walter's Park for another year.

Vice Chair Brann asked for Todd Schroeder to make his comment to the Commission. There was no objection.

Mr. Schroeder with the Soil and Water Conservation District provided information to the Commission regarding the Diamond Creek Recreation Area Multi-Resource Management Draft Plan. He encouraged the Commission to review the information and he will work with the staff to be scheduled on a future agenda.

E. Kachemak Drive Path Committee – Dave Brann

Vice Chair Brann commented that the Committee talked about seeking funding through grants. If the Committee or Commission can find grants outside of HART funds, Katie would look at it to help determine if it makes sense for the group to pursue. Any money that comes from a grant has to be approved and accepted by Council. He said he met with Carey about the first section and they outlined the parameters of where the surveying would take place.

F. Karen Hornaday Park Committee – Robert Archibald

Commissioner Archibald commented that at their last meeting they considered priorities for the funds available for the day use area improvements. Their priority is to remove the current pavilion and add the new one in conjunction with the dirt work. It would alleviate tearing into the area twice. They developed a task force that will meet January 23<sup>rd</sup> to look at designs of picnic shelters. Public Works Director Meyer participated in discussion about the pavilion. They talked about ways to save costs by

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encouraging a volunteer opportunity, the City designing the structure as compared to getting a kit that can be built on site. Mr. Meyer said he could contact the cities of Seward and Soldotna for information about the cost of their pavilions.

Commissioner Archibald summarized their first priority is moving the picnic shelter, the second is designing the new picnic shelter area, and the third is to do the seeding and landscaping, in that order to avoid re-doing things. As far as the rest of the list goes, they are all important but some of them fall under the maintenance category more than improvements.

Vice Chair Brann called for a break at 7:09 pm and reconvened at 7:12 pm.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

None

**PENDING BUSINESS**

A. Karen Hornaday Park Day Use Recommendations

Commissioner Archibald reiterated the park committee's suggestions to move the existing structure and come up with a feasible plan for a new structure. There was discussion about the best way to proceed. If the work is being done by volunteers it may not need to go to council. If they need to award a contract for any work, then council approval would be required. It might be necessary to have a contractor involved to remove the old structure safely.

Vice Chair Brann suggested sending a memo to the City Manager explaining the process of what they would like to do, utilizing volunteers, and asking for a response on how to proceed. There was no objection from the body.

B. Budget Update

This was moved to the next agenda by consensus of the Commission.

C. Dog Park

Commissioner Lillibridge requested moving this to the next agenda as she would like to show some photos via power point.

Commissioner Lowney said she will be absent in January and wanted to comment that she is in favor of having a dog park at the HERC yard location. It is a central and visible location that is already being used by people doing agility training. There is plenty of parking and most of the area is already fenced. If you hide it in an offset location people won't be used as much.

Commissioner Archibald said he has heard favorable comments from people about that area as well. He has some ideas he will share next time.

**NEW BUSINESS**

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A. Strategic Planning

This was moved to the next agenda by consensus of the Commission.

B. Commissioner Attendance at 2013 Council Meetings

The Commission reviewed the dates and confirmed the following months:

Commissioner Bell- January and August

Commissioner Lowney- March and July

Commissioner Lillibridge- February and June

Vice Chair Brann- April and May

Commissioner Archibald couldn't confirm dates due to his work schedule but would try to fill in when needed.

C. Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Application for Karen Hornaday Park

This agenda item was addressed by Community and Economic Developer Koester at the beginning of the meeting.

D. Kachemak Drive Path Committee

Vice Chair Brann suggested not acting on this until Chair Bremmicker returns to give some feedback. Commissioner Lillibridge thinks it is premature at this point as it is almost Christmas and the Chair is absent. They should devote some discussion as to why it should be disbanded. It has been nice to have sub committees to deal with these issues. She would like to have an understanding of the process going forward before disbanding.

Commissioner Lowney sees the benefit of putting it to an ad hoc committee, but perhaps the Committee could remain in place. The Karen Hornaday Committee had talked about disbanding, suggested meeting quarterly, but continues to meet regularly as there are things that keep coming up. There are pro's and con's, but it might be a good way to go until the wheels get going again.

Commissioner Archibald expressed his awareness that the City is going to be busy with projects and the burden of having a project that is still in its infancy with budget constraints holding it back, and the light at the end of the tunnel is dim. He is unsure if it will be easier to proceed with an ad hoc committee. He agrees with waiting to discuss it when Chair Bremmicker returns.

This was moved to the next agenda by consensus of the Commission.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

A. Approved Ordinance 12-49, Appropriating \$20,000 from HART Fund for Survey Work and Engineering/Cost Estimating for Proposed Kachemak Drive Trail

B. Commissioner Attendance at Council Meetings 2012

C. Commission Annual Calendar 2012

D. Resolution 12-2013 City Council and Advisory Body Meeting Schedule

**COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

None

**COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF**

None

**COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER**

None

**COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR**

None

**COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Lillibridge wished everyone a wonderful holiday and good vacation. Everyone has worked very hard this year and this is a dynamic, hardworking Commission. She is proud to be a Commissioner with this group and has had a lot of fun this year.

Commissioner Lowney wished everyone Merry Christmas and agrees this has been an incredible year. She looks forward to another good year and is going to be sorry to miss the next meeting. In reference to the dog park, looking at the HERC area, she isn't opposed to it being a playground, but thinks maybe it is time to develop a playground for another user group in the community. This is a dog friendly community and we need it. There are things in the area that need to be addressed before adding more to that space. As a group they need to address the corner that includes skate park and the basketball court which she thinks is half on city grounds and half on school grounds. Maybe some of it is dependent on what happens with HERC. Before building another play area at the HERC, let's deal with the ones we have.

They asked for an update with what is happening with the HERC building at the next meeting.

Commissioner Bell said it has been a great year and is looking forward to lots of exiting improvement in Parks and Recreation this next year.

Commissioner Archibald said Merry Christmas and that they've accomplish a lot and it's been lots of fun.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 17, 2013 at 5:30 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: \_\_\_\_\_