



City of Homer

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Memorandum

TO: MAYOR CASTNER AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS
FROM: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
THROUGH: JENNY CARROLL, SPECIAL PROJECTS & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
DATE: NOVEMBER 18, 2019
SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORDINANCE 19-47 TO REPEAL HCC 2.76 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

BACKGROUND: The Economic Development Commission (EDC) discussed Ordinance 19-47 to repeal HCC 2.76 at their October 8, 2019 meeting. After lengthy discussion, the EDC generally agreed that there is value in addressing economic development as a City, and in involving citizen input, but that there are structural challenges to the EDC and some of the tasks outlined in the EDC bylaws are no longer needed.

Chair Marks inquired if the Commission would like to submit recommendations or a statement to City Council regarding the proposed disbanding of the commission. The EDC agreed to provide a statement to the Council in the positive, accepting the change from a standing Commission to a convened task force or other possibilities. The EDC requested time to work with the sponsors of the Ordinance to come up with restructuring recommendations. Councilmember Lord agreed to postpone the ordinance to allow further consideration by the EDC.

The EDC took the matter up again at their November 12, 2019 meeting and unanimously agreed to the following:

The EDC recommends that the following important aspects be included in any new restructuring of the City's economic development strategy:

- ***Create an effective annual cycle for City Council review and action on economic development issues facing the City;***
- ***Increase engagement and drive City of Homer issues into the KPEDD Borough-wide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS);***
- ***Utilize citizen time and City resources to the maximum potential for effective decision-making that moves economic development forward in the City.***

Keeping the three above criteria in mind, the EDC then deliberated several different restructuring ideas and ***recommends the following for consideration in revising the draft ordinance:***

Disband the EDC and establish an annual review/action-plan for Economic Development Priorities (EDP).

It was suggested that the annual review process could follow the model of the Capital Improvement Plan and the Land Allocation Plan in which:

- **Every year**, staff sets a review schedule approved by Council to:

a) Circulate economic development priorities amongst Departments, Commissions, Committees, Boards and other community stakeholders with a request to provide City Council with their top three economic projects/goals; any additional economic opportunities, needs, or concerns; and any suggestions for implementation

(City Council could use the Economic Vitality chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan as the economic development priorities; or alternatively, Council could appoint a one-time, temporary Committee to create recommendations for the priorities list from information detailed in the "Economic Vitality" chapter and the City's CEDS documents for the initial Council review.)

b) Schedule an annual Economic Development Priorities (EDP's) worksession and presentation at a City Council Regular Meeting for public comment and for Council to set their top three EDP's for the year. During the worksession, Council will also brainstorm action items for working on EDP's during the year. These may include appointing one or more issue-specific Task Forces, sending requests for information and recommendations to commissions/boards, drafting resolutions or ordinances directly from Council, developing or revising/revisiting strategic partnerships, or conducting a Business, Retention & Expansion Survey/Report.

- ii. **Every 3 years,** the Mayor will appoint, and Council will confirm, a City representative to the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD). This representative will attend KPEDD board meetings, and will report back to Council *at least quarterly*.
- iii. **Every 5 years,** the KPEDD City Representative will work with City Council, the Mayor, and the City Manager's office to strategically engage with KPEDD on their CEDS update in order to gather and promote inclusion of Homer-specific economic development information and needs.

This type of annual review process provides flexibility for City Council to decide the best mechanism for acting on economic development issue(s); provides a mechanism for working with KPEDD on CEDS; and has several points at which public input is solicited.