



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Manager

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov

(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Katie Koester, City Manager
DATE: January 8, 2020
SUBJECT: January 13 City Manager Report

Informal Sister City Gathering Regarding the Town of Teshio

On Friday, December 20th, Mayor Castner assembled a small group of constituents and my assistant Rachel Friedlander to discuss and rekindle the Sister City relationship Homer has with Teshio, Japan. Constituents included Flo Larson, Terri Spigelmyer, and Megumi Beams, a Homer resident from Japan who offered to bring items from Homer and send them to the Teshio Mayor's office on behalf of the City during her vacation to Japan this December/January. The group discussed how the Sister City relationship encourages neighborliness because we share the same waters; helps with students interested in studying abroad in either City; and encourages tourism and cultural understanding. The Mayor believes rekindling this relationship is best served organically through informal citizen partnerships rather than being formerly appointed through Council. The Mayor donated personal funds to be used by Megumi in selecting gifts to bring to Mayor Hiroyuki Sasaki, and both City of Homer and State of Alaska pins were given to Megumi for distribution to Mayor Sasaki's office. As for ideas on how to rekindle and keep the Sister City relationship active, Megumi provided the attached list of ideas for future use. Mayor Castner has invited Megumi to share how her trip to Japan went and any correspondence shared with Mayor Sasaki at the February 10th City Council meeting. Included for historical reference is the 1984 oath taken between the City of Homer and Town of Teshio to establish the Sister City relationship.

AML Ferry Conversation

I participated in a teleconference organized by Alaska Municipal League (AML) that evolved into the establishment of a 'Ferry Caucus.' You have before you this evening a memo to authorize Council participation in a Ferry Caucus legislative fly-in for the first week of the Legislative Session. The focus of the original meeting was an action plan for the group. Participants noted the need to improve communication between coastal communities so that we are all aware of the advocacy efforts of our neighbors and can coordinate. There was also conversation about hiring a public relations contact to keep the group informed and organized. I imagine these will be continuing topics of conversation as the Ferry Caucus takes shape and I encourage Homer to remain engaged.

Flooding

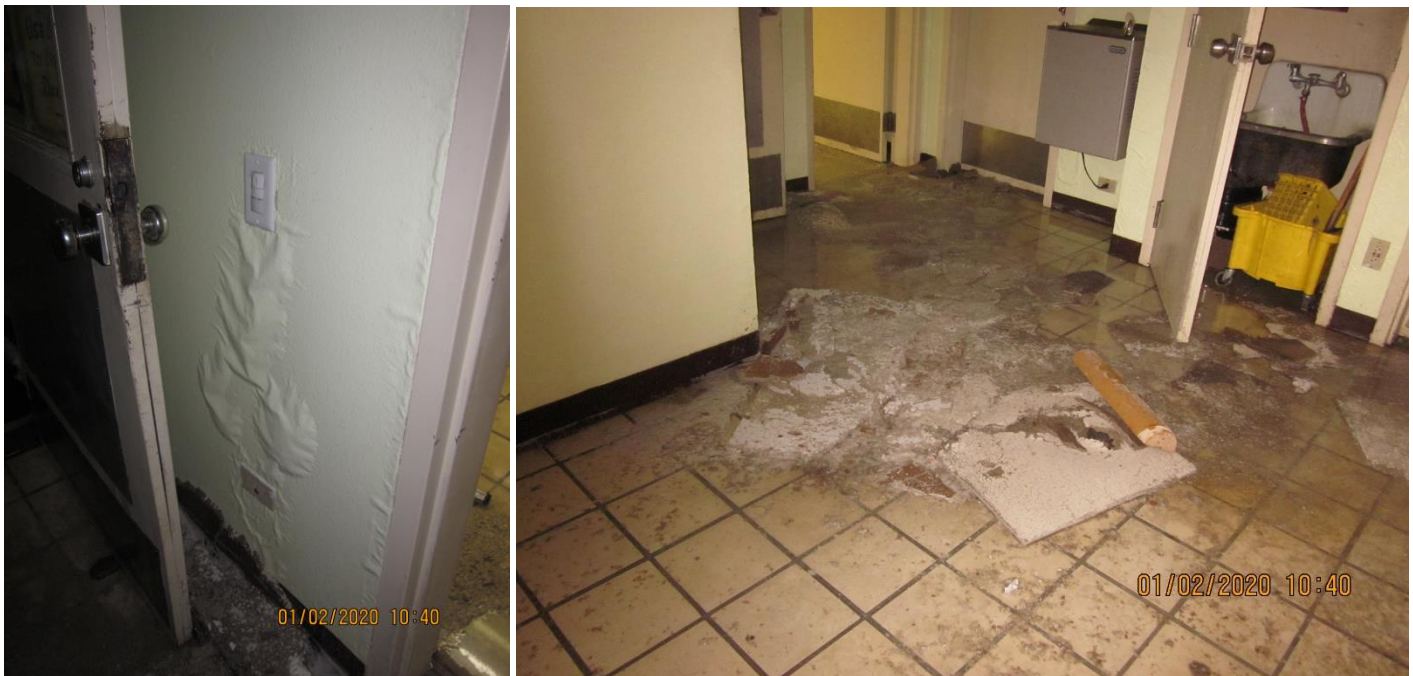
As you recall, the week of December 9th brought heavy rains that flooded area roads and threatened local transportation networks. Public Works was pleased with how well City infrastructure survived the rain storm event. A similar flooding event in 2002 caused significant damage to City roads. Staff believes significant progress on City infrastructure since 2002 contributed to the successful weathering of the storm including:

- 1) Creek/road crossing culverts have been upsized to pass the volume of water and debris that moves during this type of event (i.e. – Woodard Creek)
- 2) Grading of gravel roads and shoulder work along paved roads assured that runoff got off the road to the road side ditches.
- 3) Improving drainage along the roads by maintaining/improving/creating new road side ditches.

Unfortunately State roads did not fare as well. The minimal damage to City roads allowed Public Works to assist limited ADOT crews with protecting East End Road from further damage, repair damage caused by the East End Road flooding, and minimize East End Road traffic flow interruption.

Freezing

Fast-forward to the first of the year and winter has arrived in full force. New Year's Day, the Port and Harbor had a waterline burst in the Ice Plant and there was quite a bit of water damage done to the sheetrock in the lower restroom area. Ice plant staff have cleaned up what they could to prevent further damage, however a contractor will be brought in to repair the damage in order to keep the plant on schedule to begin producing ice again in March. The damage is estimated at under \$10,000 and can be covered under the existing budget. However, if other unanticipated maintenance is needed at the plant in 2020, Council could see a request for additional authority in the future. The exposed pipe that allowed cold air to infiltrate the building has been discovered and repaired, so the issue should not happen again.



Trip Report: Anchorage with Port and Harbor Director Hawkins

On December 12th, Port and Harbor Director Hawkins and I traveled to Anchorage for a number of different meetings. The two takeaways I would like to highlight from the Port and Harbor Director's informative trip report (attached) are: 1) the conversation with HDR on advice for advance planning and owner representation on a project the magnitude of the Large Vessel Harbor (as one of our term contract engineers, HDR will be drafting a proposal on services they can provide) and 2) the very productive meeting we had with Scott Thomas, Traffic Engineer for ADOT. In addition to making recommendations for parking safety improvements on the Spit that we will work on over the winter, Scott had recommendations concerning temporary barriers and signage that could be placed along Ocean Drive to discourage vehicles

from parking on the bike path. These vehicles are a hazard to cyclists and block the line of sight for pedestrians and vehicles pulling out; appropriate signage and barriers would allow HPD to enforce violations. Ocean Drive is a State road and ADOT would propose entering into a management agreement, similar to the pedestrian safety agreement we have with ADOT on the Homer Spit, to manage the parking and safety issues on Ocean Drive during the summer months. If this is an issue Council is interested in pursuing, I will work with Public Works and ADOT on flushing out details of what an agreement would look like and any associated costs.

Water Storage Distribution Improvements Grant Closeout Update

In 2012, Public Works secured a grant, the purpose of which was to design needed improvements to our water distribution/storage system (45% City/55% EPA; \$884,000 total). These projects included:

- Kachemak Drive (Phase III) Water Main Extension
- Shellfish Avenue Water Main Extension
- Redwood Tank Demolition
- A-Frame Water Tank Demolition
- New Water Tank Design
- Micro-Hydro Feasibility Study

In 2015, Public Works secured an ADEC grant, the purpose of which was to construct needed water distribution/storage improvements (30% City/70% ADEC; \$2,797,000 total). These projects included:

- Kachemak Drive (Phase III) Water Main Extension
- Shellfish Avenue Water Main Extension
- A-Frame Water Tank Rehabilitation/Demolition
- A-Frame PRV Station Replacement
- Water Main in Support of New Water Tank
- Telemetry in A-Frame, Shellfish and Kachemak Dr. PRV Stations

These improvements significantly improved the delivery of drinking water to our customers, improved the reliability of fire protection, and reduced maintenance costs.

This grant is being closed out at the end of 2019 and caps a successful effort to use available grant funding to improve the City's water distribution system and minimize the use of the City's Water Reserve/HAWSP funds.

Of particular note: ADEC grant funds that we hoped could be used to rehabilitate the A-Frame Tank could not be utilized. The cost to rehabilitate the A-Frame Tank were higher than replacement. The unused funding allowed for installation of telemetry in three existing PRV stations. These remaining grant funds would have been lost if the telemetry work had not been identified. The cost of telemetry in these stations was included in Public Work's 2020/21 budget capital request. Using the available unused grant funds eliminated the need for direct City funding in the additional amount of \$130,000. To stay within budget, City crews installed the telemetry equipment.

Next steps in the water storage distribution improvements project, which is listed on the Capital Improvement Plan, is replacement of the A-Frame Tank and constructing the proposed Shellfish Water Tank to improve drinking water and fire protection redundancy and allow for effective installation of micro-hydro facilities.

Proposed Improvements to the Skate Park

A community group, Friends of the Homer Skate Park, has approached the City about making improvements to the current park. They requested a letter of support from the City of Homer to be able to begin fundraising. I have been very clear with organizers that the future of the HERC building and grounds is uncertain and I would limit improvements to immediate safety concerns, improvements that cost very little, or structures that are removable. The attached letter outlines some of the improvements envisioned and will hopefully allow this group to begin their fundraising efforts.

Opportunity to Participate in the Governor's Conversation

AML is encouraging municipalities to respond to the questions Governor Dunleavy posed in his ADN article entitled "Time for a Conversation About the Alaska We Want." Questions include:

- Do we want to continue to grow government with little or no controls on spending, or do we want a spending limit?
- How do we want to pay for government going forward if oil revenue is not enough to pay for the government we have?
- Which programs and services do we wish to preserve?
- What should the PFD look like going forward?
- Are we committed to developing our resources to provide jobs, wealth, and revenue for Alaskans or not?
- What sacrifices are we as Alaskans willing to make in order to leave a better Alaska for our children and grandchildren?

These points should be kept in mind as Homer works to draft comments to the Governor and shared with AML for advocacy. Please let me know if there is a member who is interested in tackling any of these topics and bringing suggestions before the body.

ENC:

Ideas on How to Rekindle and Keep the Sister City Relationship by Megumi Beams

1984 Oath taken between the City of Homer and Town of Teshio to Establish the Sister City Relationship

Letter of Support to Friends of Homer Skate Park

Trip Report from Port and Harbor Director Hawkins

Governor Dunleavy's article, "Time for a Conversation About the Alaska We Want."

Homer Public Safety Building Progress Report, 12/3/19 through 1/8/20

4th Quarter 2019 Customer Feedback Log

Memo from City Clerk Jacobsen on By Mail Election Meeting with KPB Clerks

Letter from KHLT on Louie's Lagoon Conservation Easement