



City of Homer

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Planning

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To: Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission
From: Julie Engebretsen, Deputy City Planner
Date: March 12, 2020
Subject: Draft Ordinance Amending HCC 19.08 campgrounds

Requested Action: Discuss the draft ordinance, make any changes, and forward a recommendation to the City Council.

Introduction

This ordinance makes two changes. Line 24 changes the camping season when City campgrounds may be open for camping. The second change begins on line 73, and changes how long someone can stay in a municipal campground.

Camping Season (Line 24)

The camping season as defined in code is April 1- October 30. It is illegal to camp in a closed campground outside of this timeframe, unless the City Manager declares one of the Spit campgrounds open for winter camping, as the Fishing Hole campground currently is used. Although Homer is experiencing a normal, cold winter this year, prior years have been unseasonably warm. With warmer weather has also come for more requests to camp in city campgrounds before April 1, particularly at Mariner Park. The Winter King Tournament, held in March, also draws a few RVs. The Fishing Hole Campground is currently available for winter camping, but Mariner Park is not. Parks Maintenance Coordinator Steffy suggests that revenue from Mariner Park if it opened in March would cover the cost of a porta potty, and would be a minimal change in workload for staff. Mariner Park is a more desirable location for visitors to enjoy waterfront camping.

Staff recommendation: Change the camping season start date from April 1 to March 1.

Staff note: If this is too broad a change, another section of code could be changed to allow the City Manager to open camping for an event or in case of increased demand.

Fiscal Note: Camping Revenue is expected to cover the increased cost of porta potty rental. Residents will also benefit from having a porta potty at the park for more of the year. Staff is already at the park on a daily basis collecting trash so no increase in service or costs are expected. Revenue projection \$400. Cost projection: \$300.

Maximum duration of stay (Line 73)

Currently in code, a visitor can stay in any combination of city campgrounds for 14 days. Those 14 days do not have to be consecutive camping days. Thereafter, they are not allowed in any city campground for 14 days. There is an exception in code that if there are enough vacant spaces, then they can be allowed to stay. The proposed change would state no one could camp in the same campsite for more than 14 days. After that, they could move to a new campsite for another 14 days at either the same or a different city campground.

Staff does not think this will result in more people living in City campgrounds. With a camping fee of \$20 a day, or \$600 a month, staff does not feel the change will result in more people staying for longer stretches. But we do have visitors that might spend a week at Hornaday campground, and another two weeks on the Spit.

Fiscal Note: not change in revenue or expenses are expected

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