

Homer Comprehensive Plan Update Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #3
Thursday, April 26, 2007; 12-2 p.m.
Cowles Council Chambers
Meeting Notes

Eight of the thirteen committee members were present at the meeting held at the Cowles City Council Chambers. The meeting was facilitated by Tanya Iden and Ellen Campfield Nelson of Agnew::Beck Consulting.

Attendance:

Committee Members

Allegra Bukojemsky	Ethan Martin - ABSENT
Marianne Schlegelmilch	Michael McCarthy
Bill Smith	Val McLay
Christopher Story - ABSENT	Jim Henkelman
Hannah Bradley - ABSENT	Bob Howard - ABSENT
Anne Marie Holen	Barb Seaman
Tina Day – ABSENT	

Interested Community Members

n/a

Staff

Beth McKibben, Homer Planning Dept.	Tamas Deak, KPB
Tanya Iden, Agnew::Beck Consulting	Tom Brigham, HDR
Ellen Campfield Nelson, Agnew::Beck	Steve Colt, ISER

Public Workshop Attendance

The CAC was asked whether they thought the Community Workshop was representative of the Homer Community in general. Many CAC members expressed that the community members who attended the Workshop were in large part the same group of people who come to all the meetings in town. The group then discussed how they might better reach portions of the community who do not seem to be participating in the Comp Plan process.

Publicity/Outreach for the Comp Plan Process and CAC

The CAC agreed they want to spend more time reaching out to the community and community groups to involve them in the Comp Plan process. Word of mouth is very effective in Homer. The following outreach methods were brainstormed:

- Develop a letter to the editor from the CAC Chair (Val McLay) identifying CAC members and describing how to be involved in the planning process.
- List CAC members on the website – www.homercompplan.com.
- Contact Homer Tribune/News to ask if they will list CAC members.
- Use the newsletters and publications of existing groups to insert “blurb” about the Comp Plan Process, how to be involved, the CAC, and list CAC members. For example:
 - Kachemak Bay Land Trust Spring newsletter – Barb Seaman

- Chamber of Commerce newsletter – Tina Day
- Other groups CAC members participate in?
- Post flyers around town reminding community about the website.
- Planning Dept. and CAC present at monthly meetings of existing groups/organizations in order to spread the word about the Comp Plan and get a variety of people involved. It was determined that Barb Seaman would help Beth McKibben develop an “Outreach List.” A couple of groups were mentioned - Board of Realtors, Rotary, and the Chamber of Commerce.
- Widely distribute the comment form.

Workshop Debrief

Many good new ideas came out of the Workshop (April 25, 5:00-8:30pm). The following sections present recommendations by topic; the section immediately below presents several general comments related to the plan process:

- What responsibility do I, as an individual, have to make Comp Plan happen? Put something in the plan about taking individual responsibility.
- Look at the downside of every implementation idea (i.e., strict regulation of growth impacts land prices.)
- Focus on partnership, non-City entities that would be candidates for implementing different aspects of the plan (e.g., winter trail grooming done by nonprofit group; child care services provided by a for-profit entity).
- Importance of enforcement and sticking to the Plan

The CAC discussed each of the workshop “breakout sessions.” The main points from each of the Public Workshop breakout sessions are summarized in the Public Workshop Synopsis (attached). The discussion at this CAC meeting focused on Land Use & Housing and Economic Development.

LAND USE + HOUSING

The CAC discussed several themes explored at the Public Workshop which add depth to the issues described in the Issues & Goals Report.

- Future Growth and Extension of Services
 - Long term growth projections are important.
 - Try to anticipate where growth will occur, notably where annexation might happen next; decide how best to work with people through the process.
 - All land owners should be given a copy of the Comp Plan or a summary, like a small brochure, explaining expectations regarding future growth. This information would be especially helpful for people preparing for potential LID’s (Limited Improvement Districts) and annexation.
 - Recurring theme was the increase in growth around the periphery of the city and how to deal with extending services to these people. The relationship between Homer and Kachemak City was specifically mentioned, along with the question of how Kachemak City could access different types federal funding to help subsidize Homer projects.
 - Suggestion that subdivision developers should be required to pay for the infrastructure needed for their projects.

- Affordable Housing
 - Concern that the lifestyle in Homer will be forced to change due to rising housing prices, etc.
 - Strong desire to help low to moderate income people in Homer have a place to live. There is a dilemma that as Homer becomes a more attractive place to live, housing prices rise.
 - Want to include images of different types of affordable housing, open space housing, etc. in the Comp Plan.
- Regulatory/Zoning Issues
 - Current zoning and enforcement needs to be addressed
 - May need to add new zoning districts, specifically more residential types. Rural residential allows for lots as small as 15,000sf. Some people don't perceive this to be "rural" residential.
 - Final platting authority is needed for the city (Borough has it currently) – what additional resources would the city need to take this on: staff, GIS capabilities, etc.?
 - Plan should explain mixed-use development more clearly. Specific idea was artist lofts over commercial areas to encourage art development and walkability.
- Parking surfaced many times as a big issue.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The Comp Plan needs to be clear regarding intent to support economic growth, the laundry list of specific examples in old plan is too limiting. For instance: timber harvesting was a high priority prescribed in the 1989 plan; rather than prescribing specific "shall" uses, be a little more flexible about the goals.
- Need to accommodate both recreation and industrial uses on the Spit – important to the economy.
- Homer should capitalize on its recreational location and resources for economic development. Specific recreational opportunities discussed: Bay Crest Ski Hill, Olsen Mountain. Camping – is more needed?
- Focus on more passive/eco-tourism. Comp plan support quiet recreation. Tidal pool exploration, bird watching, wildlife viewing, etc.
- Promote Scenic Byways designation - Homer to Cooper Landing
- Two layers of tourism – across the bay and within Homer – promote more of a diversity of options on "this side." Not only a gateway to Kachemak Bay State Park but also a destination in its own right.
- Are there more benefits to recreational development than there are downsides? What about "Aspenification?"

ENVIRONMENT + OPEN SPACE

- See workshop synopsis for major points developed by the Community

TRANSPORTATION

- See workshop synopsis for major points developed by the Community

PUBLIC SERVICES + FACILITIES

- See workshop synopsis for major points developed by the Community

GENERAL

There was consensus around the fact that the Plan needs to be broad and outline the “intention” of the City. “Clarity of intent would allow latitude for implementation.”

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, June 26, 2007, 6-8pm in City Council Chambers

Purpose will be to review portions of the draft Plan