

Economic Development Report

Housing: In March, an RFP was written for development of City owned property for housing development. The Economic Development Commission approved the RFP on April 26, 2019. I then partnered with Capital Facilities, Planning and Zoning, the Interim City Manager and the City Clerk, to improve this process.

Following those discussions, I will create a presentation to Council and attach maps of properties, specific incentives the city can offer for the individual properties, and recommend the area that is most ready for development. Council can consider this, which will also be good outreach to the community, regarding which property will move forward with an RFP.

I also attended the Senior Citizen Board meeting June 18, 2019. I have been in contact with several board members who would like to see movement again on senior housing. They have 23 people on their waiting list for housing. I am working with Planning and Zoning to help with this issue. I will also be exploring grant options for the Senior Center, while exploring approval for a public/private partnership. We are hopeful there might be some positive movement in the right direction regarding senior housing development in the near future.

I have also started the process of an overall Strategic Housing Plan that I budgeted for this year. This research investment has far-reaching implications on quality of life and economic opportunity for Valdez residents. The plan will provide a common understanding of Valdez's housing gaps and a roadmap for addressing the most pressing housing needs in the community.

Business Lunch and Learn: We do not have a date yet, but the next lunch and learn will be a session with a representative from the Alaska Small Business Administration. They will advise business owners about the programs and grants available for expansion and business start-ups. There are some great ideas out there for start-ups with our tourist population increasing.

Marketing: Our maps for the cruise ships were a big hit. We will be adding some icons to the new print run. We received feedback from passengers and the community and we will implement those changes. We are still working on marketing material for Doing Business in Valdez, Cruise Valdez, and Explore Valdez for the Ports and Harbors Department.

I am working on projects including wayfinding, placing information for cruise ship passengers, creating new banners for Kelsey Dock, adding new signs around city with new maps and information for the community and tourists, replacing old weathered signage, and adding rack card holders for marketing businesses at the airport. I have also ordered a bronze plaque for the Alyeska Statue at the Kelsey Dock.

Communication: The post cards have been a huge hit. I have heard lots of positive feedback. We will continue to send post cards about our city events.

Events: On Saturday, May 25, 2019, **Military Appreciation Day** was a big success! The weather was a big factor. We had more than double the attendance compared to last year, going from approximately 150 to 300 attendees. We also debuted our new stage. It made things more professional and the Mayor did an outstanding job. We had three speakers and the 9th Army band played.

On Sunday, May 26, 2019, we had 10 boats leave the harbor full of military personnel for a day of fishing. The seas were very choppy for all. Some caught fish and some fed the fish.

The Opener Music Festival was June 14 and 15, 2019. We featured David Reynolds, The Moondoggies, 32 Degrees, Area 907, and Hannah Bethel. Mother Nature somewhat cooperated on Friday, and the rain affected the event on Saturday. We had around 200 event participants. The beer on the pier was a success. We had some complaints about the beer garden not being near the music. We have adjusted that for the July 4th event and will continue to learn from each event going forward.

When it rained on Saturday, we counted 68 cars on both sides of Fidalgo and Hazelet with people in their cars listening to the music. Since this was our first music fest, we have some adjustments to make for next year.

We are exploring different configurations of the event based on the feedback we received and suggestions are still very welcome.