

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

VOTE TO APPROVE D.1 ON THE AGENDA:

YEA: Knackstedt, Molloy, Gabriel

NAY: Winger, Glendening, Pettey

MOTION FAILED.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT (Public comment limited to three (3) minutes per speaker; thirty (30) minutes aggregated)

Tim Redder recounted the experience of his father, "Grandpa Jim," who suffered from a rapid decline in health from COVID-19 and eventually passed. He requested that the Council implement a mask requirement in all public places within the City of Kenai, in order to protect our citizens, and especially those like his father whose underlying health conditions leave them vulnerable to public spread.

Craig Wortham, General Manager of Alyeska Tire, implored that the Council initiate a City-wide mask mandate, particularly within local businesses. He discussed issues that his business has been faced with, including: having to shut two stores during what is normally a highly profitable quarter, due to exposures outside their control; how the resulting loss of revenue has been exacerbated by increased operating costs (purchases of PPE and post-exposure sanitation services); the passing of an employee from the virus; and ongoing harassment faced by employees from people who resist the stores' mask-wearing policy. Mr. Wortham explained that a City-wide mandate would alleviate some of the hardship felt by individual businesses who are currently responsible for implementing their own mask policies, thereby lessening the overall economic toll.

Jerry Wortham, owner of Alyeska Tire, clarified that they initiated their in-store mask policy at the beginning of the pandemic. He reiterated Craig Wortham's statements about the hardships their business has faced, and supported his appeal to the Council to take pressure off of small local businesses by implementing a mask mandate for the City.

C. PUBLIC HEARING

- 1. Resolution No. 2020-89** - Opposing Alternative 4 Proposed to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council that would Close All Federal Waters in Cook Inlet to Commercial Salmon Fishing. (Mayor Gabriel)

MOTION:

Vice Mayor Molloy **MOVED** to adopt Resolution No. 2020-89 and Council Member Knackstedt **SECONDED** the motion.

Mayor Gabriel opened for public hearing.

Teague Vanek, urged Council to oppose Alternative 4 and pass the Resolution. As someone who frequently does business in the Kenai area, he can attest that if Alternative 4 passed he would have less to contribute to the local economy.

Roland Maw expressed gratitude for the expediency with which the Council came forward to respond to this issue, especially considering Alternative 4 and its related documents were made public on very short notice and allowed only a limited time for public comment. Expressed concern that if Alternative 4 is passed, fish-processing plants could be closed entirely and long-running businesses shut down. Urged the Council to oppose Alternative 4.

John McCombs expressed frustration at state and federal government inaction and non-compliance, and stated his opposition to all four Alternatives. He asserted that the Alternatives do not comply with national standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, nor were they written by fishermen. He explained that has seen how non-compliance has damaged the local economy and community. He expressed gratitude to the Council for addressing this issue.

Steve Vanek agreed with the statements made by John McCombs, and discussed the common confusion fishermen have over the demarcation of federal waters. He stated that Alternative 4 would be a death knell for the fishery, and noted that the local community could be substantially affected if they lose income from the raw fish tax. Thanked the Council for addressing the matter and encouraged them to pass this Resolution.

David Martin thanked the Council for their timeliness in addressing the issue of Alternative 4, and voiced his wholehearted support for the Resolution. He noted several issues, including: that some people used to fish mainly, and often exclusively, in the waters 3 miles beyond shore before State management placed restrictions there; that the number of fish harvested in this area is an indicator of run strength, so without commercial fisheries operating there the statistical data on fish in Cook Inlet would be limited; that this area is also where the highest quality salmon is harvested, and most fish harvested from Cook Inlet go to a fresh market where they demand a higher price; and that this is the only area where drift fleet can harvest other species of salmon in the Inlet. Reiterated that Alternative 4 is not compliant with the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

There being no one else wishing to be heard, the public hearing was closed.

Mayor Gabriel passed the gavel to Vice Mayor Molloy in order to speak on the Resolution that he sponsored. Noted that this is a complex issue, and referenced a 2016 ruling that ordered that the State of Alaska to bring their fisheries management plan into compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Explained that Alternative 4 was a last-minute addition that has not been given adequate time for public consideration, and that one reason Alternatives 1 through 3 have not been discussed by Council is that they were proposed much earlier. Noted that, under National Standard #8 in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, it is the City of Kenai's responsibility to stand up and make their voices heard when there is a measure that will adversely affect our community.

Local fishermen and members of the public were thanked for coming forward to speak on this issue. It was noted that just because this Resolution does not include the other Alternatives that does not mean the Council supports them.

It was explained that the success of the local fishing industry affects many other businesses in the community and further noted that the community doesn't need an Alternative that would shut down commercial fishing in an already difficult economic time.

Clarification was provided that this discussion was not just about one user group, but that all user groups in the Cook Inlet Drainage are important.

MOTION TO AMEND:

Council Member Knackstedt **MOVED** to amend Resolution No. 2020-89 by adding a new Section 2 as follows: "That the City Council has not considered which of the remaining alternatives should be adopted by the NPFMC." Vice Mayor Molloy **SECONDED** the motion. Council Member Knackstedt requested **UNANIMOUS COUNSENT**.

VOTE ON THE AMENDMENT: There being no objection; **SO ORDERED.**

Mayor Gabriel requested that all Council Members sign the Resolution as amended.

It was pointed out that this Resolution was consistent with past Resolutions passed by Council which supported science-based decisions for issues affecting all user groups in the fishing industry.

VOTE ON THE MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED:

YEA: Molloy, Winger, Glendening, Pettey, Gabriel, Knackstedt

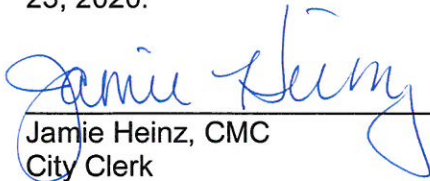
NAY:

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

E. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

I certify the above represents accurate minutes of the Kenai City Council meeting of November 23, 2020.



Jamie Heinz, CMC
City Clerk

