

Assembly, Council Want UAF Research Vessel

Wednesday, 29 April 2009

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/090429.research_vessel.mp3{/audio}

Erik Wander/KMXT

At Tuesday night's Kodiak Borough Assembly-City Council joint work session, the two governing bodies took up the issue of attracting a University of Alaska Fairbanks research vessel to Kodiak. In a March letter to the City Council, City Mayor Carolyn Floyd and City Manager Linda Freed, Borough Mayor Jerome Selby made a case for home porting UAF's Alaska Region Research Vessel in Kodiak.

Selby said that the timing of examining that possibility is appropriate as the city engages in development of a comprehensive plan for waterfront property and facilities. He also said with the Kodiak Fisheries Research Center and the proposed Alaska Department of Fish and Game research facility, home porting the ARRV in Kodiak has the potential to make it a hub for marine research in Alaska.

Freed expressed her concerns about where the approximately 200 to 300-foot vessel would berth, given that the NOAA Ship Oscar Dyson and the Alaska Marine Highway's Ferry Tustumena already have dedicated space. She also said Kodiak is in competition with Seward, which has already made its interest known and looked into various options for home porting the ARRV there.

Borough assemblywoman Pat Branson said Kodiak should use the competition with Seward for the right to homeport the vessel as a motivating factor in the Borough's and City's collaborative efforts.

-- (Vessel 1 38 sec. "I don't want that to be ... just spur us forward.")

City councilman Jack Maker expressed his concerns about where to put the vessel as well as how to fund any new facilities that would have to be built in order to accommodate it, but he said he likes the idea in theory.

-- (Vessel 2 36 sec. "The city dock between ... a lot on our horizon.")

City councilman Terry Haines emphasized the benefits home porting the vessel in Kodiak would have on the community as a whole and supported exploring the feasibility of bringing the ARR.V here.

-- (Vessel 3 49 sec. "The municipality has put ... if it's practical.")

That next step, Borough Assembly and City Council members agreed, is for the city to address a letter to the University as well as Alaska's congressional delegation and state legislators making Kodiak's interests known and exploring funding opportunities necessary to lure the ARR.V to Kodiak.

###