

SITKA POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION

Wednesday March 5, 2008 – 7:00 P.M.

Harrigan Centennial Hall

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Gwen Lazzarini, Gail Roderick, Michael Wise, Joseph Reeves

Others Present: Sheldon Schmitt, Sitka Police Chief, Rob Janik, Sitka Fire Department
Scott Brylinsky, Public Works Operations Chief

Members of the Public: John Litten, Natalie Sattler, Paul Olsen

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was motioned/seconded (Lazzarini/Wise) to approve the minutes from February 6, 2008 meeting.
Motion carried.

D. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Chief Schmitt asked that Item 2, Discussion of the Bear Ordinance, be moved up to accommodate members of the public and that Natalie Sattler be allowed to speak about a bike shelter in downtown.

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA – None

F. COMMUNICATIONS – None

G. REPORTS

- 1. Chair – None**
- 2. Vice Chair – None**
- 3. Police Chief – None**
- 4. Fire Chief**

Rob Janik sat in for Chief Elmer and briefly informed the Commission on the number of incidents and calls of service.

H. OLD BUSINESS

1. Downtown Tour Bus Parking

Ms. Lazzarini reviewed her ideas of moving tour bus parking from Lincoln to Maksoutoff and converting Maksoutoff to a one way during the summer. Mr. Litten informed the Commission that tour buses used to park on Maksoutoff parallel to the Triune Building but were moved to Lincoln St. to allow for additional parking for businesses. Moving the parking would eliminate tourists having to cross the street twice to get to the Russian Church, eliminate traffic backing up on Lincoln and would encourage deliveries prior to 9:30 A.M. He also suggested that, if approved by the Assembly, signage indicate commercial and bus parking only. He thanked Chiefs Schmitt and Elmer for installing the mirror in front of Wells Fargo. It measures 36" in diameter.

After discussion, it was motioned/seconded (Roderick/Lazzarini) to forward the issue to the Assembly to change current dedicated commercial vehicle and bus parking loading and unloading on Lincoln St. to Maksoutoff, next to the Triune Building, and converting Maksoutoff to a one-way street towards Harbor Drive. Motion Carried.

Mr. Litten also addressed the Commission about allowing two-way traffic at the larger Centennial Building driveway. It would alleviate congestion at certain times of the day.

I. NEW BUSINESS

1. Citizen request for additional handicap parking on Lincoln St.

Ms. Roderick heard that the owner of the building where Fairweather is located is adamantly opposed to allowing an additional handicap space on Lincoln. Ms. Lazzarini brought up the question of whether or not handicap parking is enforced. Chief Schmitt brought up the dedicated parking space behind the American Legion as a possible location for Mr. Burton to park if the space is properly set up. He would first like to see the Legion exhaust all other options before continuing to discuss altering parking on Lincoln St. Ms. Roderick pointed out that if a handicap space were added, it wouldn't guarantee Mr. Burton get that space every time. Ms. Lazzarini thought he could continue to park in the parking lot behind Mac's/Russell's and use the alley next to the drugstore as an alternative to the alley that's currently blocked off. It was agreed that the Chair and Chief Schmitt visit Mr. Burton to discuss options and that this item be deferred to Old Business on next month's agenda.

2. Discussion of Sitka Conservation Society's Bear Ordinance

Natalie Sattler of the Sitka Conservation Society and the Sitka Bear Working Group spoke about the proposed Safe Neighborhoods/Wild Bears Ordinance. The number of reported bears is increasing and now is the time to do an ordinance as a tool to address problems such as trash.

Paul Olsen, also with the Sitka Conservation Society, informed the Commission that the proposed ordinance is largely modeled after Juneau's, which has been effective. They conducted a study that showed most bear intrusions have been because of garbage. They would like to see food/fish waste out of garbage cans. The ordinance will be somewhat enforced like a ticket/infraction. The first offense will be a warning, to give them a chance to get educated. The second and third offenses will be fines. Chief Schmitt recommended that the Commission support this ordinance.

It was motioned/seconded (Wise/Reeves) to recommend that the Assembly approve the bear ordinance. Motion carried.

3. Discussion of a policy for traffic calming devices in Sitka

Scott Brylinski, new Operations Chief for the City's Public Works Department, introduced himself and his position to the Commission. He informed the Commission that after a study, the recommended flashing device for DeGross St. would violate traffic rules. He would like to establish a policy for public requests to streamline the process.

After discussion, it was motioned/seconded (Roderick/Reeves) to recommend that Mr. Brylinski create a policy for the public to make traffic requests to the Police and Fire Commission then the Commission present those requests to Mr. Brylinski for feasibility. Motion carried.

Ms. Lazzarini brought samples of materials from Traffic Logix for review. Mr. Wise asked if there is a way to prove that speeding in neighborhoods is occurring.

It was motioned/seconded (Lazzarini/Roderick) to request that the Municipal Engineer, through the Public Works Director, study traffic patterns and speeding on DeGross St. and whether or not traffic calming devices, such as speed humps, etc., be recommended. Motion carried.

4. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

It was motioned/seconded (Lazzarini/Roderick) that Michael Wise be nominated for Chair for one year. Motion carried. It was motioned/seconded (Roderick/Wise) that Gwen Lazzarini be nominated for Vice-Chair for one year. Motion carried.

5. Proposed bike shelter in downtown Sitka

Natalie Sattler of the Sitka Bike Friendly Community Coalition was present to inform the Commission that the Coalition received funding from the Banff Mountain Film Festival for a bike shelter. The Coalition would like to put the shelter on the corner of Lake and Lincoln St. and include a bike rack for approximately 12-14 bikes. She and the Commission discussed parking enforcement, signage and bike abandonment. Ms. Lazzarini asked if Ms. Sattler received any feedback from bikers. Ms. Sattler responded that they have.

J. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Chief Schmitt informed the Commission that he would like to adopt an ordinance to allow the Sitka Police Department to write tickets for adult seat belt and proof of insurance. He would like to ensure the money for tickets goes to the City and Borough of Sitka and not the State of Alaska as it does now.

It was motioned/seconded (Wise/Reeves) that the Commission moves forward with the Chief's proposed ordinance and recommend it to the Assembly. Motion carried.

K. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS

Next meeting date: April 2, 2008

L. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.