
SITKA POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION

Wednesday, June 6th, 2007 – 7:00 P.M.
Harrigan Centennial Hall

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Daniels called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

B. ROLL CALL

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|---------------------|---|--|
| Present: | Mr. Dennie Daniels Mr. Joseph Reeves | Mr. Michael Wise |
| Absent and excused: | Ms. Gail Roderick | Ms. Gwen Lazzarini |
| Others Present: | Dave Swearingen Sheldon Schmitt Matt Turner | - Acting Fire Chief - Police Chief - Bicycle Friendly Community Campaign |

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 2ND, 2007 MEETING

MOTION: M/S Daniels/Wise moved to approve the minutes from the May 2nd, 2007 meeting.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 3-0** on a voice vote.

D. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA - NONE

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Mr. Turner spoke about the initiative to help Sitka meet the Bicycle Friendly Community standards set by the League of American Bicyclists, be awarded this recognition, and make Sitka as the first Bicycle Friendly Community in Alaska. He said that they are looking to the Police Department for support in terms of providing statistics and information about the enforcement of the bicycle helmet law, and getting public safety officers on bike patrol.

He further explained that becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community requires the completion of an application that asks specific questions under each of the action focus areas. The process creates a detailed audit of the engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation efforts for the community. Steps needed to complete the application and meet the standards range from creating a detailed inventory of existing and needed bicycling infrastructure, to working with the police department on enforcement of helmet laws, to creating more incentives for people to ride their bikes. Mr. Turner also pointed out his group is a ready-made caucus to champion the efforts of the Police Department.

Chief Schmitt said the Police Department has been active in promoting the bicycle helmet law and has been actively involved in the bike rodeo. He mentioned that the SPD is currently short on staff that there is no police officer available to go on bike patrol. He expressed interest in working with Mr. Turner's group especially in the area of enforcement.

F. COMMUNICATIONS - None

G. REPORTS

1. Chairperson

Chair Daniels informed the members about the decision of the sprinkler waiver committee to approve a temporary waiver for the City and Borough of Sitka to operate a concession stand at the Kimsham ballfield with the condition that there will be no kitchen until the building is sprinklered.

2. Vice Chairperson - None

3. Police Chief Schmitt

The following were the highlights of Chief Schmitt's Report:

- Minor consuming cases are on the rise. He said that 65% of the cases are diverted to Tribal Court which is part of the Tribal Youth Diversion Effort (TYDE). He noted success with the program.
- The community jail is full, mostly due to domestic violence cases. He briefly spoke about a severe case involving a woman's face repeatedly bit by a domestic partner.
- SPD got a fully-equipped K-9 car from the Fairbanks Police Department for free. Detective Mark Hake is currently in Fairbanks with the K-9, Justice, for training which will run through July.
- SPD's Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (CVE) Officer continues to perform inspections in Sitka as part of the CVE Program funded through a grant from the Alaska Highway Safety Office.
- The Animal Shelter addition project will not start until fall. The bids for the project came in high that they decided to delay the project.
- The department lost another dispatcher while they are still short of one police officer.

Asked by Mr. Wise about the curfew ordinance, Chief Schmitt said that the curfew is for kids under 18 years old. During school days, curfew is 10:00 pm; weekends, 11:00 pm, and in summer, 12:00 midnight. He said he will bring the ordinance in the next meeting.

4. Acting Fire Chief Dave Swearingen

Acting Fire Chief Swearingen drew his report from a written report prepared by Chief Elmer and stressed on the following:

- The Fire Department received the matching grant of \$86,000 from the Southeast Region EMS for the purchase of a new 4x4 ambulance. The oldest ambulance will go out for surplus once the new ambulance arrives, leaving SFD with 2 ambulances in full service and one in reserve status.
- Alaska State Marshall Dave Tyler will be in town on June 7th.
- The Assembly has approved SFD's budget and accepted increases in funding for travel/training, supplies and equipment for FY 2008.
- Fire Chief Elmer will be in Washington DC from June 16th to the 25th for the National Fire Academy's "Assistance to Firefighter's Grant" peer review. He will be participating in the review of grant requests from across the US for the \$500 million available in this grant program.

On Mr. Wise's query about the details of the ISO fire rating process mentioned in the previous meeting by Chief Elmer, Mr. Swearingen said that he doesn't have any information but he surmised that Sitka will end up getting the same rating which is in the 4-5-6 levels.

H. OLD BUSINESS

1. Swan Lake Crosswalk Update

Chair Daniels noted that based on news reports, the Swan Lake Crosswalk is part of the capital project for the rehabilitation and improvements of Swan Lake in the State budget. He ruled to take this item off the agenda.

I. NEW BUSINESS

1. Vitskari/Burkhart St. Intersection Stop Signs

This issue was brought before the Commission by City Engineering Drafting Manager in an email to Chief Schmitt, copies of which were included in the members' packets. In his email, Mr. Fujioka noted that there are no stop signs on Lance Drive at the Vitskari/Burkhart St. intersection while there are stop signs on Vitskari and Burkhart Streets. He thought that it is time to consider giving the right-of-way to traffic on Vitskari/Burkhart rather than Lance since the vehicles entering the intersection from either side of Lance Drive are invariably turning on to Burkhart. Lance Drive is no longer connected to Sawmill Creek Road. He also mentioned that the development of Hillside, Briggs, and Wingert subdivisions will eventually result in the largest traffic flow being on Vitskari/Burkhart intersection rather than on upper Lance Drive.

Chief Schmitt concurred with Mr. Fujioka's observation and added that two other people have also mentioned it to him. He agreed with Mr. Fujioka's suggestion that they do the 4-way stop first for a period of time until it is apparent that Lance Drive residents, long used to turning on to Burkhart St. without stopping, have adjusted their driving habits.

MOTION: **M/S Daniels/Reeves** moved to recommend to the Public Works Department to install stop signs on Lance Drive at the Vitskari/Burkhart/Lance Drive intersection.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 3-0** on a roll call vote.

2. SPD Personnel Cut

Chief Schmitt explained to the members that during the budget process, the Department was forced to make a position cut but he was given leeway to identify which position to cut. The Assembly told him that he will have the opportunity to bring this cut back before the Assembly should the City comes into a windfall. He noted that City got that windfall as Congress reauthorized the timber receipts program while the City gets a relief from the State in its PERS/TRS obligations. He stressed that he did not want to lose one position since it will be hard to get it back and cuts are tough on personnel morale. He sought support from the Commission to bring back the position.

By consensus, the members expressed support to SPD's request to restore the position previously cut by the Assembly.

J. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Chief Schmitt mentioned an email from Ms. Roberta Flood, a resident of Alice Island, who requested that speed bumps be installed on Alice Loop Road to slow down vehicles. The members thought that there are other streets in town that receive more traffic than Alice Loop Road that would require a traffic calming device such as speed bumps. Chief Schmitt offered to respond to Ms. Flood's email and relay the Commission's position.

Mr. Wise told the members that he will not be able to attend July's meeting.

K. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS

After a brief discussion on rescheduling the next regular meeting which falls on the 4th of July, the members decided to move it to the following day.

Next Meeting Date: July 5th, 2007

Agenda items:

Old Business

1. Tour Bus Parking on Lincoln St./Maksoutoff Traffic Flow

New Business

1. DeGroff St. Traffic Calming Options

L. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

PREPARED BY: Maria Finkenbinder
Contract Secretary