
SITKA POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION
Wednesday, August 1st, 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

Present: Dennie Daniels Michael Wise
 Joseph Reeves Gail Roderick
 Gwen Lazzarini

Others Present: Scott Elmer - Fire Chief
 Lt. Garry McCrary - Representing the Police Chief
 Dan Jones - City and Borough Engineer

Members of the Public: Jean Frank Bill Burns
 Erica Knox Mary Jo McNally
 Jay Stelzenmuller
 Several others who didn't give their names

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 6TH, 2007 MEETING

MOTION: **M/S Lazzarini/Daniels** moved to approve the minutes from the June 6th, 2007 meeting.

DISCUSSION: The Secretary requested that the following amendment be made to the minutes, explaining that the minutes failed to indicate the motion and the vote taken on item no. 2, under new business:

On page 3 of 4, under SPD Personnel Cut, delete the 2nd paragraph that starts with "By consensus..." and replace with the following:

MOTION: **M/S Daniels/Reeves** moved to express support to restore the position previously cut by the Assembly.

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

ACTION: Motion to approve the minutes as amended **PASSED unanimously** on a voice vote.

D. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA - NONE

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

F. COMMUNICATIONS - None

G. REPORTS

1. Chairperson

The Chair informed the members about the decision of the sprinkler waiver committee to deny one request and grant a temporary waiver to another.

2. Vice Chairperson - None

3. Lt. McCrary for the Police Chief

Lt. McCrary briefly discussed the events and cases handled by the Sitka Police Department (SPD) during the month of July, pointing out that they received 2,019 calls, completed 221 reports and made 35 arrests which are normal numbers for summer. He also mentioned the trainings SPD personnel have attended, the assistance provided by the Marine Unit/ERV, and some staffing issues.

He updated the Commission about the Live Scan fingerprint system which he said still has some installation issues. They are trying to get the bugs out and are hoping that they'll be able to get additional training from the State.

He also told the Commission that he is currently serving on the Bicycle Friendly Community committee and as part of the program, he began riding one of SPD's bicycles back and forth to work.

The Chair gave a positive comment about the K-9 unit's participation in the Super Saturday event at the Fire Hall.

4. Fire Chief Scott Elmer

Chief Elmer spoke about the review of the City's "Public Protection Classification" by the Insurance Service Office (ISO) scheduled on August 8th. He doesn't expect Sitka's Fire Insurance Rating to move away from the current level of 5. He explained that rating is based on the City's water and communications system, the Fire Department's ability to respond to emergencies, the number of firefighters, fire equipment, etc. He pointed out that the review will also identify areas where the Fire Department can make improvements on. He stressed that that the ISO provides insurance companies with these reports and it is to the interest to the public to bring the number down. The lower the number, the lower the amount of premium paid.

He also told the Commission about the Fire Department's efforts:

- To develop a program for the replacement of the community warning siren system;
- To develop a "scope of work" draft for an update of the Sitka Emergency Operations Plan;
- To develop public information pamphlets for emergency preparedness and response;
- To submit a Homeland Security grant request for the purchase of a security system for the Fire Station.

In response to questions from the Chair and Mr. Wise about the Fire Department's staffing, Chief Elmer explained that some members are cross-trained that they are counted more than once. He also said that he had the opportunity to sit on the committee that reviewed the Assistance to Firefighters Grant applications and he learned that for a community of Sitka's size, the Fire Departments have budgets averaging \$5 million to \$6 million. He pointed out that Sitka could use more volunteer firefighters and in the area of apparatus.

He also told the Commission that the Fire Department did not apply for funding to purchase a ladder truck. He said that since the City is due for evaluation by ISO this year, additional information will be gained on the necessity of this apparatus and the potential financial savings from reducing the current risks in rescue and aerial master stream application.

Asked by Mr. Wise about the presence of a staff on duty in the fire hall at night, Chief Elmer replied in the affirmative.

H. OLD BUSINESS

1. Tour Bus Parking on Lincoln St.

Asked by the Chair about cost estimates on the Bevan proposal for tour bus parking on Lincoln St., Mr. Jones told the Board that he was not prepared to give any as he was only advised by the Secretary to prepare for the next agenda item, which is DeGroff St.

The Secretary told the Board that based on previous Commission minutes, the evening's discussion is supposed to focus on Fred Reeder's "walking mall" proposal that was brought up a few years ago.

The Chair requested Mr. Jones to provide the cost estimates on the Bevan proposal in the next meeting.

I. NEW BUSINESS

1. DeGroff St. Traffic Calming Options

Mr. Jones briefly discussed the three traffic calming options identified by the Commission, namely:

- (1) Rumble strips only;
- (2) Rumble strips plus central island;
- (3) Slalom/chicanes.

At the beginning of his presentation on the cost estimates, Mr. Jones gave a disclaimer, saying that the unit prices may change.

Rumble Strips

Mr. Jones explained that the basic rationale for rumble strips is notification – a reminder to drivers to slowdown or that a stop sign is up ahead. It is a series of grooves on the pavement and is usually used on the freeway. He suggested placing the rumble strips upon entry to DeGroff St. from Sawmill Creek Road and 115 feet before the Baranof St. and Monastery St. intersections. He added that the City crew can plow over it in winter and it is something that can be installed in a week. He presented the following cost estimates for this option:

PAY ITEM DESCRIPTION	PAY UNIT	Quantity	Unit Price	Extended Price
Grooved Asphalt Rumble Strip	EA	4	\$2,500	\$10,000
Estimate Total				\$10,000
Estimating Contingency		0.1		\$1,000
Construction Total				\$11,000
Construction Contingency @ 8%		0.08		\$880
Design at 8%		0.08		\$880
Project Management at 12%		0.12		\$1,320
Project Total				\$14,080

Asked about the noise level and its effects, Mr. Jones said that most of the literature about rumble strips only talks about the noise level on the freeway. He did not have any information on the effects of the noise generated by rumble strips on residents. He said that it is something that he can research on.

Rumble Strips Plus Central Island

Mr. Jones said that the central island provides a psychological input to the driver – it feels narrow; it looks narrow; people won't drive fast. It basically affects people's perception of the width of the road which forces them to slow down. The central island narrows up the street into 9.5 foot lanes and can have rolled curbs possibly 4-5 inches in height so it can be driven over for residents turning to their driveways.

He said that the work involves pavement removal and concrete work. He estimated that the contract work will go up to two months. He gave the following cost estimates for this option:

PAY ITEM DESCRIPTION	PAY UNIT	Quantity	Unit Price	Extended Price
Remove Existing Pavement	SY	450	\$12	\$5,400
Central Island Curb and Gutter	LF	1350	\$90	\$121,500
Choke Point Curb and Gutter	LF	100	\$70	\$7,000
Grooved Asphalt Rumble Strip	EA	4	\$2,500	\$10,000
Estimate Total				\$143,900
Estimating Contingency		0.1		\$14,390
Construction Total				\$158,290
Construction Contingency @ 8%		0.08		\$12,663
Design at 8%		0.08		\$12,663
Project Management at 12%		0.12		\$18,995
Project Total				\$202,611

In response to the Chair's question about the expected life of DeGroff St., Mr. Jones said that the Public Works Department was tasked to do a general survey of City streets for general paving and they found out that DeGroff Street's surface, curb and gutter are newer than other places in town. He pointed out that if a central island is decided upon as the way to go, the work will require taking out the asphalt between the curbs to make sure that the central island doesn't go over the utilities.

Slalom/Chicanes

Mr. Jones pointed out that this option involves bumping out the parking spaces with the center line moving. He cited as an example, the elephant ear shaped curb at the corner of Katlian St. and Lincoln St. in front of City Hall. He said it prevented drivers from cutting around that corner. On DeGroff St., the chicanes would prevent drivers from speeding through it and instead, they will have to slow down and drive through a slalom-like course. He presented the following cost estimates for this option:

PAY ITEM DESCRIPTION	PAY UNIT	Quantity	Unit Price	Extended Price
Remove Existing Pavement	SY	90	\$12	\$1,080
Chicane Curb and Gutter	Ea.	9	\$2,250	\$20,250
Grooved Asphalt Rumble Strip	Ea.	4	\$2,500	\$10,000
Striping	LS	1	\$3,000	\$3,000
Estimate Total				\$31,330
Estimating Contingency		0.1		\$3,130
Construction Total				\$34,460
Construction Contingency @ 8%		0.08		\$2,757

PAY ITEM DESCRIPTION	PAY UNIT	Quantity	Unit Price	Extended Price
Design at 8%		0.08		\$2,757
Project Management at 12%		0.12		\$4,135
Project Total				\$44,109

Public Comments

Mr. Stelzenmuller asked about the objections of State DOT to the temporary jersey barriers to which Mr. Jones explained that State DOT would have let the City continue with the barriers if these were regular concrete barricades with full weighting. Mr. Stelzenmuller liked the idea of central island but he suggested making it shorter and closer to the intersections to serve as choke points. He had problems with the rumble strips due to the noise it would generate and it would be harder on smaller cars.

A lady remarked that rumble strips alone are not sufficient to address the problem.

A gentleman wondered by speed limits are so hard to enforce. He noted that there are signs all over the street and he couldn't understand why it has to reach this level of discussion. He said he's not crazy about the options presented and would rather have the option not to do anything.

Responding to the gentleman's question, Ms. Knox stepped forward to give a brief background about the speeding problems and public safety issues on DeGross Street. She spoke about the discussions at the Police and Fire Commission meetings and how general consensus was reached that it is not enforcement issue but more of a design flaw. She also asked about the status of DOT's plan for a roundabout at the HPR-SMC-Lake St. intersection and how it would affect the traffic situation on DeGross St.

Ms. Knox expressed frustration that the residents were not notified early enough about this meeting and not given enough time to do research and prepare their comments. She shared with the members information from a 90-page traffic calming booklet prepared by the City of Anchorage which recommends speed humps. She said the booklet did not talk about rumble strips and she expressed concern about the central islands option which she thought would make the road too narrow for buses to navigate. She maintained that closure of the street or putting up barriers would still be the best option to calm down traffic on the subject street.

Furthermore, Ms. Knox told the Commission that she polled 41 DeGross St. and Highland St. residents and 37 responded that they want the barricades to remain.

Mr. Burns insisted that one speed bump is all that is needed on DeGross St. to slow down traffic.

Ms. Frank shared Ms. Knox's frustration about not being notified early enough. She thought that chicanes would cause difficulty for snowplowing in winter time. She requested the Commission to revisit speed humps, saying that it works in Seattle streets and its noise level would be a lot lesser than rumble strips. She was also concerned about access for emergency vehicles. She also suggested putting up a camera monitor as an alternate to police presence in the area.

Ms. McNally said that the barricades caused inconvenience to people like her who live on Sawmill Creek Road and use DeGross St. a lot. She suggested that speed humps or speed humps should be considered and for police presence to remain consistently on DeGross St.

Another gentleman supported the idea of speed humps and urged the Commission to give it a thought.

Another member of the public stated that the last thing he wants to see on DeGross St. is the barricades. He asked the Commission to leave the street as it is and stressed that what he wanted is absolute

minimum interference by the City.

Commission Comments

Mr. Wise asked Mr. Jones if putting in painted strips marking the lanes and parking spaces would give the effect of narrowing the streets, Mr. Jones replied that based on literature, it doesn't work. Mr. Wise likewise noted that there is no consensus on what the solution would be or if there is really a real problem on DeGroff St. He added that anything the Commission would recommend will not happen right away. If it requires a big sum of money, it will have to get Assembly approval and it will have to wait till the next budget process.

The Chair reminded members of the public that DeGroff St. is a public road and should be treated accordingly.

On the suggestion of putting in a camera on DeGroff St., Lt. McCrary remarked that the SPD does not have the equipment to do it but what they can do is bring the trailer/radar to the area as often as they possibly can. He added that SPD cannot leave their radar equipment with volunteer residents but he is willing to bring the radar and do the observation with the volunteers.

Ms. Lazzarini commented that Ms. Knox's informal poll results did not match the number of people who attended the Police and Fire Commission and the Assembly meetings when the decision not to extend the jersey barriers was made. She explained that the Commission decided not to recommend the extension due to the overwhelming majority of people who spoke against it in that particular meeting.

The Chair requested more information from Mr. Jones about speed humps, its feasibility for DeGroff St. He ruled to defer action on this item for another month, adding that the Commission will try to look into more options.

J. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Mr. Wise asked if tour bus parking is within the purview of the Commission. The Secretary told the Commission that downtown parking is part of their jurisdiction. She added that the Assembly recently approved the Visitor Plan Version 2.0 which includes the creation of a tourism commission by ordinance. Until the Tourism Commission is organized and decides to take on the issue, the Police and Fire Commission can continue to discuss tour bus parking on Lincoln St.

K. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS

Next Meeting Date: September 5th, 2007

Agenda items:

Old Business

1. Tour Bus Parking on Lincoln St./Maksoutoff Traffic Flow
2. DeGroff St. Traffic Calming Options

New Business

1. Speeding on Monastery St. (Lt. McCrary's request)

L. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

PREPARED BY: Maria Finkenbinder
Contract Secretary