
SITKA POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION
Wednesday, September 6th, 2006 – 7:00 P.M.
Harrigan Centennial Hall

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Mr. Dave Moore Ms. Ginny Moring
 Mr. Dennie Daniels Mr. Michael Wise

Absent & Excused: Ms. Gwen Lazzarini

Others Present: Police Lieutenant Gary McCrary
 Fire Chief Scott Elmer
 Building Official/Fire Marshall Scott Brylinsky
 Public Works Director Rich Riggs

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 2ND, 2006 MEETING

MOTION: M/S **Daniels/Moore** moved to approve the minutes from the August 2nd, 2006 meeting.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 4-0** 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 that he's leaving the next day and will be gone for 10 days.

2. Vice Chairperson – None

3. Police Chief – Lieutenant Garry McCrary

Lt. McCrary highlighted the following items in the written Police Chief's report:

- The grand opening of the Sitka Family Justice Center on Aug. 25, 2006.
- The patrol division gearing up over the Labor Day holiday weekend as part of the State's "Click It or Ticket" and "You Drink You Drive You Lose" campaign.
- The SPD stepping up enforcement efforts when school zones are active.
- The death of a young man after an excessive amount of alcohol consumption plus

substances.

- Unusually high statistics for Title 47 (alcohol/mental) cases for the month.
- The operations of the marine unit including an investigation of a sexual abuse of a minor in the southern part of the island.
- The hiring of a temporary jail officer in place of Jail Officer Jay Myer who is assigned other essential duties of the department.
- The status of the purchase and installation of a live-scan fingerprint system by SPD.
- The purchase and installation of the Digital Eyewitness Media Manager.
- The listing of found property and abandoned/derelict vehicles on the Police Department website.
- The completion of the new impound yard at the Sawmill Cove Industrial Park.
- Construction of the addition to the Animal Shelter

The Police Lieutenant also discussed briefly the different grants and community policing programs the Police Department is currently engaged in.

On Mr. Daniel's question about an update on the K-9 fundraising program, Lt. McCrary said that so far they've raised \$15,000. SPD is aiming for \$45,000 to \$48,000 for three years.

4. Fire Chief Scott Elmer

Fire Chief Elmer pointed out the following important items in his written report:

- The Instructor Training Program scheduled to be completed the first week of October and funded with the remaining funds from the Assistance to Firefighter's grant program.
- The completion of the tsunami inundation map for the Sitka area and the public presentation on tsunamis by Elena Suleimani in the evening of Aug. 28th.
- Delivery of a Firefighter I level certification course which will allow the SFD to be tested for firefighter I level training accreditation by the State of Alaska.
- The Fire Chief to introduce the concept of a public safety dive certification program during the Alaska Fire Chief's Association Board of Director's meeting and conference in Fairbanks.

On the status of the grant application for the ladder truck, Chief Elmer said that he doesn't have any update yet but he expressed optimism for SFD.

5. Assembly Liaison

Mr. Duncan expressed apologies for missing a few meetings. He also spoke briefly about the newly-inaugurated Sitka Family Justice Center and the forthcoming elections.

H. OLD BUSINESS

1. Swan Lake Crosswalk Update

The Chair told the members that this proposal is still with City Staff. Mr. Riggs reiterated his concerns about uncontrolled intersections and crosswalks providing comfort zones to pedestrians. He said that the project is on hold and there's no immediate action to be taken.

2. Lillian Drive Update

The Chair drew the members' attention to the City Staff correspondence particularly on the cost estimates for the speed hump project. He believed that the \$14,000 quote is too pricey and the Commission should ask City expertise in fleshing out the scope/cost of the proposal then have

that information along with the Commission recommendation go to the Assembly and let the Assembly make the final determination.

Mr. Riggs mentioned that this proposal was supposed to go before the Assembly in the budget process but it was not presented when the Assembly made the cuts to the budget. He also pointed out that the speed bumps did not come up prior to paving. The paving was resident driven – through an LID petition. He personally directed the project manager to do a plans-in-hand walkthrough with residents prior to commencing the bid phase. Speed bumps were not on the radar screen for residents at that time.

MOTION: M/S **Moore/Wise** moved to ask the City Administrator to bring the proposal for speed humps on Lillian Drive to the Assembly now or as part of the FY08 budget process.

DISCUSSION: On the question how many speed humps, the Chair said that the intent of the motion is to go forth with the previous recommendation of the Commission for two speed humps.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 4-0** on a roll call vote.

3. DeGroff St. Update

The Chair stressed that the DOT permit is due to expire on October 31st and the Commission needs to make a recommendation to the Assembly either to continue the experiment, stop it, or make it permanent. He wanted to make sure that it is on the Assembly's agenda before the permit expires. He told the members that letters will be sent out to the residents in the area to get their comments in the next meeting and he will request Sitka Sentinel's Shannon Haugland to do a story about it.

The members exchanged views on how the jersey barriers affected the flow of traffic along DeGroff St. and Sawmill Creek Road, and at the intersection of Lake St., HPR and SMC.

Mr. Riggs said that if the Commission endorses to make the structure permanent, it would be a budget item. He pointed out that the Public Works Department is struggling with the street budget and that there's no real big budget to move around. He also said that there is no guarantee that the State DOT will approve to make it permanent.

4. Subcommittee Report on Sprinklers for Downtown Area

The Chair thanked Mr. Wise and Ms. Lazzarini for doing the groundwork and coming up with an impressive report on the proposed sprinkler program for the downtown area.

Mr. Wise discussed the written report that he and Ms. Lazzarini submitted to the Commission, pointing out the background of the proposal, the methodology of the study, the financing options, and the issues related to the proposal. He said that he met with seven property owners and six out of the seven said they would consider adding a sprinkler system to their respective buildings. Ms. Lazzarini also did her own survey of property owners. Mr. Wise summed up his report with the following conclusion:

"The sub-committee believes that a city-funded program to assist business property owners in the downtown area of Sitka has merit and should be further considered by the City Administrator and Assembly."

MOTION: M/S **Moore/Daniels** moved to endorse the conclusion of the Sub-Committee that a city-funded program to assist business property owners in the downtown area

of Sitka has merit and should be further considered by the City Administrator and Assembly.

DISCUSSION: Fire Chief Elmer stressed that when prioritizing the areas for the program, the distance between sprinklered buildings and the existence of firewalls should be considered. He commended Mr. Wise and Ms. Lazzarini for their work.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 4-0** on a roll call vote.

5. TURNING LANE AT JEFF DAVIS ST. AND RAPTOR CENTER

Mr. Riggs told the Commission that there is a forthcoming Transportation Impact Study undertaken by Transportation Engineering NorthWest (TENW), the results of which will be presented to the Assembly on Sept. 26th. Although the study focuses on the impact of the construction of a multi-purpose dock capable of serving cruise ships at the Sawmill Cove Industrial Park, he said he asked Mr. Mike Read of TENW to prepare a brief summary that would focus on the SMC-Jeff Davis intersection. He will provide the Commission a copy of that summary in the next meeting.

He also said that the reconstruction of the Indian River will begin in winter. There will be a way for people to get to the Raptor Center on the other side of the bridge. The new bridge will have pedestrian access on both sides. He suggested advocating to DOT for appropriate signage in the area.

The Chair said that this item will be kept on the agenda till the next meeting.

I. NEW BUSINESS

1. SPEED LIMIT ON SAWMILL CREEK ROAD

The members reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of asking DOT to lower the speed limit on Sawmill Creek Road along the stretch between Indian River Road and Price Street, from 45 mph to 35 mph. They revisited the previous recommendation made the Commission.

Lt. McCrary stressed the need to lower the speed limit especially in the trailer court areas where school children wait for their buses. He added that the Jarvis St. to Price St. area has grown considerably in terms of residential, commercial and industrial activities.

MOTION: M/S **Moring/Daniels** moved to recommend to the City Administrator to ask the State DOT to lower the speed limit on Sawmill Creek Road between Indian River Road and Price Street from 45 mph to 35 mph.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Moring said that a lower speed limit would lower the risks for accidents in the area.

Mr. Daniels said that it is the right thing to do. He pointed out the difficulty of merging with the traffic coming from Jarvis and Smith Streets.

Mr. Duncan pointed out that the area is becoming part of city limits. He endorsed lowering the speed limit on Halibut Point Road from 45 mph to 35 mph. He would do the same for Sawmill Creek Road.

The Chair said that the State denied it once. It may not accommodate the request.

Mr. Riggs said that City Staff has talked about revisiting it. He pointed out that DOT has a different set of decision makers now and may consider the request. He also said that the traffic count is approaching the numbers when the mill was operating.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 3-1** on a roll call vote with Mr. Moore opposed.

2. SMITH STREET PARKING

Lt. McCrary said that this request stemmed from an inquiry made to the Public Works Director about parking along Smith Street and the lack of enforcement. He explained that the Traffic Officer talked to some of the local businesses and construction workers and they were receptive about enforcing parking rules.

The Chair brought up the Sitka Code requirement for business owners outside the central business district to have a certain number of off-street parking areas. Parking within the central business district is provided by the City.

MOTION: M/S **Daniels/Wise** moved to recommend to the City Administrator to put up appropriate "No Parking" signs and a speed limit sign of 20 mph on Smith Street.

DISCUSSION: Lt. McCrary said that they will give a fair warning to business owners in the area before they start enforcing the new rules.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 4-0** on a roll call vote.

J. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Mr. Wise raised a Lincoln St. property owner's concern regarding regulating people using the alleys between buildings to smoke and drink at night. Lt. McCrary said that there are ordinances on smoking and open container. He suggested asking the property owner to call the SPD about their specific concern or problem.

K. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS

Next Meeting Date: October 4th, 2006

Agenda items:

Old Business –

1. DeGroff St. Permit
2. Swan Lake Crosswalk Update
3. Lillian St. update
4. Turning Lane at Jeff Davis St. and Raptor Center

L. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: M/S **Daniels/Moring** moved to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

PREPARED BY: MARIA FINKENBINDER
Contract Secretary