
SITKA PORT AND HARBORS COMMISSION
Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2008
Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Keith Nyitray Chuck Woods
 Mike Slifer Rich MacIntyre
 Marc Moats

Absent: Grant Miller

Others Present: Stan Eliason David Tjomsland
 Dave Malone Rick Steffey
 Eric Jordan Walt Pasternak

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 13TH, 2008 MONTHLY MEETING

MOTION: **M/S Slifer/Woods** moved to approve the minutes from the February 13th, 2008 meeting.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 4-0** on a voice vote. Mr. Moats came in after vote was taken.

III. CHANGES TO AGENDA - NONE

IV. CORRESPONDENCE

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Mr. Tjomsland spoke about the issue of fish box tax and the accountability of it. He distributed copies of his written opinion.

Rick Steffey asked about what happened to the floating barge processing fish waste that was here in Sitka a couple of years ago. He thought that this type of business should be good to have in town. He also wanted to know if DEC has approved grinding and discharging of fish waste in the channel.

Mr. Moats said that SPC has permits to grind and discharge waste and they've tried communicating with commercial sector about not dumping fish waste.

The Chair mentioned the efforts spearheaded by Grant Miller to produce biodiesel from fishwaste and set it up at Sawmill Cove. They are applying for grants right now.

Mr. Jordan stepped forward to discuss the issue of fish waste in the harbors and the related issue of sealions. A lot of fishermen did not know that it is illegal to dump fish carcasses in the harbors with the exception of the two cleaning stations. Originally, he pointed that there was a thought of barging the

carcasses out past the 40-fathom edge. There was no time to look get funds and permitting. He strongly urged that the following be implemented: (1) a signage be put up indicating what the ordinances are regarding dumping of fish in the harbors, and encouraging users not to throw carcasses in the water and instead take it to deeper water; (2) reconfigure the fish cleaning stations that it is difficult for them to slide off the carcasses through the chute, and (3) requesting the City to pass an ordinance to repeal the exemption for the fish cleaning stations. He stressed that the problem is in the channel between the bridge and the breakwater.

Mr. Slifer pointed out that the increase in fish debris in the harbors was exacerbated by the fact that the charter boat operators were required to bring in the fish waste to the harbor. He said that there was no dumping of carcasses by the charter boat operators in Crescent Harbor last year. They hauled their fish waste to outside waters and dumped it there. Kingfisher fleet hauled out their fish waste at the end of the day. He suggested that a barge be stationed at Sealing Cove to collect the fish waste.

Mr. Moats proposed that they get hold of Mr. Miller and meet with Mr. Nyitray and Mr. Majeski next week.

Mr. Dave Malone, speaking as a recreational boater, spoke about the difficulty of taking home fish waste and disposing it as part of household garbage in relation to the recently passed bear nuisance ordinance.

Mr. Walt Pasternak asked the members to pay attention to the problem of dumping fish waste. He also told the Commission that he took offense at a sign by the work float indicating that as a commercial fisherman, he is not allowed to tie up at the work float fish cleaning station.

VI. REPORTS

1. Acting Harbormaster

Mr. Eliason did not give any report but responded to queries from the members regarding the status on the purchase of ladders and the expected income from reserved moorage this year.

2. City Staff – Mr. Dave Wolff, Finance Director

Mr. Wolff responded to questions from the members. To wit:

- (a) The harbor finances look pretty good for the incoming fiscal year that there would be no need for a moorage rate increase.
- (b) He projected future revenue of \$750,000 in raw fish tax based on the last year's collection of \$808,000.
- (c) The projected net loss in 2010 is for the \$2 million project to replace the marine wall.
- (d) Regarding the status of the marine fuel tax grants, Mr. Wolff explained that the State has not passed the appropriations bill that would outline the mechanism to hand out the money. The projection for 2014 does not include ANB Harbor reconstruction. An engineer will be in town to do the estimates for ANB.
- (e) He also told the members that the marine services center won't qualify for the state head tax money since small cruise ships don't participate. The City Finance Department is asking the Assembly to establish a commission that would identify the projects which would qualify for funding. As of April 2008, Sitka has received only \$103,000 covering the period May thru June 30th 2007. The State withheld the money from July to September.
- (f) As of Dec. 31st, 2007, the Harbor Fund has a working capital (liquid money) of \$2.170 million and capital assets of \$16 million. The Harbor Fund is in good shape due to the raw fish tax coming in in the last two years.
- (g) \$36,000 of fish box tax and \$708,000 of raw fish tax came into the harbor fund last year.
- (h) As of April 9th, the Finance Department has conducted 17 audits. Until the audit is finished, he has nothing to report about the fish box tax collection.

3. **Chair - None**
4. **Others - None**

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Repositioning of Fish Cleaning Stations

Chair suggested to table to next meeting since there is no subcommittee report to be discussed.

Mr. Moats reiterated his suggestion to meet with Mr. Nyitray, Mr. Miller, and Mr. Creamer who offered to participate as member of the general public.

2. Request to amend commercial user fee ordinance to cover fish processors for charter operations

The Chair mentioned that the Assembly never took up the ordinance proposed by the Commission during the two nights former Chair Creamer attended.

Mr. Slifer proposed resubmitting certain portions of the ordinance including a provision regarding unattended vessels at Sealing Cove.

The Chair concurred that they should resubmit a chunk of the ordinance and remind the Assembly that it is part of the whole package.

Mr. Moats suggested bringing back the ordinance in next month's agenda for discussion.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Parking in the Harbors

The Chair indicated that parking in the harbors is an on-going problem that is not being addressed by the Sitka Police Department (SPD). He suggested drafting a letter to SPD and also a letter to the editor.

A brief discussion ensued regarding parking problems and the apparent lack of parking lot officer to monitor parking in the harbor parking lots.

MOTION: **M/S MOATS/WOODS** move to write a letter to the City Assembly to enforce the parking ordinance in the harbors.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 5-0** on a voice vote.

Mr. Nyitray will draft the letter.

IX. GENERAL DISCUSSION

The members briefly talked about the evening's discussion on dumping of fish waste, the discussion with Mr. Wolff regarding the status of the Harbor Fund, and the need to check on the workfloat sign issue raised by Mr. Pasternak. They also talked about "zero tolerance on dog poop" in the harbors.

X. CLOSING

A. AGENDA

Under unfinished business:

1. Fish cleaning stations - barging
2. Revisiting the commercial user fee for the harbor system

B. NEXT MEETING DATE HARRIGAN CENTENNIAL BUILDING – May 14th, 2008

C. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Prepared by: **MARIA FINKENBINDER**
Contract Secretary