



City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

Coast Guard City, USA

SITKA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Regular Monthly Meeting

Held Telephonically

June 10, 2020 6 p.m.

FINAL MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Chair Littlefield called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Present: Roby Littlefield (chair), James Poulson, Ana Dittmar, Scott Saline, Bob Sam

Absent: Kevin Mosher (assembly liaison)

Staff: Amy Ainslie

Public: Mike Finn, Adrienne Wilber

II. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR & OFFICERS AS NEEDED

Littlefield noted she had not had prior discussions to see if any officers intended to run for a particular position. Ainslie clarified that “as needed” elections would occur if, for example, the secretary was elected to the vice-chair position in which case another election would be held to fill the secretary position. Commissioner Sam expressed interest in taking the vice chair position.

M-Poulson/S-Saline moved to nominate Bob Sam for Vice-Chair. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioners agreed to review new business immediately following the approval of the minutes.

M-Poulson/S-Saline moved to approve the agenda with New Business discussed first. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 13, 2020 minutes

M-Poulson/S-Dittmar moved to approve the May 13, 2020 minutes with a correction about adding the lighthouse to the historic preservation plan. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote. Saline asked for clarification on the aforementioned lighthouse and whether or not the Marine Exchange had ownership. Saline promised to research an answer and report to the commission. Littlefield invited him to present said findings in a report whenever they were ready.

V. NEW BUSINESS

B.1330 Seward Avenue

Ainslie presented the request for review of new generator for AT&T to be constructed at 1330 Seward Avenue behind the gym. A representative was not present because a contractor from Washington was coordinating the work on behalf of AT&T. Ainslie noted the generator would be put on a newly constructed cement pad on the southern end of the property south of an existing barricade for fuel tanks.

She clarified that the commission had reviewed AT&T's request for an antenna structure last year, but following approval, the company learned from the FAA that the antenna was required to have an independent power supply. Ainslie noted the generator would sit on a cement pad with dimensions of 12 foot by 19 foot. Commissioners discussed if the cement pad would necessitate an excavation and another excavation review. Dittmar clarified that though the generator would be encased above ground the cement pad going down six or seven inches counted as an excavation. Dittmar noted the whole area was previously disturbed. It was recalled the airbase from the 1940's likely had cement covering the area. Sam mentioned the underground tunnels that had run beneath the old airbase. He noted the tunnels had been filled in the 1960s for safety reasons, but the area was still a historic site. Poulson asked if adding the generator would affect the landmark status. The consensus was that it would not affect the site visually, thus the landmark would be unaffected.

M-Poulson/S-Saline moved to approve the request for review of a new generator to be constructed at 1330 Seward Avenue. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

C. 303 Lincoln Street

The applicant, Mike Finn, was present to discuss the project. Littlefield clarified the address was the former Radio Shack building which was built in 1994. She noted the applicant wanted to build a third-floor residence on the building. Dittmar asked what the height of the surrounding buildings were. Applicant noted that the only building in the immediate vicinity was about 30-40 feet high. He clarified that his building was currently 28 feet at the peak and with a third level would stand about 38 feet in height. Poulson asked if an architect was involved in the project. Applicant answered that an engineer was involved. Poulson discussed some of the design suggestions for downtown buildings which had been published in the 1990s. Commissioners asked if the applicant would follow the suggestions to allow the building to match the character of other downtown buildings. The applicant noted the design included a deck with a high rail which would preclude the design suggestion of incorporating parapets or high peaks. However, the applicant was interested in incorporating any design suggestions possible.

M-Poulson/S-Saline moved to approve the request for review of a third story to be constructed at 303 Lincoln Street. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

D. 707 Etolin Street

The applicant, Adrienne Wilber, was present to discuss the project. The applicant described the project as an approximately 600 square foot separate apartment that would occupy the footprint of a recently torn down shed. She noted the apartment would be visible from the street and use the same driveway and access as the main house. Poulson noted the design and materials of the proposed apartment looked like it would blend in with the character of the main house and the neighborhood. When asked about the height of the building the applicant answered 21-22 feet. She noted she is working with a designer to mimic the look of the main house, but that the roof would be less steep due to high cost.

M-Saline/S-Sam moved to approve the request for review of an accessory dwelling unit to be constructed at 707 Etolin Street. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

VI. GUESTS &/OR PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Commissioners asked if Wilber had any interest in joining the commission based on her community involvement and interests. Wilber expressed interest in historic preservation, but often worked for long stretches in remote locations and would be unable to commit to regular meetings.

VI. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE

Littlefield reported that she had attended the assembly meeting the night before on June 9th. She had requested that the assembly allow her to change the seat she was occupying from the Native Community seat to an at large seat. She hoped that opening another native community seat would allow for more participation from Native voices. She noted that the seat might be difficult to fill as it had sat open for large periods in the past, but she remained hopeful that they could fill both of the vacant seats. She noted the assembly had approved the change.

Sam reported on his work in the tribal government. He noted that many tribal citizens had concerns and interest in historic preservation issues. He noted that there were several citizens who were considering applying for a seat on the commission and were excited for an opportunity to have their voices heard and be part of the decision-making process. Sam expressed his own excitement at having these voices, with needed expertise, added to the conversation. Sam expressed concerns about the current pandemic. He noted Sitka had a rich history with pandemics, notably the Tuberculosis crisis. He was concerned that without a certified mortician and the inability to cremate remains in town that the system would become overwhelmed. He urged the commission to look at historic pandemic practices, especially regarding mortuary and crematory practices. Saline discussed the zoning of the current mortuary and if zoning would be an issue with trying to expand the business. Poulson asked about CARES money going towards a historic preservation project. Sam clarified the departments were all submitting proposals to the finance committee to determine the best use. He noted they are looking to improve the sewage and water of one of the homes on Katlian street.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

E. Historic Preservation Plan

Chair Littlefield asked what the next step for the Historic Preservation Plan was. Ainslie noted that staff had laid out a path to finish the plan earlier in the winter. Unfortunately, progress had been delayed due to edits not sent in a timely matter, the Covid shutdown, and a sudden vacancy in the department. She hoped that progress could continue once the vacant position was filled. Once that occurred staff time would be allotted to compile edits and comments from the commissioners into a draft. She respectfully asked commissioners to turn in any final comments so this could occur efficiently. Littlefield asked if commissioners had any more edits or if they could start work on a final draft. Poulson and Dittmar expressed interest in changing a few more things before a final draft was completed. Poulson asked if a subcommittee should be formed to complete more review and edits. He was concerned about the focus of the plan, the clarity of the goals, and the lack of clearly denoted areas of review. Ainslie suggested reordering some sections to address these concerns. Dittmar suggested building in a review date to allow the commission to make revisions in the future. Sam requested the draft be sent for review by the Tribal Council as consultation with the Tribe was important. Ainslie advised the commission to make a motion if they wanted it to be sent to the tribe for review. She agreed that feedback from the tribe was essential. Poulson hoped the tribal council would have suggestions for preserving and reconstructing buildings in the village.

M-Poulson/S-Saline moved to share a draft of the Historic Preservation Plan with the Tribal Council for review and approval, understanding that it was not the final draft. Motion passed 5-0.

F. Commissioner Recruitment

Ainslie informed the commission that the open positions on the commission had been advertised through the clerk's department. The vacancies were posted online and would be periodically advertised on social media and in the newspaper. Ainslie noted that she had Tom Gamble in mind as an excellent candidate and would approach him now that the Native community seat was open. Littlefield expressed concern about shutting the door on non-tribal citizens when it was so difficult to fill any vacant seat. She noted she would like the seat to be filled by a tribal citizen but didn't think it was a requirement. Sam expressed how important it was to have more tribal participation in the community and on the commission. He encouraged the seat to be reserved for a tribal member. He supported approaching Tom Gamble and suggested Chuck Miller as a candidate. Littlefield expressed concern that the assembly liaison to the commission had only attended one commission meeting. She wanted to have better communication with the assembly and noted it was important to have a strong connection through the liaison position. Sam asked about reviewing the city seal because he had been asked to be an STA representative on the committee. Ainslie clarified that once the design review committee had screened the entrees, they would all be sent out for commission and public review before being taken to the assembly. She would contact Sam about the committee meetings.

IX. SET NEXT MEETING DATE(S):

(2nd Wednesday of the Month, 6 pm **Harrigan Centennial Hall**)

Wednesday, July 8, 2020 – Regular Monthly Meeting

X. ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no objections, Chair Littlefield adjourned the meeting at 7:36 pm.