CALL TO ORDER - Chair Gorman called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL:
Present: Peter Gorman; Anne Pollnow; Bill DeArmond; Dale Williams
Absent: Thelma Carter; Pat Eliason
Others Present: Gail Johansen Peterson, Contract Secretary

Motion (Pollnow/DeArmond):
To approve the minutes of August 13 and September 10, 2008.
Motion Passed by voice vote.
Commissioners affirmed a preference for detailed minutes.

B. ELECTION OF OFFICERS
Historic Preservation Commissioners elect from amongst themselves a Chair and Deputy Chair. In the past, if needed, a Commissioner is appointed as Corresponding Secretary.
Motion (Pollnow/Williams):
To Nominate Peter Gorman as Chair and Bill DeArmond, Deputy Chair.
Motion Passed unanimously by a voice vote.

C. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA
Submit Nomination(s) to the Alaska Association of Historic Preservation
a. 10 most endangered historic properties list – nominate Sheldon Jackson Campus
b. Annual Historic Preservation Awards

D. PERSONS TO BE HEARD – None.

E. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE
Peter Gorman:
Updated Commissioners on the response to the HPC letter sent to the City (via Jim Dinley and Wells Williams) regarding HPC’s motion to recommend the formation of an historic district for the major subdivision of the SJC core campus, with design standards. Chair Gorman read the letter to the Planning Commission. Chair Gorman was concerned about the poor reception from Wells Williams. Williams asserted there was no place for establishing an historic district in the major subdivision approval process. It was clear to Chair Gorman that none of the Planning Commissioners had any of the information regarding the SJC Historic National Landmark that HPC has previously provided the Planning Commission through the City Planning Department. The day following the Planning Commission Meeting, Chair Gorman contacted Doug Gassik
(sp), State Historic Preservation Office, and sent him an electronic copy of the letter presented to the Planning Commission. Chair Gorman read the email response:

“I wanted to update you on a conversation I had with Wells yesterday. From my perspective, he did not appear supportive of any recommendations coming from the Preservation Commission. He was worried that everything will slow his process down. He was also under the impression that NHL’s already have a degree of preservation attached to them. I told him that they do not, and that the Preservation Commission presented a concept that deserved consideration because it promoted the long term preservation of SJ and it afforded the property owners the ability to sell their properties. He also kept saying that he is not able to do any guidelines on approved code. I said that I do not know code, but that code can be changed. I also expressed my concern that they are expecting a lot from an all volunteer commission. You are doing a lot to protect historic resources of Sitka, and the work you do is definitely appreciated by me and the people in this office.”

Chair Gorman summarized that the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) obviously feels that designation and guidelines to protect the campus are very important. However, this was met with complete resistance from the Planning Department.

Chair Gorman stated he was surprised that with the many important issues related to considering the core SJC Campus as a major subdivision, he was the only person present of the public at the Planning Commission to speak to this topic. Concerned citizens worked through the summer on Sheldon Jackson College issues. Funds were attained through the Trust for Historic Preservation to hold meetings. However, individuals’ participation has tapered off. Separate groups working on the Hames PE Center and the Child Care Center have such an uphill battle that they are not able to work toward other issues concerning the campus. Now that the opportunity to address issues affecting the entire core campus has been won, no one has attended meetings where these issues are finally appropriate to bring up: care & protection of burial sites; establish design standards; Sage building care, etc. The Planning Commission has decided to fast track consideration of the major subdivision, so it will have one more Planning Commission hearing prior to going before the Assembly for approval.

Pollnow recommended compiling letters of support for an historic district, and mentioned various entities appropriate to contact, including the SHPO and the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN). Commissioner Williams recommended getting the matter on the agenda for the upcoming AFN Conference.

Chair Gorman observed the new Mayor could be informed of the attitude of the Planning Commission and his advice could be requested. Chair Gorman recommended Joan Antonson or Doug from the SHPO give a presentation on Historic District designations to the Assembly.

Dale Williams:
Updated Commissioners on STA Council’s consideration of proposed demolition of a building on Katlian Street, most recently occupied by the Sitka Electronics Lab. Williams noted the Council took no position on the matter. The Council affirmed the property is outside the Federal Trust, and as private property the owner could proceed to do whatever she desired. The Council
referred the property owner, who is a tribal citizen, to the STA Cultural Committee if the property owner wished to consult on the cultural context.

Chair Gorman informed Commissioners that City Building Inspector Preston O’Connell contacted him the day after last month’s meeting with his concern and asked for HPC’s recommendation. Gorman noted O’Connell desired to cooperate with HPC to do what would be right. Gorman responded that since the building is not designated a National Landmark or placed on the National Registry, the Commission would defer to whatever action STA took.

Dale Williams noted the property was identified by Harold Jacobs as a Clan House, but has been used more recently for other purposes. Pollnow advocated documenting the history of the building prior to its destruction.

Chair Gorman noted an historic preservation plan, if in place, would cover situations such as this. Williams noted the property owner has ascertained it would cost more to renovate the building than to demolish the building. Chair Gorman recommended HPC follow suit with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska and take no action on the matter.

Pollnow noted the building had served as a church at one time, also. DeArmond asked what is involed to document the history of the building. Pollnow said methods to document involve writing an historic report, which could include oral histories and historic photographs. Commissioners agreed staff is needed to compile such a report, as the amount of time required of volunteer Commissioners would be prohibitive to completing such a project.

Chair Gorman observed the amount of time required for HPC to perform responsibly is truly overwhelming and requires staff support. A Commissioner stated Historic Preservation is part of City Planning. Chair Gorman reported to date the HPC has received no response from City staff in regard to the heritage resources impact forms City staff asked HPC to develop. That was a three month project of HPC. Chair Gorman noted it takes two days to prepare for HPC meetings.

A question was asked if the property owner(s) could request assistance from STA’s Resource Protection Department to document the history of the building, and/or if the building fell within the effort of the Resource Protection Department’s efforts to document Indian Village clan houses. Commissioner Williams responded the building was one of twenty-two houses. He stated this idea was not suggested at the STA Council Meeting, and staff did weigh in on the matter. Williams said he would recommend buildings like the ANB Hall supersede importance for documentation and preservation.

Chair Gorman noted the SHPO grant, if successful, could fund an historic preservation plan, which then could require property owners of historic districts to at least photograph their building(s) prior to demolition. Without such a plan, however, HPC can not even make such a request of property owners. Gorman observed properties along Katlian Street are among the most remarkable, intact cultural landscapes existing in any urban area anywhere in Alaska today. These properties should be treated as a whole, with more respect than has been shown to date. Pollnow stated without HPC staff support it is not possible to document the building’s historic significance, to thereby substantiate designating the building as historic.
Motion (Gorman/DeArmond):
To acknowledge the Planning Department consulted with HPC about demolition of Sitka Electronics Lab and HPC deferred to Sitka Tribe of Alaska’s Tribal Council position on the matter.
Motion Passed on a voice vote.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
1. Historic Properties Check List Update
Chair Gorman noted the draft forms to report heritage resources impacts were sent to appropriate City and State officials for their comment. There have been no comments received to date. Gorman will follow up once more with appropriate professionals. Pollnow advocated compiling a list of what has occurred and make a presentation to the Assembly, again, emphasizing the need for a designated staff person for the Historic Preservation Commission. DeArmond noted for the record that in March ’08 the Assembly requested a future report from the Administrator, which has yet to occur.

2. Swan Lake – Determination for National Register
Chair Gorman read an email received from Marlene Campbell, Government Relations Director for the City. She received a favorable response from Joan Antonson, State Historian, who thinks there is a precedent for nominating sites like Swan Lake. Antonson advised a consultant could prepare the application (estimated cost between $3,000-$5,000), which could take between 1 to 2 years to complete. Campbell then consulted with City Administrator Dinley, who responded that he would like to place the matter before the Assembly, and request a budget (up to $5,000) be given to the Historic Preservation Commission to prepare and submit the application. The State Historic Office has offered to provide technical assistance, and to run the application through the Alaska Historical Commission. A packet of the application materials is available in Marlene Campbell’s office. Campbell stated she would notify HPC when the matter is scheduled for Assembly consideration.

3. EIS Airport Public Meeting Oct. 2 – was not attended by any HPC representative.

G. NEW BUSINESS
1. Preservation Leadership Training Course
The National Trust for Historic Preservation has an intensive one week preservation leadership course for state and local preservation organizations and entities. It will occur in Birmingham, Alabama, January 10-17, 2009. Tuition is $450; other costs involved: lodging, meals and airfare. Registration is due October 14. Commissioners anticipate funds might be available through the City for HPC to attend, represented by the Chair.

Motion (Gorman/Pollnow):
Move to approve Chair Gorman’s attendance at the Preservation Leadership Training Course, sponsored by National Trust for Historic Preservation, if funding is available.
Motion Passed by unanimous consent.
2. **Historic Preservation Grant Due October 14, 2008**

   The State Historic Preservation Office has encouraged HPC to submit an application, as it is widely known that Sitka’s needs are great. Applications are due October 14; a 40% match is required. A Preservation Plan update is the most encompassing project to undertake. Chair Gorman expressed concern about meeting the 40% match. DeArmond advised the match would come from any discretionary funds the Administrator has available. Commissioner Pollnow suggested matching funds through local groups such as the Sitka Historical Society, and national sources like the National Historic Trust. Commissioners Pollnow and Gorman will prepare the grant application in a special work session, set for 9am, October 13. Any others interested in assisting are encouraged to attend. The work session will be advertised as required. City staff will be consulted.

   **Motion (Gorman/DeArmond):**
   
   Move to apply this year for a grant to the CLG funding from the Department of Natural Resources to update the Historic Preservation Plan.

   Motion Passed by a voice vote.

3. **Alaska Association for Historic Preservation Nominations**

   Commissioner Pollnow noted she is a member of the Alaska Association of Historic Preservation. Members develop a list of 10 most endangered historic properties. Pollnow advocated adding Sheldon Jackson College as a most endangered historic property, and stated she will complete the necessary forms. Commissioner DeArmond offered use of the research and documents prepared for SJC’s nomination to the National list of endangered properties.

   **Motion (Gorman/DeArmond):**
   
   Move to nominate Sheldon Jackson College to the Alaska Association for Historic Preservation’s ten most endangered historic properties.

   Motion Passed unanimously by a voice vote.

   Commissioners agreed there wasn’t an adequate amount of time to prepare nomination(s) for the 2nd Annual Historic Preservation Awards in various categories. Commissioners listed several Sitka citizens and groups deserving of such a nomination in the categories of lifetime achievement in preservation projects, adaptive use, renovation, stabilization, and restoration, stewardship by property owners, agencies, individuals and governments.

H. **NEXT MEETING - November 12, 2008 at 7 pm.**

   Chair Gorman encouraged Commissioners to recruit individuals who might be interested in serving in the vacant position as the Native at-large Commissioner.

I. **ADJOURNMENT**

   The meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.