
Sitka Tourism Commission Minutes

December 7, 2011 12:00 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

Mission: To advise and assist the Assembly of the City & Borough of Sitka regarding its management of tourism in Sitka.

Tourism Commission Members: Woody Widmark, Bruce Conine, Gwen Lazzarini, Ptarmica McConnell, Mim McConnell. Three vacant seats.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lazzarini called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Bruce Conine, Ptarmica McConnell, Gwen Lazzarini, Woody Widmark

Also Present: Gary Baugher, Lynn Brandon, Bob Medinger, Rebecca Poulson, Mike Wise, Dan Pratt, Lance Henrie, and Lisa Busch.

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Signage Project Discussion

Baugher started discussion and explained that he and Brandon would be the City staff support to the Commission for the signage project. Brandon provided an overview of the project. The plan is to improve wayward and directional signage as well as interpretive signage. The purpose is to help visitors and locals have a better experience in Sitka. Money has been set aside from the visitor head tax fund to help with assistance on the project. The group looked at the proposed timeline outlining the tasks including responsible parties. By the end of the project, the Tourism Commission will provide a final draft with text and graphics for the signs that can be submitted to the Assembly for approval.

Brandon continued by explaining the difference between the wayward/directional signage and the interpretive signage. The wayward/directional signage is for the purpose of providing directions and maps. The interpretive signage gives specific stories about specific sites.

With public input the plan for the Tourism Commission is to determine where signs should be located, the text for each sign, and the graphics for each sign. Conine suggested that the Tourism Commission come up with a few design ideas to present for public input.

Poulson thought it may be good to have a consultant come before the Commission first to provide input on what works relative to signage in other towns. Baugher stated that it is up to the Commission.

M. McConnell informed the group that the Commission requires a quorum to make decisions. She explained that a subcommittee could be formed. For example, if the Tourism Commission decided to have two working groups, then the Tourism Commission would need to vote to create the working groups. This way a quorum is not necessary so long as the group only make recommendations, not motions. The Tourism Commission would have the voting power based on the work group recommendations. She did mention that the work group meetings would need to be posted.

Medinger reviewed the history of interpretive signage and the work that had already been done. He explained that a grant was written, but the project was never funded. There was a market survey and signage was examined around the country. He thought it would be a good idea to incorporate a walking tour into the design of the signage project. He would like to see this project help build a brand for Sitka that highlights Sitka's historical sites and culture incorporating not only downtown, but also Old Sitka, the old mill site, and the waterfront.

Busch agreed with hiring a consultant and asked what the budget was for the project. Brandon stated that there was \$75k for the Interpretive signs and \$175k for the Wayfinding signs. City staff is still working on budget numbers for this project.

Motion/Second McConnell/Conine to hire a consultant to review the project in advance to give direction and insight on the signage project to the Tourism Commission. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

The group gave direction to City Staff that there should be two separate consultants. One for the "flow" and physical structure of the signs and a second for the "content" and historical/cultural information. It is also important to ensure all signs are consistent relative to layout.

Motion/Second McConnell/Conine to create two working groups. One for Wayward/Directional Signage and one for Interpretive Signage. Woody asked if this would be an Ad Hoc Committee. It was decided that the work groups would be for the purpose of the signage project only and would terminate after the project was complete. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Wayward/Directional Signage Work Group: Bruce Conine (Chair), Mike Wise, Gwen Lazzarini. Next Meeting(s): It was decided to wait until after a consultant is hired to have a meeting.

Interpretive Signage Work Group: Gwen Lazzarini (Chair), Bob Medinger, Rebecca Poulson. Next Meeting(s): Tuesday, January 10th at 12:00pm at Harrigan Centennial Hall and Tuesday, January 24th at 12:00pm at Harrigan Centennial Hall.

P. McConnell will advertise the meetings and will also submit a Public Notice requesting additional members for the two work groups. Widmark will attend the STA Cultural Committee meeting and extend an invitation for the Interpretive Signage Work Group. Lazzarini will call other interested parties to increase the workgroups.

Motion/Second Widmark/McConnell to remove the assigned seats from ordinance.
All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

V. ADDITIONAL NEW BUSINESS

1. Schedule next regular meeting – Tuesday, January 17th at 12:00pm at Harrigan Centennial Hall
2. Items for next meeting's agenda – Keep moving forward with the signage project.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/Second McConnell/Conine to adjourn the meeting at 1:35pm. Motion carried unanimously.