



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Meeting Minutes Tourism Commission

Commission Members: Jeremy Plank, Bethany Lowrance, Carol Bryant-Martin, Vaughn Hazel, Devon Calvin, Sherri Blankenship, Lillian Feldpausch

Ex Officio: Judson Rusk, Tourism Manager, Katie O'Neil, Element Agency (On Leave), and Victoria Wright, Visit Sitka.

June 11, 2026

6:00 P.M.

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Chair Plank called the Sitka Tourism Commission meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Devon Calvin, Vaughn Hazel, Bethany Lowrance, Carol Bryant-Martin, and Jeremy Plank.

Absent: Lillian Feldpausch, Sherri Blankenship (Excused).

Ex-Officio Present: Judson Rusk, Tourism Manager, and Victoria Wright, Visit Sitka

Ex-Officio Absent: Katie O'Neil, Element Agency (On Leave).

Public: Rachel Roy (Zoom).

Secretary Bryant-Martin confirmed a quorum was present.

II. CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None.

IV. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE

A. Visit Sitka Ex-Officio member temporary change

City Tourism Manager Rusk announced that Katie O'Neil (Element Agency), ex officio, will be on maternity leave until November 2026. Victoria Wright (Visit Sitka) will serve as an interim liaison to the Tourism Commission.

B. Topline update on airport Wi-Fi Survey

Rusk gave the commissioners the May 2026 topline results of the airport visitor survey prepared by the McKinley Research Group. He reported a survey response rate of 9% at the Sitka airport, higher than the response rates for surveys conducted at the Anchorage and Fairbanks airports, which range from 4% to 6%. A majority of the respondents are out-of-town target audience members rather than in-town residents. He noted that overall survey participation is going well. Plank remarked that the survey provides a good snapshot of visitation to Sitka. No formal business action was taken.

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS**Approval of TBMP Guidelines for 2026 Season**

Commissioners reviewed public comments and recommended edits to the 2026 TBMP guidelines, a voluntary compliance program for businesses, attractions, and tour operators in Sitka. These guidelines do not replace city, state, or federal regulations. Rusk noted that during the inaugural 2026 season, the overall goal is to establish and test an operational framework for the TBMP program. The draft TBMP guidelines covered regulations on charter and tour activities, retail partners, traffic management, and cruise ship activities for registered TBMP partners. TBMP incentives and business participants will be listed on the Visit Sitka website, in the city visitor guide, and on social media. Rusk also proposed revising vehicle size restrictions on Jeff Davis to improve safety for pedestrians and smaller vehicles, but changes will not be made until the 2027 season due to the additional time required to research specific regulations. Commissioners also reviewed written public comments advocating for e-bike and bicycle safety. Lowrance recommended addressing issues with the literature and signage, which clearly designate bike lane locations.

M/Bryant-Martin/S-Lowrance moved to approve the TBMP Guidelines for the 2026 Season as presented in the June 11, 2026, packet with approved edits related to watercraft. The motion passed 5/0 by voice vote.

VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Chair Plank recognized Rachel Roy, Executive Director of the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce, to speak (Zoom). Roy updated the Commissioners on the 4th of July route changes due to construction and requested feedback before releasing the details to the public. The new route will begin at the Crescent Harbor playground, continue down Lincoln Street to Harbor Drive, and pass under the O'Connell Bridge. No formal business action was taken.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Chair Plank adjourned the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

Minutes By: Carol Bryant-Martin, Secretary