

Sitka Bear Task Force Minutes

Thursday, June 2, 2022 12:00 p.m.
Harrigan Centennial Hall/Teleconference

Task Force Members: Robert Baty, Stephen Bethune, Lillian Feldpausch, Harry Greene or Michael Harmon, Trenton Hammock, Olivia Magni, Martha Moses, Bradley Shaffer, Andrew Thoms, Claire Turner

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 12:10 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Task Force members present: Robert Baty, Stephen Bethune, Harry Green, Olivia Magni, Martha Moses, Bradley Shaffer, Andrew Thoms

Absent: Trenton Hammock (excused), Claire Turner (excused), Lillian Feldpausch (excused)

Staff: Deputy Clerk, Jess Earnshaw and Administrative Coordinator, Holley Dennison

Others: Assembly Liaison Dave Miller

III. CORRESPONDENCE /AGENDA CHANGES

Shaffer noted the bear working group for education included prevention. Thoms spoke to bear densities in town.

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(not to exceed 3 minutes on topics off the agenda)*

None.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 5, 2022

Moses moved to approve the May 5, 2022, minutes. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

VI. REPORTS

Chair: None

Members: Thoms said 4H club cleaned bear caches and distributed bear safety information door hangers and summarized current outreach. Baty relayed the education and prevention working group supported two viable options; 1) Bear proof cans, and 2) electric fences. Can costs were noted and education topics included Defense of Life and Property, schools, disease concerns, and trash disposal. Education outreach options considered 4th of July events, radio, flyers, and QR codes. Green distributed photos of a damaged bear-resistant wood container and new bear-resistant steel container. Thoms suggested to check historical bear task force files of cost/benefit can analysis. Shaffer told of can costs and of pushback from residents about keeping trash inside. Thoms wondered of how bear-resistant cans are working in Girdwood. Moses voiced concern of apartments without access to sheds or garages, desired the bear population to be

addressed in Sitka, and supported bear education. Magni spoke to a map to ID bears in real-time, a camera trap survey installed at the park, bear hair snares, fish runs at the park, and park plans to educate on bear safety and trash disposal. Thoms asked for historical bear tracking data from ADF&G, and Baty expressed interest in tracking data. City staff: Dennison noted two at-large seats advertised, with one application received.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Bear Task Force Goals

Thoms moved to recommend MOU as a goal, Moses seconded. Discussion was held of potential use of a MOU, agency collaboration, and enforcement responsibility. Thoms spoke of MOU between entities to adopt ADF&G bear approach with knowledge and unified training for agencies.

Motion fails 1 - 5

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

IX. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(not to exceed 3 minutes on topics on or off the agenda)*

Dave Miller spoke to the potential reasons for increase in bear numbers and garbage in neighborhoods.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Green asked for agenda items. Items suggested were 1) Magni: Hazing protocol in the park, 2) Thoms: "Item B" in his 4/21/22 handout about garbage storage, 3) Moses: Bear tracking information from Magni, and 4) Moses: A community evening meeting. Next meeting was scheduled for July 7, 2022, at 12:00 p.m., Harrigan Centennial Hall.

Green moved to adjourn the meeting. Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Attest:
Holley Denison, Staff Liaison