



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

DRAFT Meeting Minutes Tourism Commission

Officers: Chair Jeremy Plank; Vice Chair Ian Dempster; and Secretary Carol Bryant-Martin

Members: Devon Calvin; Vaughn Hazel; Bethany Lowrance; Alana Peterson; and Rachel Roy, Visit Sitka (Ex Officio)

Staff Liaison: Amy Ainslie, P&CD Director (Ex Officio); Holly Bayne, Deputy City Clerk.

Assembly Liaison: Chris Ystad

August 14, 2025

6:00 P.M.

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Ian Dempster called the Sitka Tourism Commission meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Carol Bryant-Martin; Devon Calvin; Ian Dempster; Vaughn Hazel; Bethany Lowrance; Alana Peterson (arrived 6:13); and Rachel Roy.

Absent: Jeremy Plank.

Staff: Amy Ainslie, P&CD Director

Public: Shannon Haugland (Sitka Sentinel)

Secretary Bryant-Martin confirmed quorum was present.

III. CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

No agenda changes were made.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M-Lowrance/S-Bryant-Martin moved to approve the July 10, 2025, meeting minutes. The motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of draft Visit Sitka Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Commission members reviewed the draft Request for Qualifications (RFQ) document for Visit Sitka and Convention and Visitor Services to be released in September 2025. Ainslie provided an overview of the draft RFQ to the Commission to obtain feedback on the new document, and highlighted changes between this version and the previously issued Request for Proposals (RFP) for Visit Sitka.

Commissioners first provided feedback on the "Scope of Services" listed as Appendix A to the RFQ, and recommended that management of the cruise ship calendar be moved under Administration, the Marketing Plan be moved under Promoting Sitka, and that Managing Tourism-Related Street Closures be removed from the RFQ altogether. In the body of the RFQ, Commissioners recommended that provisions for joint submittals between two or more organizations be added. While the Commission agreed with the evaluation criteria and relative score weights between them, they recommended putting the criteria definitions in a more identifiable location and providing a scoring rubric. It was also suggested to include the recently finalized 2025-2027 Strategic Marketing Plan as an appendix to the RFQ. No action was taken.

B. Promotion and support for TBMP

Ainslie reminded the Commission that the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal had been administering the TBMP program, which included a community feedback line, during the 2025 visitor season on a pilot program basis. Commission members discussed how city residents didn't seem to be aware of the TBMP program. Roy offered Visit Sitka sending out an e-blast to help promote the community line. She suggested the city post the TBMP information on the city website. Peterson shared that the STA is also reviewing the TBMP program guidelines with the intent of providing feedback to be implemented for the 2026 season. The Commissioners agreed that the TBMP program can be included as a topic for the end of season review. No action was taken.

C. Planning for End-Of-Season Reviews

Ainslie stated that the city envisions the Sitka Tourism Commission members to establish routine reviews as a committee which entails plans for the annual visitor season and making adjustments via end of season reviews. The Commission members discussed reviewing street closures and management of the TBMP program. Roy recommended obtaining feedback from the community prior to the tour operator feedback. Ainslie proposed scheduling public meetings to conduct a community survey by 10/9/25 and allowing time for review by the Commission members and the Assembly by 11/13/25. Ainslie noted that the CBS new Tourism Manager hire is in process. This city employee will work with the Sitka Tourism Commission as the main point of contact during 2026. No action was taken.

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (*For items ON or OFF the agenda and not to exceed 3 minutes*)

Vice Chair Dempster recognized Shannon Haugland with the Sitka Sentinel. Haugland introduced herself and stated she would be covering Commission meetings for the newspaper.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: M-Lowrance/S-Bryant-Martin moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM. The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Minutes By: Carol Bryant-Martin, Secretary