



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Minutes - Final

Planning Commission

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

7:00 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Present: Chris Spivey (Chair), Darrell Windsor, Stacy Mudry, Wendy Alderson, Katie Riley, Thor Christianson (Assembly Liaison)

Absent: None

Staff: Amy Ainslie, Ben Mejia

Public: Aaron Bryan, Meggan Turner, Sheldon Turner, Ariadne Will (Sitka Sentinel)

Chair Spivey called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

Commission agreed to move item C to the end of the agenda.

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

A [PM 22-05](#) Approve the February 16, 2022 meeting minutes.

Attachments: [3-February 16 2022 DRAFT](#)

M-Mudry/S-Alderson moved to approve the February 16, 2022 meeting minutes.

Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

V. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

B [MISC 22-04](#) Annual Election of Officers

M-Windsor/S-Alderson moved to nominate Chris Spivey as chair. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

M-Spivey/S-Mudry moved to nominate Darrell Windsor as vice-chair. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

VI. REPORTS

C [MISC 22-05](#) 2021 Annual Short-Term Rental Report

Attachments: [2021 Annual Short-Term Rental Report 2.28.22](#)

Ainslie presented the 2021 short-term rental annual report. Ainslie noted that the number of permits had decreased, likely due to the utility billing policy that changes short-term rentals as commercial use. Ainslie noted that the total nights rented were in-line with 2018 and 2019 levels which indicated a recovery from pandemic impacts to tourism. Ainslie noted that there was significantly more bed tax revenue than in years past, with the average implied revenue per permit reaching a new high. Ainslie noted this likely indicated a rise in nightly rent, either by the increase in premium properties, the movement of market prices, supply/demand, or inflation.

Ainslie noted that more respondents identified the rental property as their primary residence, although there was also an approximate 20% increase in the respondents identifying that they would be off-site during rental.

Ainslie displayed short-term rental distribution maps which showed few clusters of permits in the downtown and Edgecumbe Street neighborhoods. Ainslie also showed a heat map based on the number of night rented, which should slightly higher intensity of use in the downtown area.

The Commission discussed the net change in permits. Riley recognized that while 16 permits were deactivated, the 6 permits not yet active as well as the 2 permits approved earlier in the evening would mean that the deficit would rapidly reduce.

VII. THE EVENING BUSINESS

- D [CUP 22-05](#) Public hearing and consideration of a conditional use permit for a short-term rental at 304 Eliason Loop in the R-2 MHP - Multifamily and Mobile home district. The property is also known as Lot 7, Block 3, Hillside Subdivision. The request is filed by Tamara Bryan. The owners of record are Aaron and Tamara Bryan.

Attachments: [CUP 22-05 Bryan 304 Eliason Loop STR Staff Report](#)
[A CUP 22-05 Bryan 304 Eliason Loop STR Aerial](#)
[B CUP 22-05 Bryan 304 Eliason Loop STR Floor Plan](#)
[C CUP 22-05 Bryan 304 Eliason Loop STR Photos](#)
[D CUP 22-05 Bryan 304 Eliason Loop STR Plat](#)
[E CUP 22-05 Bryan 304 Eliason Loop STR Parking Plan](#)
[F CUP 22-05 Bryan 304 Eliason Loop STR Renter Handout](#)
[G CUP 22-05 Bryan 304 Eliason Loop STR Applicant Materials](#)

Ainslie introduced the request for a conditional use permit for a short-term rental in a single-family residence at 304 Eliason Loop. Ainslie described the property as a 4 bedroom, 2.5 bathroom home on an approximately 10,000 sq. ft. lot. Ainslie noted that a property manager had been identified to manage the rental operation. Ainslie explained that the anticipated impacts from traffic, noise, and odor were minimal. Ainslie explained that the lot had ample parking and were buffered by distance to the front property line, currently undeveloped neighboring lots, and substantial grade change from the property and the lot on the lower section of Eliason Loop. Ainslie explained that the lot was accessible for emergency services and the proposal provided minimal chance of cut-through scenarios. Ainslie noted that the rental handout did not include verbiage on proper garbage handling, which would need to be addressed as a condition of the permit. Staff recommended approval.

Alderson stated that the renter handout appeared to be a general handout for Sitka Trave that did not specify regulations specific to the property.

The applicant, Aaron Bryan, was present. Bryan explained that they traveled frequently and wanted to rent their home primarily while they were away but also while they were in town. Alderson asked if the applicants had alternative housing for when they were renting out the property and were in town. Bryan explained that they had an apartment in town that they could live in while renting out their home.

The Commission opened the floor for public comment. Ainslie read public comment submitted by Mike Vieira, who expressed that the proposal would be a distinct change to the feel of the neighborhood and present potential safety concerns from increased traffic. Vieira asked that the neighborhood be rezoned to allow all property owners on Eliason Loop to operate short-term rentals.

The Commission continued their deliberation. Spivey asked if a guest limit was specified. Ainslie stated that none was included in the application. The Commission agreed to a condition of approval to limit the number of guests to 8 adults. Bryan agreed to this condition. Alderson and Riley expressed concern regarding a trend in permits for short-term rentals where applicants own more than one property to allow for short-term rental operations and the strain on housing availability that it caused.

Riley suggested that a condition be added for the applicants to retain the services of a professional property manager and keep updated contact information filed with the Planning Department. Alderson and Riley expressed disapproval of the proposal given the impact on housing market.

Windsor stated that tourism was a major industry for Sitka and that short-term rentals supported that industry. Windsor expressed concern that hampering short-term rental permit process would negatively impact economic opportunity. Riley responded that the tourism industry was also

Christianson noted that a denial of the permit should have Code support and stated that if appealed to the Assembly, the permit request would likely be approved. Riley cited the Comprehensive Plan for support to deny a permit given the housing challenges the community faced. Spivey replied that he felt the Comprehensive Plan alone was not sufficient to deny an application where no Code basis justified a denial. Spivey noted that too strenuous a short-term rental permit process encouraged un-permitted short-term rental operations. Alderson responded that she felt most people would follow the permitting process. Riley asked Christianson if the Code Enforcement Officer position was still in the budget. Christianson responded that it was. Christianson stated that if the Commission proposed a cap on permits, the Assembly would listen.

M-Windsor/S-Mudry moved to amend the conditions of approval to limit the maximum number of guests to 8 adults. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

M-Riley/S-Windsor moved to amend the conditions of approval to require that a professional property manager be retained and their contact information be updated with the Planning and Community Development Department. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

M-Mudry/S- Windsor moved to approve the conditional use permit for a short-term rental at 304 Eliason Loop in the R-2 Multifamily and Mobile Home District, subject to the conditions of approval as listed in the staff report and amended. The property was also known as Lot 7, Block 3, Hillside Subdivision. The request was filed by Tamara Bryan. The owners of record were Aaron and Tamara Bryan. Motion passed 3-2 by voice vote.

M-Mudry/S-Windsor moved to adopt and approve the required findings for conditional use permits as listed in the staff report. Motion passed 3-2 by voice vote.

E [CUP 22-06](#)

Public hearing and consideration of a conditional use permit for a short-term rental at 115A Jamestown Drive in the R-1 - single-family and duplex district. The property is also known as Lot 11, Rosi-Ashby Subdivision. The request is filed by Meggan Turner. The owners of record are Sheldon and Meggan Turner.

Attachments: [CUP 22-06 Turner 115A Jamestown Drive STR Staff Report](#)
[A CUP 22-06 Turner 115 Jamestown Drive STR Aerial](#)
[B CUP 22-06 Turner 115 Jamestown Drive STR Floor Plans](#)
[C CUP 22-06 Turner 115 Jamestown Drive STR Photos](#)
[D CUP 22-06 Turner 115 Jamestown Drive STR Renter Handout](#)
[E CUP 22-06 Turner 115 Jamestown Drive STR Parking Plan](#)
[F CUP 22-06 Turner 115 Jamestown Drive STR Plat](#)
[G CUP 22-06 Turner 115 Jamestown Drive STR Applicant Materials](#)

Ainslie introduced the proposal for a short-term rental in the downstairs unit of a duplex at 115 Jamestown Drive. Ainslie described the unit as a 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom apartment beneath the second floor unit in use as a long-term rental. Ainslie stated that the owners lived in town and would be managing the rental themselves. Ainslie noted that the lot had sufficient parking to meet the required 4 spaces and the applicants would move the swing set which would improve use of the parking area.

Ainslie stated that there was minimal anticipated impact from traffic, parking, noise, or odor as they would be in keeping with residential use of the property. Ainslie noted buffers to the site as the rear of the property abutted Forest Service land, and rock walls and grade changes provided some buffer from neighboring uses at either side. Staff recommended approval.

The applicants, Meggan and Sheldon Turner, were present. Meggan Turner explained that they were both teachers for the Sitka School District and operated four long-term rentals. They would like to use their smallest apartment for a short-term rental to increase investment profitability. The Commission voiced their approval of the request.

The Commission recessed from 7:47pm-7:54pm prior to resuming with item C.

M-Mudry/S-Alderson moved to approve the conditional use permit for a short-term rental at 115A Jamestown Drive in the R-1 Single-Family and Duplex District, subject to the conditions of approval as listed in the staff report. The property was also known as Lot 11, Rosi-Ashby Subdivision. The request was filed by Meggan Turner. The owners of record were Sheldon and Meggan Turner. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

Ms-Mudry/S-Alderson moved to adopt and approve the required findings for conditional use permits as listed in the staff report. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no objections, Chair Spivey adjourned the meeting at 8:10pm.