



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Minutes - Final

Planning Commission

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

6:30 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

****Special Meeting****

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: Jay Stilwell, Sabrina Jenkins, Wendy Lindskoog, Melissa Henshaw, Shauna Thornton, Tomy Stevenson, Stefania Potrzuski, Kathleen Brandt, John Dunlap, Loren Olsen

Chair Spivey called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Harvey Brant addressed the Commission with a request that the body consider increasing the street lighting of Lincoln Street, particularly the portion between Saint Michael's Cathedral and Totem Square.

VII. THE EVENING BUSINESS

[MISC 21-09](#)

Discussion/Direction on Short-Term Tourism Plan

Attachments: [DRAFT_Short-Term Tourism Plan](#)

Ainslie introduced the discussion on indirect infrastructure and future planning needs. Ainslie identified staff recommendations for an impact study and traffic study to assess conditions during the cruise season as well as a permitting strategy to coordinate permitting procedures across departments.

Ainslie provided background information previously requested by the Commission. Ainslie noted the estimated cost of water bottle filling stations at approximately \$5,000-\$10,000 per unit. Ainslie explained that cruise ship use of water was charged at a metered rate and waste water was not disposed of in Sitka's wastewater system, and that the current water infrastructure was adequate for anticipated demands. Ainslie explained that while some small cruise lines dispose of solid waste in Sitka, vessels above 500 passengers did not. Ainslie explained that Sitka Free Wifi was no longer functional and to reinstate the service would be costly and not lessen the burden on cellular data.

Riley suggested that future planning efforts address work force development and retention, especially with regards to cost and availability of housing.

The Commission discussed the challenge of Sawmill Creek Road closure and potential impact to a traffic study. Michael Harmon, Public Works Director, responded that a model can account for road closures. The Commission agreed that the Assembly should move forward with a request to AK DOT to conduct a traffic study.

The Commission opened the floor for public comment. Harvey Brant expressed concern that proposed plans would restrict access to Sitka Lutheran Church, to those with difficulty climbing stairs, as would be required if entered by the Harbor Drive rear entrance.

Chris McGraw stated that the city should develop a downtown transportation hub as demands for Harrigan Centennial Hall exceeds capacity. John Dunlap commented that use of CPET funds should ensure that residents do not shoulder the burden of tourism.

Ainslie read public comment from Hugh Bevan, who stated that the city should hire a private company to conduct a traffic study.

Ainslie read public comment from Charles Bingham, who questioned whether the proposed street closure times would be sufficient.

The Commission requested that staff look for a list of approved projects funded through CPET funds in other communities to clarify acceptable use of funds.

M-Windsor/S-Alderson moved to recommend the Assembly request a traffic study from Alaska Department of Transportation. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no objections, Chair Spivey adjourned the meeting at 7:29pm.