

Sitka Port and Harbors Commission Minutes

Wednesday March 10, 2021 6:00PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

Port and Harbors Commission Members:

Dave Gordon, Chris Ystad, Shauna Thornton,
Tyler Green, Michael Nurco, Tamy Stevenson
Kevin Knox (Assembly Liaison)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gordon called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Dave Gordon, Mike Nurco, Shauna Thornton, Tamy Stevenson, Chris Ystad.

Assembly Liaison: Kevin Knox joined the meeting at approximately 6:12pm.

Staff: Harbormaster Stan Eliason, Deputy Harbormaster Jeremiah Johnson. Harbor office manager Alicia Soto participated by videoconference.

III. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

IV. AGENDA CHANGES

None.

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

None.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of the February 10, 2021 meeting minutes.

M - Ystad / S - Stevenson motioned to approve the February 10, 2021 meeting minutes.

Motion passed 5/0.

VII. REPORTS

Harbormaster – Harbormaster Eliason explained to the commission the process of how the Harbor Department prepared for rebuilding floats 1-4 of Crescent Harbor. Eliason and Johnson noted that over 100 vessels of various sizes had to be relocated from Crescent Harbor to other harbors during the rebuild process. In order to accommodate the Crescent Harbor stall holders, the waitlist was “frozen” and unassigned stalls were not re-assigned so that more stalls would be available to accommodate the Crescent Harbor vessels that had to vacate the harbor during the rebuild. Once the rebuild process was completed, and the vessels returned to Crescent Harbor, the unassigned stalls were assigned to vessels from the waitlist. Due to the Crescent Harbor rebuild, the harbor department had less availability for transient vessels in Sitka over the winter months, as all the vacant stalls were needed to accommodate Crescent Harbor stall holders. Harbor office

staff had been working on collecting past due balances from stall holders. New past due balance letters had been drafted and mailed to stall holders which resulted in several stall holders making payments and establishing payment plans with the harbor department. Stall holders who failed to pay off their past due balances or establish an approved payment plan in the provided timeline, were notified that their vessels would have to vacate their assigned stalls and move to transient, the vacant stalls would then be reassigned to a vessel from the waitlist. A Crescent Harbor warranty inspection took place recently, all of the newly installed floats were found to be in good condition, however the contractor would be addressing some issues related to the water and electrical systems.

City Staff – None

Chair – None

Assembly Liaison – Kevin Knox reported that the assembly would be further discussing the enterprise fund budgets. Knox noted that he was still pursuing a co-sponsor for the garbage rate fee recommendations that were discussed during the last port and harbor commission. Knox found an assembly member in favor of co-sponsoring part of the proposed changes to the garbage rate changes but not both parts, Knox informed the commission that they can either split up their recommendations and pursue them separately or continue to pursue finding an assembly member in favor of both recommendations made during last month's meeting. Knox informed the commission that the proposed changes to the parking fines for the Eliason Harbor drive-down dock were passed by the assembly, the code had been updated to reflect the changes.

Other (s) – None

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

B. Discussion Fuel Tax

Kevin Knox informed the commission that he had found another assembly member who may be interested in co-sponsoring the proposed fuel excise tax that had been discussed during the last Port and Harbor commission meeting. Assembly member Rebecca Himschoot attended the meeting by videoconference to learn more details of the proposed fuel tax. Kevin Knox outlined the details of the draft fuel tax proposal. The fuel tax, if passed, would be a 3 cent per gallon excise tax on all fuels sold in Sitka. Revenue earned from taxing each type of fuel sold would benefit a different fund. Revenue earned from the sale of marine fuels would benefit the harbor fund, revenue earned from the sale of highway fuels would go towards road maintenance, revenue earned from the sale of aviation fuel would benefit either the airport or seaplane base, revenue earned from the sale of heating fuels would benefit the electrical fund. Knox noted that the proposed fuel tax had not been fully vetted by the City's legal and finance departments, if the commission was serious about wanting to move forward with the proposed fuel tax, additional details would need to be figured out.

Chris Ystad noted that nobody likes paying more in taxes, however most people he had discussed the proposed fuel tax with were in favor of it, as it would provide additional revenue to support the harbor fund and could provide some relief to the annual harbor rate increases. The consensus of the commission was to move forward with pursuing the fuel excise tax so that it could be discussed at the assembly level to see where it goes. Knox and Himschoot would further review the draft language of the proposed fuel excise tax and involve the City's legal department when ready to move forward.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

C. None

X. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS

1. The next regular scheduled meeting would take place on April 14, 2021.
2. Liveaboard/island resident garbage fees (if necessary)
3. Fuel Tax (if necessary)

XI. ADJOURNMENT

**M - Nurco / S - Ystad motioned to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:10pm.
Motion passed unanimously.**

Attest: Jeremiah Johnson, Deputy Harbormaster