



# CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

## Meeting Minutes - Final Sustainability Commission

**Officers:** Chair Katie Riley, Vice Chair Angie Bowers, Secretary Carol Voisin

**Members:** Elizabeth Bagley, Kent Barkhau, Aurora Taylor, Fernanda Zermoglio

**Staff Liaison:** Bri Gabel, Sustainability Coordinator

**Assembly Liaison:** Kevin Mosher

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Tuesday, April 4, 2023

6:00 P.M.

Harrigan Centennial Hall

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### I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

**Chair Riley called the meeting to order at approximately 6:02 P.M.**

**Present:** Katie Riley (Chair), Elizabeth Bagley (left at 8:10), Kent Barkhau (telephonic), Angie Bowers, Aurora Taylor (arrived at 6:15), Carol Voisin, Fernanda Zermoglio, Kevin Mosher (Assembly Liaison, arrived at 6:45).

**Absent:** None

**Staff:** Bri Gabel (Sustainability Coordinator), Amy Ainslie (Planning Director)

**Public:** Larry Edwards, Eric Jordan, Lisa Sadleir-Hart, Joel Hanson, Barbara Bingham, Leah Mason

### II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

No agenda changes.

### III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

Approve the March 7, 2023 minutes.

**Bowers moved to approve the March 7, 2023 minutes.**

**Motion PASSED 6-0 by roll call vote.**

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

Lisa Sadleir-Hart reported on the Electrification Expo with 130 attendees and 20 experts. The most interest was in heat pumps and how to finance new ones in homes.

### V. REPORTS

**Staff:** Gabel requested commissioners let her know their summer schedules for attending meetings for quorum monitoring. She reported on the Yale Climate Change Communication webinar on public perceptions of the Inflation Reduction Act would share a link when available.

**Chair:** Riley gave an update on her presentation to the Assembly presenting the commission's work plan, which was unanimously approved.

**Commissioners:** Voisin thanked Riley for a detailed and well delivered presentation of the commission's work plan to the Assembly.

Bagley congratulated Gabel on her recent Sitka Daily Sentinel interview.

### VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**VII. NEW BUSINESS****A. Recommend the Assembly Fund a Sitka-based Heat Pump Assessor via Alaska Heat Smart**

Andy Romanoff, Executive Director of Alaska Heat Smart (AHS), outlined his request for the Assembly to provide \$10,000 to fund a Sitka-based heat pump assessor. AHS received permission to allocate some money from the Department of Energy (DOE) to fund some assessments and incentives for low-income homes in Sitka, but the continuation beyond the initial assessments would be contingent on securing other funding sources. The Sitka assessor would be trained by the Juneau assessor that would be in town and the \$10,000 would continue to support more assessments after the initial DOE funding was expended.

Leah Mason supported the Alaska Heat Smart's request.

Riley raised a concern that the financial benefits from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) may overlap with the program. Romanoff explained that this would fund assessments of the readiness of a home to receive a heat pump, not fund the heat pumps like rebates through the IRA would when they came into effect. Zermoglio asked if an assessment was required for the IRA rebate and how else it might educate homeowners. Romanoff explained that an assessment was not required but it may help homeowners decide if the rebate is a correct choice for them. Bagley suggested the outlined budget be more specific for the \$10,000, specify whether it was a one-time request, and any other staff time that may be required as the Assembly would need those details.

**Taylor moved to recommend that the Assembly fund a Sitka-based heat pump assessor through Alaska Heat Smart.**

**Motion PASSED 7-0 by roll call vote**

**B. Draft a Letter of Support for Sitka Local Foods Network and Transition Sitka's Community Garden Concept**

Joel Hanson presented on the community gardens concept for two, ½ acre locations on Osprey and Jarvis Street. He explained the six qualifications that every garden site required and how these sites fit. He provided an overview of the timelines and tasks required to develop the gardens and how they would be managed. He had requested letters of support from other community organizations and the Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Sadleir-Hart stated that the need for gardens is clear with many food stamp recipients and gardens provide a rich resource for those recipients. Eric Jordan supported the concept but made note of the toxic pollution for gardens from diesel bus emissions during tourist season. Barbara Bingham expressed support for the community garden concept and the letter of support. Mason suggested that the gardens could be a source for composting.

Commissioners inquired if other avenues for funding besides the city had been explored and support for the concept was expressed. Gabel explained the process to provide the letter if was pursued to have up to three commissioners draft the letter before it was brought back to the commission for approval at the next meeting in May. Voisin, Taylor, and Bowers volunteered to draft the letter of support.

**Bowers moved the Sustainability Commission draft a letter of support for Sitka Foods Network and Transition Sitka's community garden concept.**

**Motion PASSED 7-0 by roll call vote**

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**C. Recommend a Sustainability Commissioner\* for Appointment by the Assembly to Serve on the Tourism Task Force Motion**

*\*per Resolution 23-11, the Sustainability Commission may recommend either a member of the commission or a member of the public for the sustainability seat on the Tourism Task Force.*

Barbara Bingham elaborated on her credentials for serving on the task force. Bagley asked how the commission could support Bingham and if there was a way to include a spot for discussion with her in future meetings. Riley indicated that she would work with staff to determine the best way to create an opportunity to hear from Bingham at future commission meetings. Zermoglio noted the commission was in a good position to provide guidance and reliable resources for sustainability issues, particularly around tourism. Gabel clarified that Bingham would not represent the commission in the same way that no one member represents the will of the entire body and would act independently with commission support.

Sadleir-Hart, Mason, and Larry Edwards voiced support for Bingham's recommendation.

**Voisin moved to nominate Barb Bingham as the Sustainability Commission's recommendation to the Assembly for the Tourism Task Force Motion PASSED by 7-0 by roll call vote**

**Bowers moved to table Item D until after Item E was addressed. Motion PASSED by 6-0 roll call vote**

**D. Decide the Next Steps for Executing the 2023-2024 Annual Work Plan Goals**

Gabel explained that the Energy Transition Partnership Project (ETIPP) application process had been overhauled and was very different from the 2021 application. In her discussion with Rob Jordan, the regional partner, he explained that only two letters of support were required and encouraged quality of quantity. Per Jordan's recommendation, the Assembly and the Sustainability Commission be the primary sources, and the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, should they choose to participate. She clarified that the city was applying for the technical assistance, not the commission, and that while the commission would be heavily involved in the scoping process and conduct public engagement, she would handle writing the application. Barkhau, Zermoglio, and Riley volunteered to draft the Sustainability Commission's stakeholder engagement form for commission approval at the May meeting.

**E. Approve the Energy Transition Partnership Project (ETIPP) Application Resolution Draft**

Mason voiced her support for the application.

**Bowers moved to approve the ETIPP Application Resolution Draft Motion PASSED by 6-0 roll call vote**

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

Jordan stated that three years ago the city declared a climate emergency. He opined that we are not moving fast enough and that there needs to be more recognition of the emergency.

Mason reminded the commission that the community energy plan needed to engage the community.

**IX. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA**

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, May 2, 2023 at 6:00 P.M., Harrigan Centennial Hall.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**Chair Riley moved to adjourn the meeting.**

**Seeing no objection, the meeting ADJOURNED at 8:40 P.M.**

Minutes By: Carol Voisin, Secretary