



# 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, March 7, 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 6:03 P.M.**

**Present:** Katie Riley (Chair), Elizabeth Bagley, Kent Barkhau, Angie Bowers, Aurora Taylor, Carol Voisin, Fernanda Zermoglio (telephonic), Thor Christianson (Alt. Assembly Liaison, left at 6:55 P.M.)

**Absent:** Kevin Mosher (Assembly Liaison)

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

**Public:** Barb Bingham, Larry Edwards, Joel Hanson, Eric Jordan, Lisa Sadleir-Hart

### II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

No agenda changes.

### III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

Approve the February 7, 2023 minutes.

**Bagley moved to approve the February 7, 2023 minutes.**

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

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

Joel Hanson reported on the community garden proposal that was sent to the Commission and was looking to restart community gardens. He had gone to commissions and asked for letters of support.

Lisa Sadleir-Hart thanked the Commission for its work and the process thus far.

### V. REPORTS

**Staff:** Gabel reported that the Pacific Northwest to Alaska green Corridor Initiative would have its first public webinar on April 8<sup>th</sup>. She explained the Sustainability Commission would recommend a seat on the newly created Tourism Task Force at their meeting in April.

**Chair:** Riley gave a brief update on the Inflation Reduction Act rebate timelines. She explained that the state was waiting for federal guidance on rebates and that they would likely start late 2023 or early 2024.

**Commissioners:** Voisin announced the Sitka Electrification Expo was March 18<sup>th</sup> and financial information on electrification options would be available.

Bagley was a keynote speaker at the OneHealth Conference in Fairbanks and served on a panel with Micah Hahn, a professor at UAA, who expressed encouragement about Sitka's sustainability efforts.

Zermoglio shared observations and lessons learned while working in South Africa where the community is involved in water planning and conservation.

**Assembly:** Christianson clarified that the Commission would recommend a representative to the Assembly and the Assembly would make the official appointments to the Tourism Task Force.

## **VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. Present Public Survey Results**

Gabel presented the public survey results collected from January 24<sup>th</sup> to February 28<sup>th</sup>. She noted the limitations the survey had and that overall, it was useful to get a sense of the community's desires but should not be used to definitively rank what the Commission should or should not do.

Christianson explained the Assembly's capital projects ranking process and noted that money is often the largest determiner of which projects were prioritized. Barkhau added that there may be some capital projects yet to be identified in the community energy plan.

Eric Jordan gave some examples of success then noted that since the Commission had come to no agreement on the problem they could not come up with a solution. Larry Edwards reinforced the need for a community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory and high-quality surveys.

#### **B. Discuss and Prioritize Projects for the 2023-2024 Work Plan Draft**

Gabel presented the City staff feedback on the nine project proposals and explained it was meant to help the Commission balance the equation for sustainable change, not rank projects. She highlighted that project intensity, the amount of time and effort for City staff and the Commission would need to carry out projects, was critical for finalizing priority list.

Community members stated their top priorities. Barb Bingham: renewable energy strategy, right-sizing tourism, solid waste, GHG inventory. Sadleir-Hart: renewable energy strategy with weatherization and GHG emissions inventory, solid waste strategy. Jordan: GHG emissions inventory. Hanson: GHG emissions inventory in the renewable energy plan, composting. Edwards: GHG emissions inventory.

Riley asked Commissioners to focus on three questions: look for opportunities to combine plans, how many projects were feasible without being overloaded, and what was the specific goal. She added that tourism would be addressed by the new Tourism Task Force and suggested that the City shouldn't have two tourism projects at the same time.

Riley expressed concern that a community renewable energy strategy might not be feasible in one year. Zermoglio believed that it could be done in one year, explained the nuances between a strategy and a plan, and added that action plans would fill out areas that the strategy would identify. Bowers noted that the community renewable energy strategy addressed many of the concerns of the Commission.

Riley asked if the community renewable energy strategy could be done if Sitka was unsuccessful in getting the Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Project (ETIPP) technical assistance. Zermoglio explained that there were alternatives that could be pursued such as other funding sources or could be done through partnerships with a university. Voisin summarized her conversation with Rob Jordan, the regional partner for ETIPP in Alaska, in which he said that he believed Sitka had a good chance of receiving technical assistance again.

Bagley spoke to the timeliness of a solid waste strategy as the City's contract for waste management would expire in the future and they would need a plan. She noted the Commission's unique position, ability to help with this effort, and the desire to find ways to support work already being done by staff.

Bagley wondered if the municipal fleet transition plan was helpful for the staff and recommended it be combined with the electric vehicle infrastructure plan. Barkhau voiced his desire to see the municipality transition to electric vehicles. Riley noted that it supported Resolution 2022-18: Decarbonization of City Operations by 2030.

Voisin proposed that the Commission work on right-sizing tourism, finding the number of tourists the community was comfortable with and suggesting a limitation based on that number, during the six months that the Tourism Task Force wasn't meeting. Barkhau noted that there are many sustainability issues woven into the tourism issue. Bowers added tourism would always be part of Sitka's sustainability issues. Taylor agreed that tourism was a big issue. Gabel agreed with Commissioners that there were certainly aspects of tourism to which sustainability pertained, but expressed concern about the Commission determining the right-size for tourism as it was not clearly defined as a Commission topic in its establishing ordinance and was outside of her expertise.

The Commission agreed that the energy conservation and weatherization project and the GHG emissions inventory could be wrapped into the community renewable energy strategy. They also agreed that the municipal fleet transition and electric vehicle infrastructure plan projects could be combined.

Commissioners anonymously ranked the six projects and discussed how many could be done based on the collective Commissioner-ranked list and the project's intensity. It was determined that each project should be ranked in order of importance and worked on individually until there was a lull, in which case the next project would be focused on.

**Bowers moved to adopt the following priorities:**

- 1. Community renewable energy strategy with weatherization and energy conservation and greenhouse gas emissions inventory**
- 2. Solid waste strategy**
- 3. Municipal fleet electrification and EV infrastructure plan**

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

**C. Introduce and Explain the Project Proposal Staff Feedback Rubric**

Gabel introduced the 2023-2024 work plan draft and explained the need for a work session to finalize the formatting of the plan and fine tune language as needed. Riley requested Commissioners look through the plan early and come to the work session with desired changes to increase efficiency. Ainslie explained that these changes needed to be made in a public setting and that Commissioners need to present any rewrites not the staff.

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

Jordan commented that combining projects was a good idea because it made the more priorities unique.

Ainslie reinforced that City staff did care about the sustainability of Sitka and the Commission's goals.

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

The work session to format the 2023-2024 work plan was scheduled for Monday, March 23, 2023 at 6:00 P.M., Harrigan Centennial Hall.

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 6:00 P.M., Harrigan Centennial Hall.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**Riley moved to adjourn the meeting.**

**Seeing no objection, the meeting ADJOURNED at 9:20 P.M.**

Minutes By: Carol Voisin, Secretary