

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-23

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA CONCERNING
THE RELOCATION OF THE ALEXANDER BARANOV STATUE TO THE
SITKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM**

WHEREAS, the City and Borough of Sitka recognizes the fact that Sitka is built upon the homelands and villages of the Tlingit people, who have occupied this land they called Sheet'ka since time immemorial, and without whom the building of the City and Borough of Sitka would not have been possible; and

WHEREAS, although Sitka's history includes war, the Tlingit people now share these bountiful lands and waters with the City and Borough of Sitka and welcomes all visitors to live in peace, and with this message, the citizens of Sitka holds that our public gathering spaces should exemplify a diverse Sitka that is safe, just, and welcoming to all; and

WHEREAS, the City and Borough of Sitka was generously gifted a statue of Alexander Baranov by the Hames Family; this statue and stone pedestal is placed in front of Sitka's Harrigan Centennial Hall, and is one of the first monuments displayed to greet a visitor to Sitka; and

WHEREAS, it is well known that Alexander Baranov as director of the Russian-American Fur Company left an indelible mark on the history of Sitka; however, it is also well known that much of this history involves Baranov directly overseeing enslavement of Tlingit and Aleut people to hunt fur mammals to near extinction; violation of Native women, families, and law; murder, and theft of indigenous property – often justified under a theory of racial and cultural superiority; Baranov's cruelty earned him the Tlingit nickname *Loosh Te'ix* "No Heart"; the violence dispensed by Baranov continues to ripple through time, with waves of historical trauma still causing pain for Native people this very day; and

WHEREAS, the Baranov statue's prominence at a focal gathering spot in Sitka continues to incite divisions in our community; the placement at a center-point risks a wrong message to Sitka's residents and visitors; the monument to Baranov continues to normalize a figure steeped in racial division, violence, and injustice; Sitka has a choice regarding the values it can project, and should lead with our nationally recognized voice as a leader in wellness, reconciliation, and healing; and

WHEREAS, relocating the statue of Baranov to the Sitka Historical Society Museum will allow a full display providing historical context, as well as important lessons to be passed onto future generations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka directs the relocation of the Baranov statue to an appropriate location within the Sitka Historical Society Museum in Harrigan Centennial Hall as soon as possible.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, a committee of three Assembly representatives, three Sitka Tribe of Alaska Tribal Council representatives and one Sitka Historical Society representative will coordinate the relocation, provide important historical background and context, and assist in the museum curation of the statue;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, it is the intent of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka to place the statue in the care of the Sitka Historical Society Museum.

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60 **PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED** by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska, on
61 this 14th day of July, 2020.

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Gary L. Paxton, Mayor

66 ATTEST:

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Sara Peterson, MMC
Municipal Clerk

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71 1st and final reading 07/14/2020

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Sponsors: Knox/Eisenbeisz