



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Eizenbeisz and Assembly Members

Thru: John Leach, Municipal Administrator *John Leach*, Acting

From: Bri Gabel, Sustainability Coordinator *Bri Gabel*

Date: January 14, 2026

Subject: Sustainability Commission Membership Reduction from Seven to Five

Background

The Sustainability Commission is composed of seven members appointed by the Assembly and, to the extent deemed advisable by the Assembly and possible from the applicants, include at least one individual with background or training as a sustainability professional and at least one individual of Alaska Native heritage with understanding and appreciation of the historical importance of sustainability on Tlingit Aaní. ([SGC 2.31.010](#)).

Recruitment and retention of volunteers is a challenge across municipal boards, commissions, and committees. In the case of the Sustainability Commission, this has proven to be an exceptional challenge as both a newer commission and one with largely self-driven projects that often require more work outside of regular monthly meetings. With broad duties and a steep learning curve from both parliamentary procedure as well as the content of the ongoing and potential work tasked to the Commission, efforts from both CBS staff and Commissioners to fill open seats have been unsuccessful.

The Sustainability Commission has not had seven members since February 2024. While it briefly rose to six members between March and June of 2024, membership eventually settled at five members and has been operating with two open seats since. With the election of Assembly Member Riley in October, membership dropped to four. At the November regular meeting, the Sustainability Commission unanimously recommended that Commission's membership be reduced from seven members to five. In late November, with the appointment of Commissioner Vail, the Sustainability Commission once again has five members and two open seats.

Analysis

Open seats have caused challenges in meeting the quorum requirement of four members to take Commission action as open seats count towards the majority requirement (Ord. 74-114 § 3(c)). Meeting cancellations due to lack of quorum have increased over the past two years. In 2025, four meetings were canceled due to lack of quorum. In 2024, two meetings were canceled due to lack of quorum, and in 2023, one meeting was canceled.

If the membership is reduced, the Sustainability Commission would be considered full, and its quorum requirement would be three rather than four.

Recommendation

Consider the Sustainability Commission's recommendation to reduce the membership from seven to five.