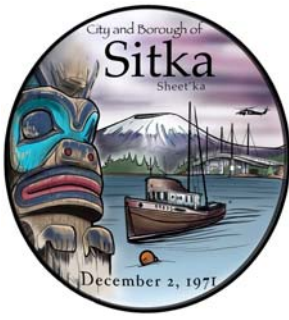


Sponsors: Ystad / Carlson

Discussion / Direction / Decision
on the establishment of a Tourism Task Force.



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Eisenbeisz and Assembly Members
From: Assembly Members Ystad and Carlson
Date: February 22, 2023
Subject: Tourism Task Force

Background

With the sudden and significant growth of the cruise tourism industry in Sitka, CBS and the community have had to quickly adapt and react. The Short-Term Tourism Plan (STTP) as stewarded by the Planning Commission and adopted by the Assembly in 2022 outlined the necessary city-operations needed to provide for public safety. Now, it is time to bridge to the next phase – long-term management of tourism. The need for this next phase has been substantiated by public input into the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan (Actions 1.1 and 3.4), the End-of-Season Tourism Survey conducted in the fall of 2022, and by the Planning Commission's recommendations on 2023 STTP implementation.

Analysis

A Tourism Task Force is proposed to help facilitate the transition into long-term tourism management. The terminology "tourism" was selected as opposed to "visitor industry" so as to address the specific and unique considerations regarding those visiting Sitka on a short-term basis for leisure, tour/guide services, and sightseeing. This is in contrast to the broader umbrella of "visitor industry" that would also include business, convention, and familial travel.

The task force would have five main directives to explore and make recommendations on:

1. Levels of tourism in Sitka
2. Annual review cycle of CBS operations and tourism-funding
3. Assisting in the development of a Tourism Management Best Practices (TMBP) program
4. Land use regulations and waterfront development policies
5. Regional strategies to advance Sitka's interests regarding cruise tourism

Proposed membership for the task force, to include nine voting seats:

- Sitka Tribe of Alaska Appointed
- Ports & Harbors Appointed*
- Sustainability Commission Appointed*
- Lincoln Street Business
- Tours and Attractions (2)
- Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal
- Community At-Large (2)
- Visit Sitka (Ex-Officio)
- Assembly Liaison
- Staff Liaison(s)

*Commissions may appoint one of their own members or a member of the public.

Members of the public appointed should be an advocate for interests and/or industries the Commission represents.

With the tourism season fast approaching, it is recommended that the task force have a kick-off meeting in April to review their directives, and outline any information members may want to gather/document over the course of the summer. The taskforce would then reconvene in the fall (September/October) to begin working on a regular basis.

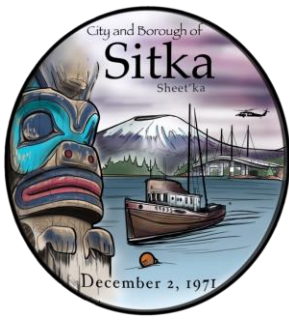
Fiscal Note

Staff liaison(s) will be needed, so their time is a fiscal resource that will be utilized, but not an additional expense. Recommendations resulting from task force work may have fiscal needs, but are subject to future Assembly decisions.

Recommendation

Establish the Tourism Task Force per the membership and directives as proposed.

Encl: Tourism Task Force Membership & Directives



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

TOURISM TASK FORCE

Membership & Directives

MEMBERSHIP:

- Sitka Tribe of Alaska Appointed
- Ports & Harbors Appointed*
- Sustainability Commission Appointed*
- Lincoln Street Business
- Tours and Attractions (2)
- Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal
- Community At-Large (2)
- Visit Sitka (Ex-Officio)
- Assembly Liaison
- Staff Liaison(s)

*Commissions may appoint one of their own members or a member of the public. Members of the public appointed should be an advocate for interests and/or industries the Commission represents.

DIRECTIVES:

1. Review the City and Borough of Juneau's findings regarding the idea to cap or limit tourism and make recommendations to the Assembly on applicability to Sitka. Make recommendations on appropriate strategies to pursue regarding levels of tourism in Sitka.
2. Develop an annual review cycle for CBS tourism-related operations including review of service level delivery, gathering and reviewing community input, and making recommendations on changes in CBS tourism-related operations. Annual review cycle should also address desired uses of CPV funds. Identify a public-body to steward this review cycle.
3. Assist in the development of a Tourism Management Best Practices (TBMP) program.
4. Make recommendations on land use regulations and waterfront development policies that may be needed in light of the growing tourism industry. Identify gaps in regulations and permitting for tourism related commercial activities and make recommendations.
5. Explore regional strategies to advance the needs and interests of Sitka and other Southeast Alaska communities regarding the cruise tourism industry.