



# CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

## Minutes - Draft

### Planning Commission

*Chris Spivey, Chair*  
*Darrell Windsor, Vice Chair*  
*Debra Pohlman*  
*Randy Hughey*  
*Richard Parmelee*

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Tuesday, January 3, 2017

7:00 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

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#### I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Spivey called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Present: Spivey, Windsor, Pohlman, Parmelee, Knox (Assembly Liaison)

#### II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

#### III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

**A** Approval of the November 16, 2016 meeting minutes.

Parmelee/Windsor moved to **APPROVE** the November 16, 2016 minutes.

**Motion PASSED 4-0.**

**B** Approval of the December 20, 2016 meeting minutes.

Pohlman/Windsor moved to **POSTPONE** approval of the December 20, 2016 minutes to allow staff to make corrections.

**Motion PASSED 4-0.**

#### IV. REPORTS

**C** Planning Regulations and Procedures.

#### V. THE EVENING BUSINESS

**D** Discussion and direction on the results compiled from the November 8, 2016 open house event.

Sheinberg gave an overview of the evening's schedule. The goal of this meeting is to work toward a draft with which all of the commissioners can be comfortable. Sheinberg asked if the commission had a general feeling about the specificity of the action steps. Spivey, Windsor, and Pohlman stated that they did not think about the specificity. Parmelee stated that there is a lot of

content for this meeting. Bosak stated that we want achievable action steps so that we do not end up with a plan that just sits on a shelf.

#### LAND USE

Sheinberg recapped the previous discussions on land use. Scarcelli gave an overview of the land use activities at the November 8th Open House. Key areas discussed were agriculture, maintaining character, improving sidewalks, harmony of use, and affordable housing. Parmelee stated that we want to keep the character of the Katlian area, but to not overdo it. Parmelee stated that we could create too much density for the area to handle. Parmelee stated that we should not encompass too much of downtown in a historic designation to the extent that development is hampered. Parmelee asked if the area past Smith Street had been considered for development. Spivey stated that we shouldn't start planning for certain areas and have to stop due to hazard mapping. Parmelee stated that we need to do our homework and set down certain criteria for land use decision-making. Bosak stated that through the open house she heard an emphasis on infill development and redevelopment. Parmelee stated that there might be possibilities up Cascade Creek Road. Pohlman stated that higher end housing should be low on the priority list. Parmelee stated that there were plans for cluster homes on the Benchlands, and we look at those in other areas. Pohlman stated that areas such as the parade lawn and Totem Square in front of the Pioneer Home could become productive gardens. Parmelee stated that you have to be sensitive to the needs of various groups of people. Parmelee stated that we need to think outside the box. Spivey stated that he receives a lot of concern about the lack of parking in the downtown area. Bosak stated the commission has spoken of decreasing residential parking. Spivey stated that people often park their boats on the street because they don't have enough room in their driveway. Spivey stated that residential parking could be based on different zones. Pohlman stated that there aren't many places to park bicycles, especially when it is raining. Pohlman stated a need for electric car parking. Scarcelli stated that in the 1970's, it appears that downtown businesses had on-site parking. Scarcelli stated that changes of use can create difficulties for parking unless a new owner can afford to create more spaces. Bosak asked about the feelings of commissioners. Spivey, Pohlman, and Windsor stated that they're in the middle. Windsor stated that we're making decisions based on the 100 people who attended the open house. Bosak stated that these statements have been heard throughout the public process. Parmelee stated that there's a lot to work through, and perhaps the commission needs more time to work through the individual items. Pohlman stated that some of the action items weren't discussed at meetings that she attended, and are designated as low priority by the data. Parmelee stated that we need to keep affordability in mind.

Garry White from Sitka Economic Development Association stated that some of the comments included in the document are not factually based. Parmelee stated that we need to get people's comments out there and work through them.

Chandler O'Connell encouraged the commission to include accessibility on the front page of multiple topics.

Rachel Moreno asked about the level of tribal involvement that has occurred. Moreno stated that she likes the tiny house movement, and the idea of creating

an eco-friendly building community. Moreno stated that Totem Square has great importance and any development should include tribal involvement.

Clyde Bright stated that the landslide assessment will impact land use drastically. Bright stated that we need to reduce lot sizes, look at higher density, and consider non-motorized development.

**BREAK 8:00-8:08**

## **HOUSING**

Sheinberg gave an overview of demographic trends and previous housing discussions. Pierson outlined the draft housing objectives. Parmelee stated that we could find a an area for tiny houses that are affordable for young people. Parmelee stated that a good start would be looking at lot size requirements, maybe 4000 or 5000 square feet. Scarcelli stated that maximum lot sizes and building square footages can be created. Windsor stated that the owner of a trailer park wanted to sell individual lots to the tenants, but it was a no-go. Windsor stated that if we could get down to 2000 square feet per lot, it might be attainable. Parmelee stated that he thinks a lot of trailer owners would like the opportunity to upgrade their homes. Pohlman stated that the only assisted living facility is Pioneer Home, and many elders would need to be downtown to be near support services. Knox asked about sweat equity versus homesteading. Bosak stated that there is a sweat equity program through rural development. Bosak stated that there is a lot of interest in homesteading, particularly in the Harbor Mountain area. Parmelee stated that islands are a good place for homesteading. Windsor stated that the area surrounding Fairbanks is a good example of this.

Clyde Bright stated that we need to modify the code for lot sizes and structures.

Charles Bingham stated that we need to look at lot sizes, and consider what type of housing is appropriate for elderly individuals. Bingham spoke about mixed use and row house options.

Sheinberg asked for commissioners to give their overall feelings on housing. Parmelee stated that we're moving in the right direction. Windsor stated that a few items could be removed and a few could be combined. Scarcelli stated that tiny homes might be geared toward younger people but might not be best for the elderly population. Spivey stated that we need to consider financeability, and said that banks won't finance tiny homes because they don't meet building codes. Windsor clarified that the banks won't finance if there is a chassis. Parmelee stated that homes on a chassis should be differentiated from those on a permanent foundation. Spivey stated that we should throw out the term "tiny home." Pohlman stated that we should normalize what happens in Sitka, such as multifamily in R-1, rather than pretending it doesn't exist.

Charles Bingham stated that there is a growing single population, so co-housing facilities should be considered.

## **ECONOMICS**

Sheinberg gave a brief overview of previous economic development

discussions. Bosak outlined the economic chapter's draft goals and objectives. Bosak stated that many action items address electric vehicles, maritime industry, and agriculture. Bosak stated that perhaps seasonal businesses could try it out for a year before complying fully with zoning requirements. Windsor stated that he would love an electric car. Parmelee stated that he was surprised by some of the numbers in the Spend \$100 activity. Windsor stated that Wrangell's city government built a haul-out and it is proving to be successful. Parmelee stated that Seward did the same. Pohlman stated that when we discuss "value added," we also need to consider "value subtracted." Parmelee stated that he likes the focus on local agriculture. Bosak stated that item x seems to be full of fluff, and we want the action items to be clear and achievable. Spivey stated an interest in diversifying the local economy. Parmelee stated that we need to develop industries that make sense for our community. Pohlman stated that education did not make the list, but it's a source of economic development. Windsor stated that he knows a lot of people who went to Sheldon Jackson and stayed in Sitka.

Garry White stated that this almost mimics SEDA's strategic plan. White suggested listing maintaining infrastructure, education, and innovation. White stated that Juneau's government stepped up and now UA's education school will now be housed in Southeast. Don't specify the capacity for the haulout, we just want a haulout.

Charles Bingham stated that we need to look at the sustainability of our economic development, and look at renewable resources. Bingham stated that the action step for internet is important. Bingham stated that the Supreme Court has ruled that internet can be a public utility. Bingham stated that we're moving into the gig economy, and these private contractors have to pay sales tax while not receiving benefits. Bingham stated that there are folk schools up north but not in southeast.

Chandler O'Connell stated an appreciation of the diversity of action steps. O'Connell suggested identifying top priority action steps and beginning research.

Clyde Bright stated that a key to economic development is opening up city land, perhaps turning it over to an organization like SEDA. Bright stated that a potential area for development is No-Name Mountain, and is concerned that the Cross Trail expansion could compromise that potential development. Bright spoke of possible tourist development on Middle Island.

Scott Saline stated that a good cold storage facility makes sense for economic development

Parmelee stated that we need focus on item u. Windsor suggested that each commissioner choose their top three items and bring them back to the next meeting.

Bosak stated that meetings in a box will be available tomorrow and will be due by the end of February.

## **VI. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

No report.

**VII. PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Parmelee/Windsor moved to ADJOURN at 9:20 PM.

Motion PASSED 4-0.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Samantha Pierson, Planner I