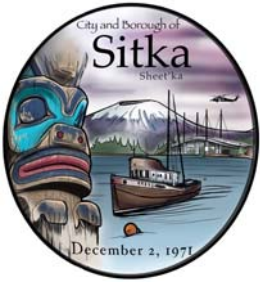


Sponsors: Himschoot and Duncan

**Discussion / Direction / Decision**  
for the reorganization of the Sitka Bear Task Force.



# City and Borough of Sitka

PROVIDING FOR TODAY...PREPARING FOR TOMORROW

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*A Coast Guard City*

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor Eisenbeisz and Assembly Members  
**From:** Assembly Members Himschoot and Duncan  
**Date:** March 1, 2022  
**Subject:** Sitka Bear Task Force

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### **Background**

In 2005 Police Chief Sheldon Schmitt convened the Sitka Bear Task Force to address the issues of bear and human conflicts in town. That group produced a number of recommendations, and several were implemented. The main focus of the group was on education, prevention and enforcement.

On October 26, 2021 ADFG biologist Stephen Bethune brought concerns to the assembly's attention, along with the total of 14 bears euthanized in the community in 2021. At the December government to government meeting with Sitka Tribe of Alaska the Tribe requested the task force effort be renewed.

### **Analysis**

The previous Sitka Bear Task Force suggested code changes, education actions and a number of garbage handling recommendations. Mr. Bethune offered a number of suggestions in his October 26<sup>th</sup> letter to the assembly and in a subsequent public presentation on bears. It is essential the community reduces the costs in staff time while also reducing the risks to humans and bears.

A new task force should review previous suggestions, investigate efforts in other communities, and report back to the assembly in six months. Any recommendations that include an expense should come with funding opportunities such as grants, if possible. The new bear task force should include a representative from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG), the Sitka Police Department, the Public Works Department, Alaska Waste Management, Sitka National Historical Park, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Baranof Island Housing Authority, the Sitka Conservation Society, the Fortress of the Bear, two at-large seats, and an assembly liaison. Applications for the task force will consist of a letter of interest and a resume if available, and will be due in the City Clerk's office by March 15 for consideration by the assembly on March 22.

**Fiscal Note**

Initially, this task force comes with the expense of staff time from the various agencies, businesses, organizations and city staff. The recommendations of the task force should be provided to the assembly with specific costs identified for future decisions and implementation.

**Recommendation**

The assembly should direct the city administrator to collaborate with the ADFG to reorganize the Sitka Bear Task Force. The goals of the task force are to provide measures that will help to reduce bear-human conflict in Sitka and a timeline for implementation of their recommendations.