



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Minutes - Draft

Planning Commission

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

7:00 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Present: Robin Sherman (Acting Chair), Wendy Alderson, Margaret Frank
Excused: Darrell Windsor, Thor Christianson (Assembly Liaison)
Staff: Amy Ainslie, Kim Davis, Ariadne Will
Public: Larry Edwards, Martina Kurzer, Marsha Strand, Bernadette Rasmussen, Darryl Rehkopf, Erin Kitka, Floyd Tomkins, Sienna Reid, Maegan Bosak, Greg McIntyre, Sharon Ferrick, Barb Bingham, John Herchenrider, Katie Riley, Klaudia Leccese, Jeff Feldpausch, Devon Calvin, Toby Campbell, Norm Campbell, Cathy Li (Sitka Sentinel)

Acting Chair Sherman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

A [PM 25-17](#) Approve the October 1, 2025 meeting minutes.

**M/Alderson-S/Frank moved to approve the October 1, 2025 meeting minutes.
Motion passed 3-0 by voice vote.**

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

V. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ainslie told the commission that it had an open seat following the election of Katie Riley to the Assembly. Ainslie said the 2025 End-of-Season Tourism Survey was open through October 26. She said too that an update on the land study was to be presented to the commission in November.

VI. REPORTS

VII. THE EVENING BUSINESS

B [P 25- 08](#) Public hearing and consideration of a final plat for a minor subdivision at 286 Tongass Drive. The property is also known as a portion of Lot 15, U.S. Survey 1496. The applicant is Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC). The property is owned by State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Davis introduced a final plat for a minor subdivision at 286 Tongass Drive. The property

had been used by SEARHC since 1998 and was the location of Penrod Hall, which SEARHC planned to demolish. A preliminary plat of the subdivision had appeared before the commission at its September 3rd meeting. Davis said the main change between the preliminary and final plats was a plat note that granted CBS access to a dirt road to access and maintain a city-owned communications tower.

Erin Kitka, who spoke on behalf of SEARHC, said he had nothing to add. No public comment was received. The commission did not deliberate and commented that the plat was bringing the property "in conformance with reality."

M/Sherman-S/Alderson moved to approve the final plat for a minor subdivision at 286 Tongass Drive in the P public lands district subject to the conditions of approval. The property was also known as a portion of Lot 15, U.S. Survey 1496. The request was filed by the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC). The owner of record was the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Motion passed 3-0 by voice vote.

M/Sherman-S/Alderson moved to adopt the following findings as listed in the staff report. Motion passed 3-0 by voice vote.

- C** **LM 25-02** Public hearing and consideration of a tideland lease request for municipal tidelands located seaward of 1604 Sawmill Creek Road in the R-1 single-family and duplex residential district. The property is also known as Alaska Tideland Survey 645. The request is filed by Rose Risley and Brian Blankenship. The owner of record is the City and Borough of Sitka.

Postponed by applicant to the Planning Commission's November 5 meeting.

- D** [MISC 25-16](#) Discussion on a request for an administrative interpretation of community garden for Sitka Tribe of Alaska at the end of Andrew Hope Street.
- Ainslie provided the commission with background behind an administrative interpretation to allow for a community garden by Sitka Tribe of Alaska at the end of Andrew Hope Street. Under the administrative interpretation, the garden was to be designated a community center. Ainslie said that while this was an administrative decision, she wanted to present her findings to the commission to get a "sense check" from the panel. She said she landed on the community center designation after determining that horticulture uses defined in the code referred more to gardening uses with a commercial component, while community centers referred to uses aligning better with STA's plans. Under the interpretation, the garden was required to apply for a conditional use permit.

Jeff Feldpausch, who spoke on behalf of the applicant, said that he appreciated the commission's support. No public comment was made.

During deliberation, Acting Chair Sherman said she would like to see "community garden" a designated use within the code and said she felt the conditional use permit should not be required.

No motion made.

- E** [ZA 25-01](#) Discussion of zoning code changes for cruise related docks.

Ainslie introduced continued discussion of a zoning text amendment to define and regulate cruise docks within the city and borough. She said that the next step would be for the commission to review a draft ordinance. In her presentation, Ainslie reviewed

proposed definitions for cruise ships and docks, in which zones cruise docks were to be allowed, conditional, or prohibited, and options for regulating cruise docks in unzoned areas.

During commission questions, the panel clarified the definitions proposed and the limits of nonconforming use permits, which would apply to existing cruise docks if the ordinance prohibited cruise docks outright.

Larry Edwards, Barbara Bingham, Devon Calvin, Klaudia Leccese, and John Herchenrider spoke under public comment. Written comment from Laurinda Marcello, Barth, Jackie, and Charlie Hamberg, Chandler O'Connell, and Neil Akana was read into the record. All comment supported prohibiting cruise docks outright.

During deliberation, the commission was split regarding the outright prohibition of cruise docks. Commissioner Alderson said she had previously voted in favor of conditional use permits she disagreed with because the application met all code requirements; she was unsure whether she would be able to deny an application she had strong concerns with but that met all code requirements. Acting Chair Sherman said she understood such hesitations but did not want to completely rule out the possibility of a new dock in the future. She also said she did not want to be put in a position where the prohibition of cruise docks was lifted from the code if Sitka was met with a proposal it agreed with, as the lifting of the prohibition would be for the purposes of a single project.

The commission requested a designation of the cruise dock use be provided for the GP Gary Paxton special zone. Acting Chair Sherman said she especially wanted to see the zoning of Goddard and Katlian Bay.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Alderson asked when the commission would next hear an update related to a possible bus depot on Oja Way. Ainslie said information would be provided at the next meeting.

Acting Chair Sherman adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.