

## **POSSIBLE MOTION**

**I MOVE TO** approve a staff facilitated, community oriented new Comprehensive Plan with some limitations due to funding.

Note: Maegan Bosak, Planning and Community Development Director, will give a presentation.



# City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

*Coast Guard City, USA*

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mark Gorman, Municipal Administrator  
Mayor McConnell and Members of the Assembly

**From:** Maegan Bosak, Planning and Community Development Director *MB*

**Subject:** Comprehensive Plan Presentation

**Date:** January 6, 2016

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After review and discussion, as well as public input, the Planning Commission is recommending a staff facilitated, community oriented new comprehensive plan with some limitations due to funding. The motion passed unanimously at the January 5<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting.

Staff gave a presentation on the comprehensive planning process, including timeline, Sitka's previous plans and what other municipalities have done. There was lengthy discussion over the pre-planning process and methods of public participation. The Commission agreed that public participation will be the most important portion of the plan and that they will spend time at future meetings discussing various methods with Staff. The scope and schedule and public participation methods will be approved by the Planning Commission, providing the opportunity for public comment, prior to the plan kick off.

Commissioners and public comment stressed that the comprehensive planning process should be staff facilitated with content derived from public comments.

Following this recommendation, the Assembly should expect to see a community driven final document that sets a generalized vision for the coming years. The plan will be primarily focused on planning and land use issues and will be limited, based on budget and time constraints, in public participation and depth. This plan option does not intend to meet all expectations associated with an extensive comprehensive planning process but rather fulfill legal requirements and create a vision geared towards promoting our vibrant, healthy, sustainable and fiscally responsible community.

The main intent of the Comprehensive Plan is to have a foundational blueprint that acts as a reference, providing guidance and continuity for policymakers in decision making.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Pass a motion directing staff to proceed with a staff facilitated, community oriented new comprehensive plan with some limitations due to funding.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PRESENTATION PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT STAFF**

*Comprehensive Plan presentation by Planning and Community Development Department staff.*

Staff presented information on the comprehensive plan process and explained three options for how to proceed: a revision of 2007 plan, an in-house limited new plan, and a more comprehensive document developed in collaboration with contractors.

**COMMISSIONER DELIBERATION:** Parker Song stated that the process is extremely critical to the outcome of the plan, and proposed a more community-based process. Pohlman stated that there will be a tension regardless of the process, and stated concerns for the timeline being too drawn out. Pohlman stated that the commission can access information from other community-based committees and processes. Spivey stated that voter turnout and public hearing attendance numbers are poor, and we shouldn't drag out the plan. Parker Song stated that efficiency is not necessarily the most important factor when running a community. Pohlman asked Parker Song if she had additional ideas for community engagement, beyond what staff had proposed. Bosak stated that she believes the commissioners and staff are working toward the same public participation goal, and that the role of staff is to set meeting times, gather comments, and other practical tasks. Administrator Gorman suggested that "staff facilitated" is a more appropriate term than "staff driven." Gorman stated that the community has a low tolerance for consultants, and the current financial situation should encourage the city to become more self-sufficient. Windsor stated that in addition to external expenditures, this plan will require a large amount of staff time. Hughey suggested that if setback requirements were reduced to 5 feet, much staff and commissioner time would become available. Bosak stated that the plan may result in code revisions. Bosak stated that the department's goal is to prepare and submit one chapter per month for Planning Commission approval. Bosak explained that a charrette is an interactive mapping process.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Libby Stortz stated that the 1999 Comprehensive Plan was developed by a group of community stakeholders. She suggested the implementation of a time-limited taskforce to help with the planning process. She stated that consultants have different ideas than community members, and that the Comprehensive Plan should be reflective of the views of community members, not staff.

Carolyn Servid stated that a plan was developed in 1994-1995 by a community-driven process. She said the city did not adopt this plan, opting instead to bring in consultants Murray Walsh to develop a new plan. She stated that she believes citizen time and effort has not been valued. Servid stated that climate and fiscal concerns should be addressed by the plan.

Scott Saline stated that he was involved in a previous planning process. He stated that the city should not make the same mistakes made in previous plans. He stated that previous plans and municipal code have created barriers to economic development, competition, and affordability. He pointed to concerns about float houses and parking. Saline thanked Parker Song for her letter to the editor.

Dorik Mechau stated that the plan should encourage collaboration instead of competition.

**MOTION: M/S POHLMAN/HUGHEY** moved to recommend a staff facilitated, community oriented new comprehensive plan with some limitations due to funding.

**ACTION:** Motion **PASSED unanimously 5-0** on a voice vote.

January 5, 2016