



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Minutes - Draft

Planning Commission

Wednesday, November 5, 2025

7:00 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Present: Darrell Windsor (Chair), Robin Sherman (Vice Chair), Wendy Alderson, Margaret Frank, Jacquie Foss, Katie Riley (Assembly Liaison)
Staff: Amy Ainslie, Kim Davis, Ariadne Will
Public: April Candilora, Bill Grant, Randy Hughey, Devon Calvin, Jack Navitsky, Tess Heyburn, Bernadette Rasmussen, Darryl Rehkopf, Larry Edwards, Rose Risley, Brian Blankenship, Katherine Prussian, Bob Sam, Rachel Moreno, Jay Stelzenmuller, Shannon Haugland (Sitka Sentinel)

Chair Windsor called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

II. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

No discussion was held prior to the vote.

M/Alderson-S/Frank moved to nominate Robin Sherman as Vice Chair. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

IV. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

A [PM 25-18](#) Approve the October 15, 2025 meeting minutes.

M/Alderson-S/Sherman moved to approve the October 15, 2025 meeting minutes. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

None.

VI. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ainslie said that the Assembly approved a resolution petitioning the state for three additional restaurant and eating place licenses. She said the request was to be heard by the Alcohol Beverage Control Board in early December. She also said the commissioners had received an email from the city attorney regarding an appeal of an administrative interpretation. Ainslie said the commission would be made aware of the timeline of the appeal as it was available. She said too that a preliminary plat had been received from BIHA and would go before the commission soon.

VII. REPORTS

VIII. THE EVENING BUSINESS

B [P 25- 09](#)

Public hearing and consideration of a plat for a lot merger of 338 and 344 Katlian Avenue in the R-1 single-family and duplex residential district. The property is also known as Lots 43 and 44, Block 1, U.S. Survey 2542 A&B, Sitka Indian Village. The request is filed by Bill Grant. The owner of record is North Pacific Seafoods, Inc.

Davis introduced a request for a lot merger at 338 and 344 Katlian Avenue. The properties were within the R-1 single-family and duplex residential district and were owned by North Pacific Seafoods. The company had received a CUP for increased density at the properties (six-plex) on March 19, 2025 and was working towards building workforce housing on the properties. One of the conditions of approval for the CUP was that the lots be merged.

Bill Grant, who spoke on behalf of North Pacific Seafoods, said the organization no longer had plans to build housing on the properties as originally planned. He said the lot merger was already underway when this decision was made and so the company wanted to proceed with the lot merger but not the rest of the housing proposal.

Under public comment, Bob Sam said the project undermined the integrity and heritage of the Sitka Indian Village. Sitka Tribe of Alaska submitted written comment stating concern regarding trespass onto adjacent properties held in trust for tribal citizens. It said too that the development of high-density housing in the neighborhood would exacerbate existing challenges of the area.

During deliberation, Sherman provided a brief description of the ramifications of the deed restrictions present in the village and asked if all property owners of deed-restricted properties had been contacted. Ainslie said this was not known and that STA maintained the list of all property owners on behalf of BIA. The commission asked how the merged lots could be developed, independent of a CUP. Ainslie said that by right, an owner of the merged lots could build up to a duplex. She said that as existed, a property owner could build a duplex on each of the lots by right, and that merging the lots would have the impact of decreasing the density of the properties as allowed by right.

Sherman requested the item be postponed to allow for consultation with STA. The applicant agreed that this would not delay any building plans.

M/Sherman-S/Alderson moved to postpone consideration of a plat for a lot merger at 338 and 344 Katlian Avenue to January 21, 2026 to allow for consultation with Sitka Tribe of Alaska. Motion passed 5-0 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.

Davis reviewed a tideland lease request for municipal tidelands seaward of 1604 Sawmill Creek Road in the R-1 single-family and duplex residential district. The lease

was in holdover status following the death of the previous owner, Vaughn Blankenship. The tidelands had been leased by Blankenship since 1967. Davis said the proposed lease action would transfer the lease to the current property owners, identify the 20-foot-wide CBS sewer easement over the tidelands, and update the lease to be in line with current CBS policies. She said competitive bidding was likely inappropriate due to the historic use of the tidelands by the upland property owner, which was consistent with SGC 18.20.130. Following commission recommendation, the request would then be presented to the Assembly. Davis said competitive bidding was ultimately to be decided by the Assembly but that the commission could make a recommendation.

Applicant Brian Blankenship had nothing to add. No public comment was received and the commission did not deliberate.

M/Sherman-S/Alderson moved to recommend approval of the lease request for municipal tidelands located seaward of 1604 Sawmill Creek Road. The property was also known as ATS 645. They further recommended the Assembly to find competitive bidding for the lease to be inappropriate as there was an upland property owner preference, and competitive bidding would have had unjust results to the existing lessee. The request was filed by Rose Risley and Brian Blankenship. The owner of record was the City and Borough of Sitka. Motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

D [MISC 25-18](#)

Discussion/Direction on Phase I Evaluation Criteria for the Housing Land Suitability and Feasibility Study.

Ainslie provided an update on the Land Feasibility Study and requested commission feedback as the study neared the end of Phase I. She asked the commission to weight evaluation criteria for the end of Phase I. Criteria were divided into three categories (constructability, density potential, and desirables), with each category housing a handful of subcategories. All but one of the subcategories within the constructability and density potential categories were weighted at 15%; the transportation capacity subcategory was weighted at 10%.

During public comment, Jay Stelzenmuller said he felt Indian River Valley was the most obvious place to develop. Larry Edwards asked the commission to add an additional subcategory for maintainability and sustainability of a development. Katherine Prussian asked that slide risk be considered on its own and said she hoped all reports—including Sitka Sound Science Center and DGGS research—from the last decade had been provided to the consultant team developing the study.

During deliberation, the commission expressed interest in prioritizing slide risk. The panel changed this subcategory from general topography and slide risk to slide risk, alone, and weighted the subcategory at 20%. It also weighted two of the three subcategories under the desirables category, environmental impact and proximity to services, at 3% and 2%, respectively. The access to roadways and buildable area subcategories were weighted at 12.5%, and the proximity to utilities subcategory was weighted at 10%. The weights of the physical conditions, transportation capacity, and future development connections subcategories remained unchanged.

Ainslie said that the Phase I report would be returned to the commission at its next meeting or at its first December meeting.

No motion made.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Windsor adjourned the meeting at 8:54 p.m.