

Sitka Port and Harbors Commission Minutes

Wednesday January 12, 2022, 6:00PM
Harrigan Centennial Hall

Port and Harbors Commission Members:

Dave Gordon, Chris Ystad, Shauna Thornton,
Tyler Green, Michael Nurco, Tamy Stevenson
Kevin Knox (Assembly Liaison)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice chairman Ystad called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Tyler Green, Shauna Thornton, Tamy Stevenson, Chris Ystad.

Assembly Liaison: Kevin Knox joined the meeting at approximately 6:20pm.

Staff: Harbormaster Stan Eliason. Harbor office manager Alicia Soto participated by videoconference.

III. CORRESPONDENCE

None

IV. AGENDA CHANGES

Seeing no objection, vice chairman Ystad adjusted the agenda to address item C, Discussion traffic flow and staging around HCH for 2022 visitor season, before item B, Discussion on harbor vehicle parking fees.

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

None.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of the November 10, 2021, meeting minutes.

M - Stevenson / S - Thornton motioned to approve the November 10, 2021, meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. REPORTS

Harbormaster - Harbormaster Eliason relayed to the commission that he had met with the Municipal Attorney regarding vessel insurance requirements and would be drafting a power point presentation to present to the commission for further discussion. Eliason noted that the harbor department was pursuing impoundment of 14 vessels, reasons for impoundment included past due moorage and/or derelict/unseaworthy vessels. Eliason was preparing to advertise for summer seasonal positions for janitorial services as well as port security officers. Eliason informed the commission that bids for the Crescent Harbor high-load zone repair project were due yesterday, no bids were submitted, and the project would be re-evaluated. An RFP to update the harbor master plan was being drafted.

City Staff - None.

Chair – None.

Assembly Liaison – Kevin Knox reported that the City’s first budget meeting took place last night, focusing on the “big picture” of the budget with the Assembly supporting a conservative approach. The harbor capital fund was faring well; however it was stressed. There was more working capital in the harbor fun available than expected, largely in part to grant payments for the Crescent Harbor rebuild project coming in, as well as the raw fish tax revenue being larger than anticipated.

Other (s) – None.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

B. Discussion on harbor vehicle parking fees.

Tamy Stevenson provided a recap of the idea of implementing seasonal harbor parking fee as a potential revenue source for the harbor fund and to increase compliance of parking regulations within the harbor parking lots. Kevin Knox provided input on the process of bringing the proposal forward to the Assembly, and public, should the Port and Harbor Commission choose to pursue it. Stevenson provided clarification as to how the parking fee structure would work, stating that seasonal and day passes would be available and would be valid for all harbor parking lots. After further discussion amongst commission members, it was decided to continue conversation on the topic at a later date when more commission members present and able to voice their opinion on the matter.

C. Discussion traffic flow and staging around HCH for 2022 visitor season.

City of Sitka Planning Director, Amy Ainslie, updated the commission on the status of the 2022 tourism plan. Ainslie noted that the first draft of the plan was submitted to the Planning Commission for review on December 15, 2021. A community survey regarding the tourism plan had been published between December 15, 2021, and January 9, 2022, with approximately 144 responses. The results of the survey would be presented during a joint work session between the Assembly and the Planning Commission on January 13, 2022. Ainslie stated that the upcoming joint work session would include review the tourism plan and present the Assembly with a proposed supplemental appropriation of funds needed to fund the tourism plan. The Planning Commission would be making a final recommendation on the tourism plan on January 19, 2022. The tourism plan would go to the Assembly for potential adoption of the plan on January 25, 2022. Ainslie highlighted the portions of the tourism plan that would most impact harbor users, which included activity within the Crescent Harbor/HCH areas including the Crescent Harbor launch ramp. Ainslie shared results of the community survey regarding potential closure of the Crescent Harbor launch ramp, of the 118 community responses only 23 users stated they would be highly or moderately impacted by closing the Crescent Harbor launch ramp during tourism season. It was not yet known if the launch ramp would be closed for the entire tour season, or usable at times when congestion was minimal. Discussion amongst vendors/excursion operators had taken place with some in favor and others hesitant regarding the proposal of relocating all vendors from the main parking lot to behind HCH.

M - Stevenson / S Thornton motioned for the Port and Harbor Commission to support the Planning Commissions tourism plan as it relates to staging around the Harrigan Centennial Hall area. Motion passed unanimously.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

D. Tender fee's.

Harbormaster Eliason explained to the commission that he had recently been contacted by Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska in regard to needing to know what the Port of Sitka's tender fees would be for the 2022 cruise ship season so that the cruise line companies can incorporate the fees into their budgets. Eliason explained that rate increases normally change at the beginning of each fiscal year, July 1st. The 2022 cruise ship season would begin in late April, Eliason wanted to adjust the tender rates before the start of the cruise ship season. Eliason proposed a 6.8% increase to the tendering fees.

M - Ystad / S Green motioned to recommend the Assembly approve the recommended 6.8% increase in tendering fees. Motion passed unanimously.

X. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS

1. The next regular scheduled meeting would take place on February 9, 2022, at 6:00pm.
2. Discussion on harbor vehicle parking fees (unfinished business).
3. Discussion vessel insurance requirements.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no objection, vice chairman Ystad adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:15pm.

Attest: Jeremiah Johnson, Deputy Harbormaster.