



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Minutes - Final

Planning Commission

Wednesday, August 6, 2025

7:00 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Present: Darrell Windsor (Chair), Katie Riley, Stacy Mudry, Wendy Alderson, Thor Christianson (Assembly Liaison, left 7:59 p.m.)
Excused: Robin Sherman
Staff: Kim Davis, Ariadne Will
Public: Peter Hagan, Kristina Cranston, Tess Heyburn, Larry Edwards, Jeremy Serka, Cathy Li (Sitka Sentinel)

Chair Windsor called the meeting to order at 6:59 p.m.

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

A [PM 25-13](#) Approve the July 16, 2025 meeting minutes.

**M/Mudry-S/Alderson moved to approve the July 16, 2025 meeting minutes.
Motion passed 4-0 by voice vote.**

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Peter Hagan, Kristina Cranston, and Tess Heyburn spoke as persons to be heard and requested that the city monitor and prevent the development of a bus depot on Oja Way.

V. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

No report was given. Commissioner Mudry informed the commission that she would not be renewing her term after its expiration on August 25.

VI. REPORTS

VII. THE EVENING BUSINESS

B [MISC 25-11](#) Update on the Land Suitability and Feasibility Study.

Davis presented the commission with an update on the Land Suitability and Feasibility Study, a memo of which was included in the meeting's packet materials. The study had identified nine sites for possible development for housing. No Name Mountain was excluded from the study at this time given that it had been the subject of a study that

had culminated in 2020 but costs may be refreshed to provide a comparison. Davis provided a list of the nine sites under review, the gross acreage of each, proximate infrastructure, whether wetlands were present, and topography. She noted that two properties adjacent to Gavan Hill and Sitka High School were the most promising, particularly given that both had significant portions of level terrain and proximity to infrastructure.

Next steps were to move forward with wetlands delineation for the two Gavan Hill properties identified as most promising, as well as for a property adjacent to Harbor Mountain Road. Davis said wetland delineations were required by the Army Corps of Engineers, and that it was financially prudent to move forward with lands that appeared to have the highest development potential at the current stage of the study.

In addition to the wetlands delineation, PND Engineers, who was contracted for the study, was to perform a "desktop exercise" to evaluate landslide mitigation strategies in the Benchlands. The evaluation was to take place on a computer instead of in person to mitigate cost. Staff also recommended limiting the study of a parcel near Indian River, which was burdened by the Indian River floodplain, but which had the potential to use for a roadway connecting infrastructure from Indian River with lands owned by United States Forest Service and the State of Alaska in Indian River Valley.

All sites were to receive a comprehensive review of existing utility infrastructure and capacity of the existing utilities to serve as "backbones" for development within study areas. This was also to understand what types of housing density each site could withstand. Staff requested the commission provide feedback regarding next steps and density scenarios.

Commissioner Riley requested the study consider the development of apartments and tiny homes.

No motion made.

C [VAR 25-07](#)

Public hearing and consideration of a minor zoning variance to increase the size of a sign at 4500 Sawmill Creek Road in the GP Gary Paxton Special Zone. The property is also known as Lot Five (5), Sawmill Cove Industrial Park, Subdivision #1. The request is filed by Jeremy Serka. The owner of record is Starwest Alaska, LLC.

Will introduced a variance request for a 20-by-17-foot sign at 4500 Sawmill Creek Road. The proposed sign was to be 340 square feet and backlit with dimmable LED bulbs. The applicant said the size of the sign would promote wayfinding, and would be adequately visible to motorists driving towards the Gary Paxton Industrial Park on Sawmill Creek Road. Presence of vegetation along the roadside prevented drivers from seeing the proposed sign except from a distance.

Applicant Jeremy Serka said the sign would be made by his fabricating company and that the light would not exceed the borders of the sign.

During deliberation, the commission considered existing precedent for sign size and requested the GPIP board consider recommendations for sign code specific to the industrial park. The panel said it felt the variance request was appropriate given the circumstances presented. No public comment was received.

M/Alderson-S/Rilvey moved to approve the minor zoning variance to increase allowable sign size from 100 square feet to 340 square feet at 4500 Sawmill

Creek Road in the GP - Gary Paxton special district subject to the attached conditions of approval. The property was also known as Lot Five (5), Sawmill Cove Industrial Park Subdivision #1. The request was filed by Jeremy Serka. The owner of record was Starwest Alaska, LLC. Motion passed 4-0 by voice vote.

M/Alderson-S/Riley moved to adopt and approve the required findings for minor variances as listed in the staff report. Motion passed 4-0 by voice vote.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Windsor adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.