

March 5, 2013

Greetings Ms. Mayor and Honorable Assembly

Attached is the outcome in part of the Revitalize Sitka Working Group, a body of community members and downtown merchants, resulting from the 6th annual Sitka Health Summit. More information on the Sitka Health Summit can be found at <http://sitkahealthsummit.com/>. This year's Health Summit established it was of vital importance to the health and wellbeing of the community of Sitka to support a goal facilitating efforts to create a downtown that was healthy, sustainable, and vibrant. Through regular meetings, a notion evolved that local accessibility, a healthy visitor industry, economically thriving businesses, as well as an aesthetically pleasing downtown were all aspects allied with a lively downtown commercial district. Since October 2012, the working group has been devising projects in which to revitalize downtown Sitka, of which this is one.

By example of communities with historic districts such as Ketchikan, Juneau, and Skagway among many others in Alaska and lower 48, and with the consideration of a significant number of historic properties in the downtown area, the prospect of one or more historic districts was explored. Based on educational materials and these community examples it was concluded that a historic district designation in the area from the Petro Marine Fuel Dock to St. Michael's Cathedral was plausible and would be greatly beneficial. Boasting six National Register properties among historic building facades in one block of Lincoln Street, it was thought the cohesion of a district and the positive branding of a "Lincoln Street Historic District" would serve as a boundless tool in which to market Sitka to visitors while pursuing the preservation of Sitka's historic treasures and maintaining local authenticity.

Historic districts have proven to be a keen marketing tool for the visitor industry, stabilize or raise property values, offer federal tax incentives, open opportunity for grants and other funding, as well as have profoundly positive social and environmental impacts within a community. Advantageous mitigation measures with federal and state funded projects may also result from a historic district listing.

The Alaska State Historic Preservation Office is now accepting grant applications for preservation projects such as establishing a historic district. This Historic Preservation Fund Grant is offered by way of the Sitka Historic Preservation Commission serving as Sitka's Certified Local Government. The Revitalize Sitka Working Group would like to apply for this grant to fund the hiring of a consultant to conduct a historic survey of properties on Lincoln Street from St. Michael's Cathedral to the Petro Marine Dock for a historic district with the option to extend the district boundary down Lincoln Street. Using the survey information and archival research, the consultant will write a nomination to the National Park Service to get the district on the National Register of Historic Places. This grant has been used by most communities in Alaska that have established historic districts. Follow this link to the grant, its priorities, and past recipients at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/grant/akclg.htm>.

The Historic District Committee of the Revitalize Sitka Working Group, respectfully submit this grant application for your approval which includes a cash match of \$2,620 by the City and Borough of Sitka. As you will note in the text of the application, a survey of property owners in the proposed one block project area was conducted and a majority support pursuing a historic district listing. The Committee shared a draft version of the grant with the Historic Preservation Commission at their February 13th meeting and members unanimously agreed the project fit with their mission and are supportive of the proposal and application (noted in meeting minutes). It was noted we are to work out budgetary and staffing details of the grant with City Officials, then present a finalized version at their next meeting, March 13th for an official motion of support.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anne Pollnow, Stephanie Brenner, the Historic District Committee and Members of the Revitalize Sitka Working Group