



# CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

## Minutes - Draft

### Planning Commission

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Wednesday, December 7, 2022

7:00 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

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#### I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Present: Chris Spivey (Chair), Darrell Windsor, Wendy Alderson, Katie Riley, Stacy Mudry, (excused), Thor Christianson (excused)  
Staff: Amy Ainslie, Kim Davis  
Public: Kent Bovee, Jim Steffen, Thad Poulson, Laurie Booyse, Kim Elliot, Larry Edwards, Martina Kurzer

Chair Spivey called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

#### II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

#### III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

##### A [PM 22-21](#)

M-Riley/S-Alderson moved to approve the November 16, 2022 meeting minutes.  
Motion passed 4-0 by voice vote.

#### IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

#### V. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ainslie reported the GIS (geographic information system) would be transitioning to a new platform from MainStreet Maps to Axis GIS due to a change in the contract. The new GIS platform would be available soon and the Planning Department would notify commissioners and make a public announcement. The Planning Department would also host a demonstration for the public.

Ainslie shared some photos from a previously approved project at 424 Katlian Avenue. In the summer of 2021 the Planning Commission approved a setback variance for the placement of a tiny house. The applicant Adam Chinalski had found a small structure to turn into a tiny home. The lot was 1500 sq. ft. with a 10 ft. front setback, a 5 and 9 ft. side setback, and a 8 ft. setback at the rear. The tiny house was a good example for the community on how to build on smaller lots while still maintaining parking and reasonable setbacks.

Ainslie also announced the Planning Department had hired Coral Crenna for the Planning Manager position, she was a life-long Sitkan and current CBS employee. She would be starting in mid-January. The December 21st and January 4th meetings had

been canceled and the next meeting would be held January 18th. Spivey reminded the commissioners at the January 18th meeting they would be voting for chair and vice chair.

## VI. REPORTS

## VII. THE EVENING BUSINESS

### B [CUP 22-27](#)

Ainslie introduced a request for a conditional use permit for a short-term rental (STR) at 601 A Lincoln Street. The proposed residence was developed as a duplex and had three levels. The first floor was the owners residence. The second and third floors would be the STR with three bedrooms, 1 ½ bath, kitchen, study, and living/dining area. The STR would be utilized year-round, allowing family to visit at various times during the year. A STR permit was previously approved on November 5, 2015 but the applicant decided to not move forward with the rental. There was also a CUP issued in 2021 to allow for the building to become a triplex for multi-family use but due to the costs the applicant decided to not move forward to add an additional unit. The property was close to downtown and additional vehicle use would be low. There was adequate parking available with five parking spaces. Quiet hours would be from 10pm to 8am and the owner lived on site and would be managing the STR. Staff recommended approval of the short-term rental.

Kent Bovee, the applicant was present. Bovee lived downstairs and would like to use the top floors as the STR when family was not in town and to help cover expenses. There was no public comment. Riley was concerned about losing a long-term rental and Alderson was concerned with the density of STR's in the area. Spivey believed it was far enough from the other STR's to mitigate any density issues.

**M/Alderson-S/Windsor moved to approve the conditional use permit for a short-term rental at 601 A Lincoln Street in the R-1-Single-Family/Duplex Residential District subject to the attached conditions of approval. The property was also known as Lot Three (3), Block 13, Gregory Subdivision U.S. Survey 1474. The request was filed by Kent Bovee. The owners of record were Bovee Irrevocable Childrens Trust, c/o Kent Bovee. Motion passed 4-0 by voice vote.**

**M/Alderson-S/Windsor moved to adopt and approve the required findings for conditional use permits as listed in the staff report. Motion passed 4-0 by voice vote.**

### C [MISC 22-19](#)

Ainslie introduced modifications to conditional use permit CUP 10-06 for temporary lodging operations at 104 Jeff Davis Street by the Sitka Summer Music Festival (SSMF). As some background, in 2010 the SSMF received Planning Commission and Assembly approval to operate professional offices and lodging for guest workers and musicians in association with SSMF activities. Since then, SSMF had completed a substantial renovation on the building and was looking to support the facility with more year-round usage. Under this proposal, the building would offer a total of 10 suites (with a maximum of 15 guests) that would be available for groups or organizations to use as

lodging facilities. This would not be general public lodging such as a short-term rental or hotel-type use, the facility would only be rented to groups or organizations with a preference for non-profits who were able provide liability insurance coverage for use of the facility. This model fit better with SSMF's organizational capacity to manage the property and maintains a level of activity consistent with summer festival usage.

There were thirteen available parking spaces on the property and five additional parking spaces which could be utilized on the neighboring lot serving the Hames Center via a shared parking agreement. There was also an parking agreement in place with the Hostel for six parking spaces to be available in the parking lot. None of those space were marked. The parking requirement for hotels/motels which was the closest code definition to this use was one space per five rooms. With 10 rooms utilized, this would result in a parking requirement of two spaces meeting the code requirement. The application limited total vehicle usage to no more than five vehicles. The occupancy rules listed quiet hours from 10 PM to 8 AM and prohibited any alcohol or smoking activity on the exterior decks. There would be full-time SSMF staff in the building during business hours to help monitor activity. Ainslie stated the this met two objectives of the comprehensive plan, Historic, Cultural, and Arts Resources Action 4.1c which encouraged allowance for broader range of uses on the historic Sheldon Jackson campus. Also Land Use Action 3.2, encouraged uses that support Sitka's education, arts, and sciences economy, while preserving and enhancing the historic character on the campus. Staff recommended approval of the permit modification.

The applicant Jim Steffen was present, he asked for clarification about parking and how enforcement worked under the conditional use permit requirements. Spivey explained there would have to be complaints brought to city staff before any action would be taken to revoke the permit. Steffen explained the SSFM would like to use the property year-round to help offset annual costs of operating the building, and support expansion of music festival activities all year. Alderson asked how many people typically stay during their music festival. Steffen clarified they typically have one artist per room but sometimes they had two to a room. They normally don't go above 15 and had no plans to go above that number of guests. Riley asked if anyone lived on site. Steffen stated no, they only had one staff member at this time and would be hiring soon for another. Riley asked if there would be an emergency contact for when staff were not at the facility and Steffen clarified t here would be, and contact information would be given to all users. Riley asked staff if the approval of the conditional use permit would allow SSMF to rent to large groups such as a wedding party. Ainslie stated it was her interpretation of the application that rental use was intended for non-profit organizations with the ability to get liability insurance and not a large group of non-affiliated people. Ainslie stated that if city staff received complaints that operations were not consistent with the permit application, then the conditional use permit could be revisited.

Under public comment, Thad Poulson, the owner of 109 Jeff Davis Street (the Sitka Youth Hostel), stated that he had a parking agreement with Sheldon Jackson campus for use of the parking lot for six spaces for the hostel under a CUP. He just wanted to clarify the hostel had priority for those parking spaces. Laurie Booyse was in support of the application, she hoped more small groups could use the space and felt there was demand for it.

**M/Riley-S/Alderson moved to approve the modifications to conditional use permit CUP 10-06 for temporary lodging operations at 104 Jeff Davis Street in the R-2 Multifamily Residential District subject to the attached conditions of approval. The property was also known as Lot 3-2, Sheldon Jackson Campus**

**Subdivision No. 2. The request was filed by Jim Steffen. The owner of record was the Sitka Music Festival, Inc. Motion passed 4-0 by voice vote.**

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

**D**      [MISC 22-17](#)

Ainslie introduced the 2023 Draft Tourism Plan that was developed after a joint work session with the Assembly. The Planning Commission had been tasked by the Assembly to develop recommendations for city operations based off of last years tourism plan. For Lincoln Street closures, the Planning Commission was recommending continuing with the closure of Lincoln Street from Lake Street to Katlian Avenue on days with 5,000 or more cruise ships passengers based on ship capacity. The Planning Commission recommended the Assembly discuss if the closure hours needed to be changed as they were in favor of keeping them the same as the 2022 plan. Potential temporary restroom locations were also considered.

Other recommendations included the continuation of the bathroom grant program, walk/bike/win program, and food cart permit opportunities on Lincoln Street during closures. Future planning needs and considerations included traffic management for improved shuttle pick-up and drop-off, the possible construction of a bike/pedestrian path on Halibut Point Road, adopt design standards for a downtown beautification program and possible grant program for paint and planters. Other recommendations included bus electrification, other electric transportation alternatives and public transit opportunities to reduce congestion and offer services to the airport. It was recommended these areas could be tasked to the Sustainability Commission. Also the creation of a body dedicated to tourism planning and management was highly recommended.

Under public comment, Kim Elliot stated she had been impacted by tourist traffic and parking issues during the summer. Parking spaces were being lost and were hard to find. Elliot would like to see the cruise ship numbers restricted and wanted people to be aware of the impacts of tourism on traffic, medical care, and city staff. Larry Edwards stated the city should work with the cruise industry to not bring as many people here or add provisions to the code to place limits on cruise ship passengers to 2,000 or 3,000 a day. Jim Steffen stated the Assembly should create a committee for tourism or add it to the Sustainability Commission as it didn't fit well under the Planning Commission, who had other issues to focus on. Steffen also remarked buses had been speeding on Halibut Point Road and should not be idling downtown. Martina Kurzer also stated a no idling policy should be enforced downtown. Laurie Booyse thanked the Planning Commission and city staff for working hard on the tourism plan. Thad Poulson stated the public should be able to comment on the seasonal shutdown of any city street. Poulson would like to know the effects on traffic by closing a city street and the city should plan to plumb any restrooms instead of pumping. A letter read into public comment from Klaudia and Michael Leccese stated as a community we needed to make a decision to restrict the number of visitors and other communities had done this through memorandum of agreements. The community should be aware of how the roads were being impacted and if our access to medical care was being impacted due to higher traffic volume. The waste system was another component to review as the temporary increase in population for the season adds significantly to the overall waste being shipped out of town.

Windsor stated he had received a number of calls about the restrooms located on Maksoutoff Street and people had stated they did not want to see the street closed, Commissioners agreed to remove this location from the recommended list. On future planning needs Spivey recommended adding opportunities to add or expand permanent restroom facilities in the downtown area. Commissioners added that any future decisions on shuttling locations that include pick-ups and drop-offs heavily impact the public, and therefore any changes should include public review and input. Commissioners considered the pros and cons of creating another, dedicated commission for tourism, ultimately agreeing that a body with more industry-representation and focus on tourism would be beneficial.

**M/Riley-S/Windsor moved to recommend the 2023 tourism operations plan draft to the Assembly. Motion passed 4-0 by voice vote**

**E**      [MISC 22-18](#)

Ainslie presented a short list of potential lands for affordable housing development. The Planning Commission had asked staff to develop a list of lands which could be developed for affordable housing. The criteria Ainslie used to make the short list included the location of large acres of land, the proximity of land to existing utility structure, and accessibility to town. The first location was located next to Sitka High School, where much of the land was flat and close to existing utilities. The second location was Indian River Valley area. While not owned by the city, CBS could reach out to the State of Alaska as the current administration had expressed interest in opening up state lands to municipalities for development. The land was flat through the valley, and was close enough to existing utilities. The last location was the Benchlands, most of these lands were already owned by CBS and had some base line road infrastructure in place. There would be a need for an electric substation and there was land dedicated in the plat for the substation but it would be a large cost. In order to move forward with any of these possibilities, CBS would need to find determine land suitability and costs of development. Ainslie would be requesting funds in the FY 2024 budget to fund study work, likely in the form of a match towards grant opportunities.

Under public comment, Martina Kurzer recommended building more multi-family housing due to the limited amount of space available for development. Larry Edwards stated with even with all of the new construction there was still a housing shortage and CBS power capacity would need to be reviewed to keep it affordable. A letter read into record from Lisa Bush, Executive Director Sitka Sound Science Center, which stated that their biggest issue for the organization was housing. The community should consider seasonal housing to accommodate skilled seasonal workers such as bunk houses that have small efficiencies, or double rooms would be ideal. Ainslie recommended the commission hold a special session to bring the community into the discussions. Commissioners were excited to moved forward with a plan to develop land for affordable housing. Riley suggested to check with USDA Rural Development as they also provide funds for the development of utility infrastructure. Riley also agreed workforce housing needed to be part of the discussions as well when developing affordable housing. She recommended working with community partners such as Sitka Tribe of Alaska and Baranof Island Housing Authority to create affordable housing opportunities in the community.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Seeing no objections, Chair Spivey adjourned the meeting at 9:27 PM.