



City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

Coast Guard City, USA

Memorandum

To: Chair Spivey and Planning Commission Members
Through: Amy Ainslie, Director, Planning and Community Development /s
From: Scott Brylinsky, Special Projects Manager /s
Subject: No Name Mountain/Granite Creek Master Plan Project, Status Report #4
Date: March 26, 2020

Background

The rapid spread and response to Covid-19 is changing how the community does business on all levels. As new information comes forward, staff has considered four options on how to proceed with this project.

Status

Based on current public health protocols, we have cancelled the public meetings previously scheduled for April 7th and 8th, with no plans to reschedule the meetings at this time. We are currently in discussions with the consultant team on options for continuing work on the project in light of the meeting cancellation..

These options include:

1. **Terminate the project now.** Pro of this option is that no additional resources would go to the project. Con is that much of the work and resource expenditure thus far will have been for naught, because the continuity and context of the information gathered will be largely lost. Under this option staff would summarize work and present draft conclusions and draft recommendations in a report format. It may or may not include drawings, depending on the level of detail included in the consultants' draft graphics work to date.
2. **Ask the Consultant to summarize work to date in a "preliminary recommendations" report.** Pros of this option would be to capture the benefit of the research and analysis up to this point, providing the City with some limited benefit of the study, while also leaving the project in a better position to reactivate at such time as circumstances allow. Cons of this option would be that the work product and recommendations are not informed by public input which is considered important to the land use study.
3. **Use an interactive website to take the place of the public meetings, and continue project as earlier planned, sticking to the contract terms and completion date of June 15, 2020.** Pros of this option would be to realize the full benefit of the project with final study recommendations based on public input. The draft plan would still be

presented to the Planning Commission and Assembly in late May as scheduled. (We would wait to see whether this would be presented by the consultants in person, or other format, based on public health best practices.) However, the interactive webpage would allow members of the community to be engaged and provide input at their convenience over a two-week period, instead of attending a public meeting at a fixed date and location. Notification of the webpage would be posted on City's website, local paper, radio, social media, etc. Public participation via the webpage could actually turn out to be greater than with the public meeting. Cons of this option are the community focus is now on public health concerns, and the public may not want to think about or be engaged in the planning study.

4. **Suspend project immediately with a proposed reactivation date of November 1, 2020.** Pros of this option are that public attention will presumably be freer to focus on the land use plan in the fall. Cons are that the break in continuity will cause project momentum to be lost, and that findings and information will have to be revisited or regenerated upon resuming the project. The contract would also need to come back before the Assembly for formal revision. The consultant has indicated that this option would require additional fees to reactivate the project as described in the contractual scope of services.

Staff and the consultants are open to other options which may be proposed.

Note on contract terms

The contract provides the city with the option to terminate the contract at the owner's convenience with 10-days written notice. Consultant must provide all work products to date under this provision.

The contract may be amended by mutual consent of the parties.

Recommendation

Staff recommends Option #3. We believe this provides the best value for the community. While recognizing that community life, business, and government may temporarily be altered by the Covid-19 outbreak, Sitka still has a future, and some sort of normalcy will eventually return. The need for a land-use plan for this large parcel remains. However, if the Planning Commission and/or Assembly do not favor Option #3, then Option #2 is our alternative recommendation.

As of now no direction has been given to change course on this project. Staff is moving forward with Option #3 unless new direction is given to reconsider this course.

Action requested

We recognize that the Planning Commission's and the Assembly's focus at this time is on high-priority public health concerns and other matters requiring immediate action. Staff does not wish to distract from these high priority items unless requested.

No formal action is requested unless the Planning Commission or Assembly indicate a desire for an action item on this project.