



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Minutes - Final

Planning Commission

Chris Spivey, Chair
Darrell Windsor, Vice Chair
Debra Pohlman
Randy Hughey
Richard Parmelee

Tuesday, April 4, 2017

7:00 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Spivey called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Present: Spivey, Windsor, Pohlman, Hughey, Parmelee, Knox (Assembly Liaison)

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

- A [PM-21](#) Approval of the February 27, 2017 meeting minutes.

Windsor/Parmelee moved to **APPROVE** the February 27, 2017 meeting minutes.

Motion **PASSED 5-0.**

- B [PM-22](#) Approval of the March 7, 2017 meeting minutes.

Windsor/Parmelee moved to **APPROVE** the March 7, 2017 meeting minutes.

Motion **PASSED 5-0.**

- C [PM-23](#) Approval of the March 21, 2017 meeting minutes.

Windsor/Hughey moved to **APPROVE** the March 21, 2017 meeting minutes.

Motion **PASSED 5-0.**

IV. PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

V. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

VI. REPORTS

- D** [16-00](#) Planning Regulations and Procedures.

VII. THE EVENING BUSINESS

- E** [LM 17-01](#) Public hearing and consideration of a land lease for 725 Siginaka Way. The property is also known as US Survey 3377. The applicants are William Akan and April Wheldon for Coastal Transport. The owner of record is the City and Borough of Sitka.

Scarcelli described the history of the property and prior lease. The property was put out for a request for bid process. The bid winner was chosen for its lease rate and risk level as determined through conversations between planning, legal, and finance departments. Staff recommend that the commission recommend approval to the Assembly.

No public comment.

Windsor stated support for moving forward without the applicant present and stated support for the project. Parmelee and Spivey stated support. Pohlman stated that this seems like a pass through item and would prefer that such items not come through the Planning Commission. Community Affairs Director Maegan Bosak stated that staff will be working on a way to streamline Title 18 procedures for leasing and selling municipal property.

Windsor/Pohlman moved to RECOMMEND approval to the Assembly.

Motion PASSED 5-0.

- F** [MISC 17-11](#) Public hearing and consideration of the draft transportation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Community Affairs Director Maegan Bosak gave an update on the comprehensive plan process.

Consultant Barb Sheinberg gave an overview of the evening's agenda and shared about future meetings. Commissioner Windsor and Chair Spivey requested that the commission have the final draft for review at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting.

Sheinberg outlined the topics addressed in the transportation chapter. Transportation infrastructure is critical for the community. The number of air travelers into and out of Sitka is increasing. Air mail and freight is declining. Airport challenges include a lack of lease land to meet demand, an undersized terminal, and inadequate parking supply. The expected lifespan of the municipal seaplane base is 5 more years.

Municipal harbors provide approximately 1300 boat slips. Harbors are at 85-90% occupancy. 227 individuals are currently on the waiting list for slips.

Sitka is the first multi-basin harbor in Alaska to earn the Alaska Clean Harbors certificate. If everyone on the waiting list could obtain moorage, that would bring an additional \$396,000 per year. Knox clarified that some boats are “hot berthing” and are being moved around to vacant slips, so some revenue is being gathered. The moorage rates required to support infrastructure repairs and upgrades would increase moorage rates out of line with other communities. Sheinberg stated that creative thinking can buy more time, but cost will increase the longer maintenance and repairs are deferred. A new drive-down floating dock will be constructed at the Gary Paxton Industrial Park. Ferry stops and ferry passengers disembarking in Sitka are declining.

Sheinberg outlined vehicle usage trends as measured by Alaska DOT. Sitka has earned the designation as a bike friendly and walk friendly community. 15% of Sitkans walk to work and 5% bicycle to work, both of which are greater than state and national averages. Sheinberg featured the Edgum Drive project to narrow the street and widen multi-use paths. A systematic way to determine project priorities would be to conduct bicycle and pedestrian counts. Sheinberg reviewed the results of the spend \$100 activity. Education and streets were the two highest priority items for activity participants.

Sheinberg outlined transit and the RIDE, operated by Center for Community and Sitka Tribe of Alaska. Future considerations include the role of the city, maintaining and extending hours, access to the airport, and a possible role in transporting tourists.

Sheinberg stated that the municipality owns and maintains approximately 21 acres of surface parking lots. Parking concerns include the cost of maintenance, the cost of providing free parking, possible revision of parking standards, and determining the right amount of parking in the downtown area. Central Business District property is the highest assessed in the city. According to assessments of square footages, each downtown parking space is worth \$15,500. Sheinberg stated that minimum parking requirements often result in an excess of parking during the majority of the day. When parking is unbundled from the price of a house, consumers have more choices. Sheinberg stated that an action step is to conduct parking counts so that parking decisions can be made on quantitative data.

Sheinberg outlined transportation objectives: predictable funding and rates, maintain essential infrastructure, efficiency, complete streets, transit, environmentally sound, and parking.

BREAK 8:10-8:20

Sheinberg introduced the photovoice activity. Sheinberg handed out packets of photos and asked guided questions. Photo 1 is of an unlit dirt road in a residential neighborhood with no separation between vehicles and pedestrians. Windsor stated that the owners in this neighborhood shot down a proposal to pave the road. Commissioner Pohlman stated that people park along the street in the summer when trying to access the nearby ballfields. Commissioner Parmelee stated that there are many roads going into major subdivision that don't have sidewalks, and he's surprised that more people aren't hit. Bosak stated that kids walk along Price Street to catch the school bus and there aren't sidewalks on the 80 foot right of way. Bingham stated that lower speed limits and enforcement can increase safety in mixed use

situations. Parmelee stated that sidewalks are only necessary on one side of the road. Commissioner Hughey stated that street paving and sidewalk installation may not be feasible in the economic environment but a speed limit change can be more easily implemented. Bingham stated that Seward and Fairbanks were recently sued for lack of snow clearance under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Scarcelli stated that we need to think beyond the 18-35 age range and be proactive.

Photo 4 is of the Cross Trail. Spivey stated that he sees this more as recreation. Bingham stated that the Cross Trail is a good way to get across town. Pohlman stated concerns for maintenance. Hughey stated that he wants us to continue to value the trail. Gerry Hope stated that the bus stops at most trailheads. Bingham stated that the public needs to be made aware that some trails are not for biking due to erosion concerns.

Photos on page 7 and 8 are of the RIDE food drives. Hope stated that Sitka is a generous community and the RIDE wants to make community contributions beyond transit.

Photos 9, 10, 12, and 13 are of transportation construction. Hope stated that photo 9 is of a collaborative effort to build a bus shelter.

Photo 17 is of a park bench on Katlian Avenue. Bingham stated that benches are important for elders and parents of young children.

Photo 16 is of a bike lane. Bingham stated that there are now directional arrows in the bike lanes near Blatchley. Scarcelli stated that gravel in bike lanes is also problematic.

Photo 14 is of the Sitka Ferry Terminal. Hope stated that the ferry has historically been a main mode of transportation and stated support for continued advocacy for ferry service.

Charles Bingham stated that he has written bicycle friendly community and walk friendly community applications. Bingham stated that statistics on biking and walking to work in Sitka are highest in the state. Bingham stated that tourists should also be considered. Some Alaskan communities have adopted complete streets policies. Bingham stated concern for elders and others who are concerned for falling. Bingham stated support for lowering residential speed limits to 20 miles per hour.

Gerry Hope would like to see public transit included in the bolded area on page one, would like to see ferry service improved, and supports relocation of the ferry terminal. On page 18, transit hours need to be expanded particularly on the weekend, although funding is not there. Hope said that the municipality is considering allocating \$25,000 for the RIDE but that will not be enough to expand service. Ketchikan Gateway Borough contributes \$500,000 to \$750,000 per year on public transit. Hope would like to work with Sheinberg on the benefits of transit.

Joel Hanson lives at the corner of Arrowhead Street and Monastery Street. Hanson stated that he would not like to see sidewalks on Monastery Street. Hanson stated that vehicles in a hurry would go to Lake Street because of Monastery's many stop signs. Hanson stated that many pedestrians use

Monastery. Hanson would like to see discretion on the addition of sidewalks. Hanson would like to see existing sidewalks improved before new sidewalks are added. Hanson suggested a voluntary sidewalk cleanup project.

Dave Gordon stated that he is a seaplane owner and is concerned with wording on page 4. There should be some long-term visioning on the future facility. Gordon stated that FAA will not rebuild on the existing site. Gordon stated that small surrounding communities rely on seaplanes for access to Sitka. Gordon stated that the FAA provides grants for facility maintenance. Windsor asked about a possible alternative location across the channel. Gordon stated that the city is looking at a site on Japonski Island but there are some issues with upland property ownership. Bosak stated that the Planning Commission recommended and Assembly passed a resolution requesting this parcel from the state for this purpose.

Scott Saline spoke in favor of mitigation opportunities to benefit walkability.

Spivey stated that he would like to see more emphasis on the ferry and the floatplane dock. Spivey stated favor for lowering speed limits but it's an issue of enforcement. Pohlman stated appreciation for Bingham's recommendation to look at Alaskan applications of federal policies, such as complete streets. Pohlman stated agreement with Hanson's aversion to installing sidewalks on Monastery Street. Pohlman asked if the airport size statistics were based on national standards and stated that Sitka doesn't have some of the needs of other airports. Hughey stated that priorities must be determined based on economic driving forces. Spivey stated that the airport works for what we need, so maintenance should be more important than expansion. Knox stated that the airport is not able to handle the passenger and cargo loads at peak times, and there are safety issues. Knox pointed out that additional airlines will bring more flights in if facilities are available. Bosak stated that development of additional lease lots has been a legislative priority the last 2 years. Parmelee stated that private jets and yachts have been coming in and we need to be able to meet their needs. Knox stated that travelers would stay longer if they had a place to leave their planes. Hughey asked how many of the folks on the harbor waiting list are potential Sitkans. Knox asked about the development of action items. Sheinberg stated that the action items are under development and open for discussion. Bosak stated that the hope is that people will comment at the May capstone meeting. Knox stated appreciation for Figure 6 on utility rates.

Bosak led a discussion on a community capstone event for May. The prior capstone was held in the Centennial Hall auditorium. Sheinberg stated that an option is to partner with the Rotary Club's Bike Rodeo on May 13. Another option is to partner with Story Corps on a Thursday. Hughey stated that we had good public feedback tonight because participants had read the chapter and thought about it. Knox stated that you need to engage interest groups. Spivey stated that he will be out for much of May and early June. Knox stated that he wouldn't recommend the Rodeo because it's loud and people are preoccupied. Bosak stated that she would like to see a drop-in event with stations. Windsor stated that he wanted to be prepared ahead of time for his role in the meeting. The commission agreed on 5-8 PM on Tuesday, May 9. Hughey asked how we can get the public to read and think about the chapters. Scarcelli recommended personal outreach. Pohlman suggested posters for businesses. Hughey stated willingness to speak on Raven Radio.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Spivey/Windsor moved to ADJOURN at 9:45 PM.

ATTEST: _____
Samantha Pierson, Planner I