

Sitka Tourism Collaborative Planning Process
Meeting Notes
February 6, 2006
5:30 – 8:00; Centennial Hall

In attendance:

Collaborative Process Steering Committee members:

Jim “Stef” Steffen – commission chair; Cleo Brylinksy – Dept. of Fish and Game; John Litten – Sitka Tours; Brian McNitt – Alaska Rainforest Campaign; Hugh Beven – SEDA; Julia Smith.

Collaboration Conveners:

Jeff Budd – Sitka Bike and Hike, Convention and Visitors Bureau; Sandy Lorrigan – Convention and Visitors Bureau; Greg Dudgeon – National Park Service; Mark Gorman – Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium; Don Kluting – Centennial Hall manager; Jill Hanson – University of Alaska, Southeast continuing ed; Steve Reifensstuhl – Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association; Roger Hames – SeaMart, Sitka Economic Development Association, Raptor Center board, former Sheldon Jackson College board; Fred Reeder – Cruise Line Agencies of AK, former mayor of Sitka; Linda Behnken – commercial fisherman; Cindy Edwards – potpourri; Judy Ozment – retired, museum volunteer; Brian Massey – AK Housing Finance Corp, Fish and Game advisory board, Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association board; Bill Paden, former member of the Sitka Assembly, fisherman; David Malone – Sheatika/Totem Inn; Vern Culp – art gallery owner; Lily Herwald – Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium .

Facilitator: Matthew Turner

Assistant: Kayla Boettcher

Goal for this evening: Identify the community members who will develop, guide, and participate in a process to achieve the mission.

Introduction (given by Matthew Turner):

This is the beginning of a collaborative process to eventually develop a tourism/visitor plan. The Assembly approved this process and delegated it to the Long-Range Planning Commission. LRPC decided to proceed with the collaborative process, and a sub-committee of the LRPC has formed the Steering Committee to begin this process.

The Steering Committee has developed the following **mission**:

Mission – To create a plan that provides for sustainable tourism business development and maintains Sitka’s quality of life, recognizing the characteristics that make Sitka attractive to both residents and visitors.

Description of the collaborative process:

The process will be facilitated in the method outlined by David Chrislip, a model that has been used in Sitka before. Because it is a process, much of what will happen is not yet determined – much will be developed as we go along. We will spend a great deal of time in the beginning focused on developing a common language, and defining each segment of the mission statement. Collaboration is not based on Robert’s Rules of Order, – it is a consensus-building process. It is important to make sure everyone agrees with where we are before we move on. One of the things Chrislip has found is that the process is the key – it is

important to involve the community as much as possible; check in with the community along the way. The outcome should be a reflection of what the community wants – not any specific group of power.

There are two tracks that work simultaneously in the collaborative process:

Process: guided by the steering committee. The Steering Committee has no input into the content – they care about the public process and every step along the way. They make sure the community is invested and is appropriately represented in the process; that no one voice is being over-represented or that there are unrepresented voices.

Content: The content of the process includes identifying the participating community members (or “stakeholders”), who will gather the relevant data, and develop consensus and conclusions

The biggest potential danger is that a coalition forms against this process – people that aren’t engaged in the process but throw stones at the end.

Everybody that is involved has a responsibility to the community to engage as many people as possible – not just about the next meeting, but to share information with others outside of the meetings and hear concerns and bring those into the process

Basic tenet of collaborative process (from David Chrislip):

“If you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organization or community.”

Goal for this evening: Identify the community members who will develop, guide, and participate in a process to achieve the mission.

Question: How was the Steering Committee chosen?

When tasked by the Assembly, the Long Range Planning Commission –decided to use collaborative process and first formed a Steering Committee made up of some LRPC members and adding John Litten and Brian McNitt to increase the diversity of perspectives and experiences. The next step was to gather more people (the “conveners”) to identify areas of the community that need to be represented, then put names to those areas as “stakeholders”, which is what we’re here to do tonight.

Question: Where did the mission come from?

LRPC developed it.

Time frame that has been developed by LRPC:

Period	No. of meetings	Activity	Major Milestone
January		Organize and acquire consultants	
February		Identify Stakeholders	
	1	First Public Meeting	February 24
	1	First Stakeholder Meeting	February 25
March	2	Define issues and opportunities	
April	2	Identify strategies to achieve solutions	April 30
May	1	Collect data to support strategies	
	1	Community meeting	May 5/6
	1	Assembly update on collaboration	May 9
June	1	Collect data to support strategies	

July	1	Collect data to support strategies	
August	1	Reduce strategies and solutions to a reasonable number	
September	2	Achieve concurrence on recommendations	
October	2	Develop report for Assembly	October 31
	1	Community meeting and celebration	
November		Present report to Assembly	November 14

Process toward tonight's goal:

Conveners were asked to brainstorm answers to the following questions. The Questions are in italics, and convener responses are listed below:

1. What does a tourism plan do?

- Inventory of infrastructure
- Guidelines for development
- Identify shared community values
- Define and resolve the community's concerns regarding the future of tourism in Sitka
- Trends or forecasts
- Define where we're going to market – what kind of tourists we get, and where we get them from
- Long-range view
- What's the appropriate number of tourists for Sitka

2. Who does tourism affect?

- Everyone
- The entire community
- The environment
- People's livelihoods
- Community economy
- Quality of life
- Domino effect on adjacent communities
- Adjacent environments
- Efficiency

A participant notes – better to use the word “visitor” than “tourist” – not everyone is a tourist, but everyone can be a visitor.

3. What could stop, slow, or dilute this process or outcome?

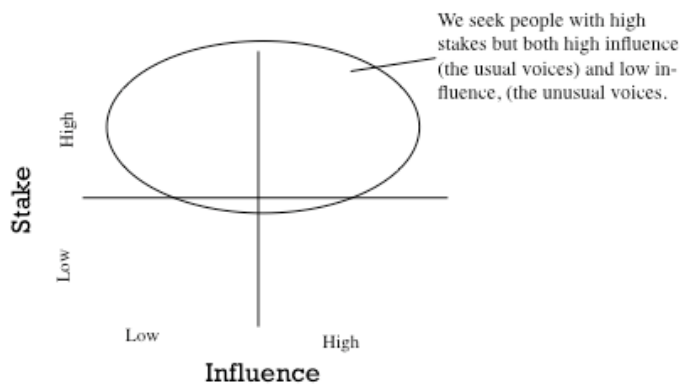
- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly • Playing “catch-up” – new participation or lack of participation • Lack of publicity • Lack of a balance of information – too much or too little • Not having real cross-section of Sitkans • LRPC • No strategies = no plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • External factors not in our control • Lack of open minds • Strong personal agendas • Results not acknowledged by assembly • Not representative stakeholders • Good info quickly • If Sitkans lose control of the process |
|--|---|

- If it doesn't include all aspects of community and stakeholders
- If stakeholders don't listen, trust, don't compromise, dominate, withdrawal
- If the plan is shelved and not used (like others)
- Good feedback, communication to public, people committed to process and mission
- No buy-in from assembly
- Broadbased representation
- Good facilitator
- Process to resolve disagreements
- Lack of participation, lack of trust
- Closed minds
- Inability to respect other viewpoints
- Non-engagement
- Failure to agree on vocabulary – the terms in the mission statement
- Failure to achieve buy-in to the process
- Failure to balance process with product – lack of patience for the process by people who are used to getting to the product
- Lack of diversity
- Presumption of outcome

These are the things we're up against – it's our responsibility to avoid these as much as possible

Question: What if we can't get a representation of the community to collaborate, because there are lots of people in the community who won't move off their position or compromise?

Answer: Chrislip has a grid of influence/stakes



We're ideally looking for stakeholders that are high stakes/high influence, and high stakes/low influence (the "unusual" or quieter voices). We want to be able to hold up a card with pictures/descriptions of every stakeholder and ask anyone in the community if they see someone that reflects them.

The participants went through two brief thought exercises in small groups to set the stage for the next steps:

What is the level of conflict among stakeholders?

What is the perceived need to address the issue?

Groups generally agreed there is high stakes in this process; a need to show Juneau how it's done; question of if the stakes are high enough – may need a crisis to draw attention to it?

Then the conveners were asked the following, drawing on the previous exercises/questions, but not naming names:

What perspectives and experiences are necessary to achieve our mission?

- Residents live, walk and drive downtown
- Native community
- Outdoor/environmental/fishermen
- Residents NOT in tourism-related work
- Local/tourism related residents
- Historical perspective of visitor industry
- Fishing industry – commercial, sport, charter
- “No growers”
- Tourism business owners
- Local youth
- students
- Visitor perspective
- Open minded
- Understand perspective of local people on future of visitor industry
- Longlife resident not visitor-dependent
- Entry level staff – waitstaff, clerical, etc.
- Historian’s perspective
- Repeat customers
- Understand regional and global forces on tourism industry
- Understand economic value of visitor industry
- Visitor industry experience
- Won’t get represented (low-income, working mothers)
- Health care – EMT, Fire Dept, hospitals, clinics
- Non profit orgs
- Education community
- Law enforcement (Coast guard, SPD, troopers, harbor master)
- Engineers/planners
- Experience with marketing/branding developments
- Someone from Ketchikan model
- Someone from Petersburg model
- Crafts persons, artists that sell
- Seniors
- Infrastructure/maintenance
- Cruise lines
- Local federal – coast guard, forest service
- Housing accommodations
- General transportation – airlines, ferry, commuter air, busses, taxis, senior transport
- AML Sampson (barge)
- Builders, contractors, real estate
- Anti-dock folks
- Everything we forgot

We need to bring in people to reflect these perspectives and experiences to engage in this process. Some people can fill more than one of these areas.

The next step would be to identify individuals who can speak to these experiences and perspectives. At this point it was 7:30, the adjournment time, so Conveners were asked how to proceed and meet the goal. It was suggested that a matrix could be developed electronically and decided upon through email and web. The Conveners have already been identified as people who have a stake in this – start with their names and fill in the grid with the perspectives/experiences they reflect. Then the group can see the holes and suggest others who can fill those. Someone suggested making public advertisements to invite interested community members to join the process. Several questions and concerns were

raised about the process at this point, and these questions will be directed toward the steering committee to determine the rules of engagement. It is not a locked door once the stakeholders have been identified – others can still join, and there may be other ways to get the public actively involved (not just as a stakeholder).

Next steps:

Develop the draft matrix, including the perspectives/experiences identified above and starting with the Conveners gathered here tonight. It will be sent to Steering Committee for first input, then out to Conveners for further input. The Steering Committee will meet next Monday to determine other next steps.