

Sitka Tourism Plan Collaborative Process
Conveners Meeting #2
20 February 2006; 6:30-9:30 p.m.

In attendance:

Collaborative Process Steering Committee members:

John Litten – Sitka Tours; Hugh Beven – SEDA; Julia Smith. (absent – Cleo Brylinsky, Brian McNitt)

Collaboration Conveners:

Jeff Budd – Sitka Bike and Hike, Convention and Visitors Bureau; Sandy Lorrigan – Convention and Visitors Bureau; Mark Gorman – Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium; Jill Hanson – University of Alaska, Southeast continuing ed; Fred Reeder – Cruise Line Agencies of AK, former mayor of Sitka; Linda Behnken – commercial fisherman; Cindy Edwards – potpourri; Judy Ozment – retired, museum volunteer; Bill Paden, former member of the Sitka Assembly, fisherman; David Malone – SheeAtika/Totem Inn; Vern Culp – art gallery owner, Gordon Blue – Sitka Ministerial Association; Tonia Rioux – Sitka Tribal Enterprises.

Facilitation Team: Matthew Turner and Kayla Boettcher

Matthew gave a brief recap of what's happened so far in this process, and a more detailed review of what a collaborative process is and some of the major components of collaborative process.

Specifically, Matthew presented the following information:

1) The role of the Conveners as advocates in this process (to be educated about the process, promote it within the community, etc.)

2) Who is a stakeholder?

Either A) Everyone! All 8800 Sitka residents plus others from the region.

Or B) A group that:

- has the needed experiences and perspectives
- reflects the community (i.e. demographics)
- is credible to most people in Sitka, including Assembly and LRPC
- is committed to the process and consistent in their participation
- will support the process and not block it

Can there be latecomers to the Stakeholder group? Yes, but they need to take the responsibility to catch up with the process.

Can we say no to anybody that wants to be involved? No, and we won't.

3) What will the Stakeholders do?

- Engage in a *consensus* process – not voting process – the number of people that favor one side of the issue or the other will not matter. Consensus must be reached by the group before the process moves forward. Every Stakeholder has veto power – if they don't agree, the group will continue to deliberate until they reach consensus. There

- are different degrees of consensus – either fully agree, uncomfortably agree, and disagree but won't block it.
- Attend a series of intensive meetings – at least two/month until May, and also in September and October; perhaps some in the summer season, but less intensive.
 - Engage in ongoing community dialogue – be in tune with the perspective of others in the community and relay those perspectives within the Stakeholder meetings.

4) What are the steps in the collaborative process?

- Create a shared understanding of what is going on (reflect on issues, understand data)
- Reach consensus on the vision/mission
- Engage in a constructive way to develop recommendations that will positively influence Sitka as a whole

Discussion from Conveners about the information presented thus far:

- The collaborative process is different that a lot of brains think; we clearly need Stakeholders who will commit to pushing their brains toward that process.
- Because everyone has a veto, if someone is completely unwilling to engage in the process, it's a hung jury from the first day.
- I like the concept of everybody having a stake in the process. We need to be sure there are **other opportunities for the public to be involved** – like the website – there could be opportunities for the public to weigh in through the web and other avenues, which would help them feel they have ownership in the process.
 - Matthew shares an example of an email from a community member who really wants to be involved, but has a heavy travel schedule coming up and doesn't want to be “punished” and not be involved because he can't make all the Stakeholder meetings. We can't have people feeling that way.
 - Matthew also presents an idea he has for ongoing community interaction, where the public is frequently invited to meet with the Stakeholders. The recent issues that the Stakeholders reached consensus on would be presented, and the public would be invited to sit in small groups with Stakeholders, to discuss that topic and ask any questions about how they reached consensus on that issue. If the Stakeholders hear ideas or concerns that weren't already previously addressed, we could revisit that issue. Otherwise, this would keep the community informed, and hopefully reassure them that their concerns and values are being represented in the process.
- Someone asked a clarifying question about **how many meetings the Stakeholders can expect to attend** – what kind of commitment is expected? Matthew and the Steering Committee members replied that on November 14 we are expected to present to the Assembly about where we are in the process. The goal is to have developed a list of recommendations for them by then. There will certainly be something to show them, and hopefully they will see the value in the process and approve more time and money to proceed further, if need be. However, it is up to the Stakeholders to determine how often and how long they will meet; how far we get in the process depends on many factors. One Convener commented that developing a set of recommendations is an ideal goal, but where the watering down

- of the expected outcome comes in is because of the timeline we're on, and the fact that it's already Feb 20 – many of the Stakeholders will be busy with tourist season soon, plus we're only budgeted a certain amount of funding at this time. The intent is to get that goal, but we may have to approach the Assembly for more time and money to finish it.
- Matthew adds that we really only have 8 weeks to work before tourist season begins, then through mid-August we may have a few meetings; then another 8 weeks in the fall.
 - There was a discussion between the Conveners and the Steering Committee members about the **expected outcomes of this process**– one SC member said he believes the commission is asking the Stakeholders to present the community values and perspectives on the issue of tourism development, which will inform the Assembly of what the community feels is important before they invest in any one interest. Some Conveners stated that this outcome is different than they one they understood to be in place – they said they need to know that the work that will be done here is more than a list of values. The mission statement was referenced – it calls for a *plan*, which the Conveners understand to be more of a product than a list of values and parameters. A Steering Committee member quotes David Chrislip as saying “you don't try to define the endzone at the beginning.” A Conveners says, “When I'm asking people to give that much time, their time is precious – I want to be able to say to them that their time will be worthwhile.” Another comments that there are too many plans that have been labored over only for the Assembly to put it on a shelf.
 - Matthew says it has to be worthwhile. It's high stakes for all of us. People are watching – not just in Sitka, but regionally, and even across the state. That's why we need to be careful and deliberate about this part of the process and find ways for the whole community will be engaged in this, even if they are not Stakeholders. If the whole community feels they were involved somehow in this process, it would be political suicide for the Assembly to not follow through with our recommendations. As Western people, we have a tendency to want to know where we're going, what the end looks like. This is a faith-based process – we have to believe that if the people of the community commit to this process and really try to figure this out, that it will work.
 - We have to find the people that have the right personalities to go through this process: people who are patient, can sit through long meetings, and not jump to conclusions.
 - It can be seen as an opportunity to learn about all the different perspectives in our community. We still have more in common than we differ on – it takes patience to focus on those commonalities, but this process is participatory, not representative.
 - What you have to allow for in this process is that you may eliminate people who don't engage in these processes – need to continuously engage those people.

Role of this convener group to move the process forward:

The Conveners reviewed the list of Perspectives and Experiences that they developed two weeks ago. There are 40 categories – we have developed a list of 200 names of potential stakeholders, but we need to carefully consider these Perspectives and Experiences and fill those roles. It's important to remember that Stakeholders can fill multiple roles.

Matthew poses the questions: Other thing to consider – do all of these 40 categories need to be at the table every time as a SH? Or can they participate as content experts, or on timely issues?

One Convener comments that after the Stakeholders have been identified, many people may look at that list and not see them based on the Perspectives and Experiences they represent, but by their name and how they're perceived to sway on an issue. The reply is that's why we need to find those "unusual voices" – the people with high stakes/low influences.

The Conveners review the list of P&E by category and offered suggestions for changes, or for moving some categories over to be content experts, instead of Stakeholders.

- Types of people – ok as is.
- Community roles
 - specifically name museums – added as subset of non-profits
 - engineers/planners – moved to content experts
 - discussed infrastructure – means public works dept – moved to CE
- Businesses
 - Craftsperson – not just art, manufacturing products that are put up for sale; so many artists in town that are affected by tourism but don't consider themselves small businesses – stays on list
 - Restaurants moves to visitor/tourism? Dual role – some only interested in tourists, some not at all, most affected by tourists? Stays where it is.
 - Can suppliers be considered small businesses? Not small, some not locally-owned; more on a wholesale level than a retail level;
- Visitor/tourism related
 - Marketing/branding – call in as content expert
 - Communications – content expert
- Transportation
 - General transportation – may need to divide in two categories: external (on/off island) and internal (within town)
 - Call in off-island transport as content expert? No – they should be there.
- Reference perspectives
 - Ketchikan and Petersburg moved to content experts
 - Repeat customers – how can we find them and be SH? Perhaps a SH can represent those perspectives. Moved to content experts.
 - "value" is taken from the economic impact card
 - Ketch – could have someone at the table to represent that; some discussion about what that category means – looking for a small-town view of tourism, keeping community small and less impact; perspective of high-volume tourism and low-volume tourism; goes back to understanding economics – but not just economics when you talk about the impact of low or high volume; seems to be a conversation about if the SH will reflect people who value and have experienced both high and low volume tourism

One Convener challenges the group to keep the content experts top-of-mind, don't lose their importance just because we've moved them off the grid.

Another says we need to be prepared to start with a larger number of Stakeholders than is perhaps ideal – there will be attrition as the process gets underway.

The group agrees we need to present potential stakeholders with an overview of what will be expected of the Stakeholders – x number of meetings, perhaps all-day meetings, etc.

We will not say no to anyone that absolutely wants to be a Stakeholder.

How will we hone down the list of names?

Matthew proposes that a smaller group from this group might volunteer to help go through that process, carefully choose people that fill in the grid in a credible, balanced way, then take it back to all the Conveners and get their approval on it.

Judy, Linda, Dave, Jeff, Bill, and Fred volunteer to help with this process.

From the public, Dorik Mechau, who has attended most of the meetings pertaining to this process, comments that many names were thrown out last week without consideration to their connection to tourism.

Upcoming Events:

The first stakeholder meeting had originally been scheduled for Saturday, Feb 25, but this meeting has been postponed until the Stakeholders are more clearly identified.

A public information meeting is scheduled for Friday, Feb 24, 7-9 pm at the Sheet'ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi house.

The conveners ask how all of this will be presented on Friday to the public. Will the list of names be presented? Members of the group dissuade – it may be offensive to some that haven't been involved; we could use the public meeting to continue to add to the list. Since we will likely collect names of more potential Stakeholders on Friday, it was decided that the small group who will sort through all the potential names will meet after the public meeting.

Matthew begins to discuss some of the other things (in addition to identifying and securing the group of Stakeholders) that need to happen before the first Stakeholder meeting can occur, such as identifying ways non-Stakeholders will be involved in the process. Matthew points out that he's been hired to facilitate the answers to some of the questions, but not to solve the answers to some of these questions. There are some questions/comments from the Conveners about getting these problems solved by the Steering Committee and the Stakeholders, once they've been convened. One convener reflects that Matthew must need help with these, and several people offer their help in the next steps of the process. The most immediate need that is recognized is preparation for Friday night's public meeting – specifically greater publicity of the event and media coverage afterward.

A Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for 7 pm on Tuesday night, 2/21, to focus on planning Friday night's public meeting. Several Conveners indicate that they will also attend to help with the last-minute details.

Conveners who are interested in being Stakeholders wrote their name and the P&E (from the grid) that they represent. These will be compiled into the master grid and begins the official list of committed Stakeholders. Eight of the present Conveners do this.