

Long-Range Tourism Plan Steering Committee Meeting
February 27, 2006; 5:30 pm
Centennial Hall

In attendance: Cleo Brylinsky, Hugh Bevan, Julia Smith, Brian McNitt, Matthew Turner, Kayla Boettcher, David Chrislip (by phone)

Process questions with David Chrislip

Cleo asks David for his recommendations on how to move from convener to stakeholder phase. A lot of names have been thrown out as potential Stakeholders, more than would be ideally manageable – we need some tips on how to make that more manageable.

David says, “One of the best ways I’ve found of narrowing down the SH list is to create a matrix, have the Perspectives and Experiences on one axis, the list of names on the other. Need a small group of people to go through the matrix, associate the people with the Perspectives and Experiences. As you do this, you will see there will be a number of people that reflect the same sorts of perspectives – too many in one cluster. So you try to figure out how to get 2-3 people from this cluster that reflect these Perspectives and Experiences. Secondly, you’ll see there will probably be some gaps in the matrix – things that don’t show up even in this list of names you have. You’ll need to discuss how to fill those gaps. Usually that takes 3-4 people plus Matthew and Kayla to sit down with that list and do the best you can, based on what you think individuals would reflect in the Perspectives and Experiences. This really needs some people from the community to look at that – perhaps several from the Conveners group – it’s too hard to do with 20 people or so. Once the smaller group has taken a cut at this, bring it back to the Conveners and have them check it out.”

Cleo asks if there’s any way to pick a couple of people from a cluster without it appearing as though we’re choosing our friends.

David says the whole process needs to be inclusive and OPEN. Whatever we do with this list, present it as we think this core group of people reflects Sitka – they have the Perspectives and Experiences (P&E) we want. And clearly communicate that it would still be open to people who didn’t show up on the list but still want to participate.

Brian had asked a question via email about the appropriate number of Stakeholders we should have. David replies that what we’re after with this is a group of people that reflect the community of Sitka, a group that has the P&E we want, and they have some credibility – that if they could agree on a plan, that their collective plan would carry some weight or informal influence with the community. There is no ideal number; of course it’s easier to work with 10 people than 100 – but if the 10 people doesn’t give you the credibility you need, then what’s the point?

David then stresses the importance of not just inviting people, but the possibility that some Stakeholders will need to be *recruited*. If someone we’ve identified to fill some of the needed P&E turns you down, we need to have the next suggestion to fill the needed P&E that person would’ve filled. “Often people think of this as an invitation, but if you just invite them, you get the people that are always involved in public processes – to get the people you need to fill the grid, you may have to recruit them.”

Cleo asks David for his advice on the role of the Steering Committee and how it interfaces with the facilitator. She mentions she was reading in his fieldbook that the Steering Committee usually comes out of the Stakeholder group, but she thought the Steering Committee was the initiating body.

David says it varies. There are two phases – the planning/design phase (where we are now), and the phase of working with Stakeholders (not there yet). Somebody needs to do the design work – identifying Stakeholders, collecting info for them to consider, setting the parameters around those meetings. The role of the Steering Committee sometimes shifts during the process – sometimes the same Steering Committee carries through to the Stakeholder phase, sometimes it changes after the design phase and a new Steering Committee develops out of the Stakeholder group.

As far as interfacing with the facilitator: the main thing is that there are 3-4 tasks that have to be done before engaging the Stakeholders: Who are the SH? What plan/process do we use to engage them? What information will they need? Answering these questions plus any other logistics that have to do with the Stakeholders – how many meetings do we think they'll have, when are the meetings, how long will they last, etc. That work is usually facilitated by the facilitator, who is assisted by 3-6 people from Sitka – it's not just turning it over to the facilitator. Part of the Steering Committee's work is to develop the credibility with the public, rather than just saying "Matthew and Kayla, do this work." In short, to do the tasks that need to be done, there need to be people from the community who are committed to the process to work with the facilitator to see that it all gets done.

Cleo asks David to expand on what he means by the "process stuff." David explains that there's more to do than just identifying the Stakeholders and then letting them go in a free-for-all. The Steering Committee needs to help determine what will happen first, second, third, etc. For example, most processes will start with an orientation meeting – introductions, idea of timeline, etc. Second phase – developing a shared understanding of current tourism situation in Sitka – i.e. how many people visit, what do they do while they're here, etc. 3rd phase does into the things that concern the Stakeholders the most, what they would like to see happen? The Steering Committee needs to spend some time considering how this process may unfold – this will lead to determining some of the logistics, timelines, etc. Prior to the first Stakeholder meeting, have some of these things outlined to help them understand what they're getting into.

Cleo asks if we establish the ground rules before the first meeting, and David replies that he often starts with a list, then asks the Stakeholders for additions/changes.

Brian indicates that the last 3 questions on our list for David focus on distinguishing the roles of the facilitator, Steering Committee, and admin. He guesses that we'll have a list of jobs – most of which we've already come up with – and we'll just need to split those among our groups. David agrees, and says that part of it is setting up for the Stakeholders, but after the Stakeholders are engaged, there needs to be a good regular relationship between the Steering Committee and facilitators in terms of debriefing the meetings, setting a tentative agenda for next meeting, and discussing how the next meeting might change based on what

happened at the last one. The Steering Committee needs to continue to work closely with the facilitator as the process unfolds.

How does the Steering Committee interface with the Stakeholders? Many times the SC members are also SH. They need to be participants in the meetings, know what happened, what works and what doesn't work, so they can help the facilitator keep things on track. The facilitator can't always see those things. Cleo comments that she was under the impression that the Steering Committee would be only about process, not content. David says it is the SC's role to pay attention to the process, but that doesn't mean they can't be involved in content.

Brian comments that it seems we'd want to have at least a couple of Steering Committee members at every meeting to provide a feedback loop. David emphasizes again that it is critical to have some of you at every Stakeholder meeting and work with facilitator consistently. They will provide a very different perspective that the facilitator might have.

Hugh asks David about the existing mission statement – he says the LRPC handed this mission statement to the Steering Committee (reads statement): At the public meeting, people voiced objection to the fact that “sustainable tourism development” is in the statement, and expressed a wish that the SH could provide their own statement. David responds that the SH could take this statement as a starting point. He said if we have a SH group that reflects Sitka, and it takes ownership of this process, there's a possibility that the statement might be rewritten to some extent. If this group does reflect Sitka, then the mission statement should reflect the community as well.

Matthew comments that when we initially brainstormed the list of Perspectives and Experiences, the P&E came forth to address that statement. If we change the mission, would it change the P&E based on reflecting community? David says it looks as though there are many levels to this statement, quality of life, etc. – it goes beyond things that are just focused on business. Cleo adds that the Commission spent a lot of time with all those words – they wanted to make it so everyone felt involved in this process; she was surprised that some felt so strongly disincluded because of the mission statement. If the Stakeholders need to rewrite it to reflect the community, then they should in order to have ownership of it.

Hugh adds that even if the mission statement gets revised, it still needs to have credibility to present before the elected body. A member of the audience commented that he was surprised at the Friday night meeting when people raised their concerns. He feels it's important to have a starting point – perhaps the Stakeholders can provide their own definitions of the terms within. But he expressed concern that rewriting the mission would take a lot of time right at the beginning, and it would be frustrating to stall the process right away.

David advises using this mission statement as a starting point. One of the early stages in the process is to develop a shared understanding among the Stakeholders about the current tourism situation in Sitka – not what to do about it, just the dimensions of tourism. It will take 2-3 meetings to do this; after that, maybe we will be in a good place to revisit that statement. He says not to start with the mission statement because there will be different

perceptions – the Stakeholders need to come to a shared understanding first. The mission statement might be less of an issue after that takes place.

Gail Johannsen-Peterson, from the audience, asks David if he's heard of Civic Tourism and if that plays into this collaborative process at all. There is an upcoming conference about it in Prescott Arizona, and she thought it might be interesting to have someone involved with this process to attend that conference and bring back information about what's happening on a national level. David says he hasn't heard of it, but there could be a place for it here—one phase where we could learn what other places are doing about tourism and how might it apply to us. If someone from the Sitka process were to attend that conference, David suggests it would be most appropriate for a stakeholder to go.

Hugh asks David if he would be willing to write down the outline of phases the process typically goes through. David says he has talked with Matthew about that to some extent already, and would be happy to provide any further assistance.

Cleo asks if anyone has any other questions for David. There are none, so the call is ended.

The Steering Committee continues the meeting by talking about the work remaining in the process of identifying Stakeholders. Brian asks Matthew to make a proposal about the next steps. Matthew says the matrix is now something like 40 (P&E) x 200 (names). The list of Perspectives and Experiences has passed public muster – when people at the public meeting asked about a certain category of people, they were up there already. We've amassed around 200 names so far – Kayla has divided those into different categories. 32 self-identified, plus some Conveners who haven't clearly indicated their intentions. Most of these folks have the Perspectives and Experiences listed with their names. Some additional people were suggested with P&E, others without.

At the last Conveners meeting, we got to the point where we were discussing what to do with all these names, and 6 people volunteered to help cull the list. The plan is to sit down with those 6 plus whatever steering committee members in a work session, to look at where we have large clusters around the same P&E and narrow those down, as well as look at places where there aren't any people on the grid and target those.

We also looked at running that through a few other filters, such as gender balance – some other good perspectives to hold this up to and make sure it's well-rounded. Matthew anticipates we'll end up with a large number to start with; there are lots of folks that want to be involved - maybe more than need to see the process through. His feeling is that once we start moving, people may see they're being represented without having to be there. The key will be that attrition happens in a well-rounded way – the Steering Committee's role is to shepherd and make sure the Stakeholder group continues to be well-rounded.

John Dunlap (from the audience) suggests a possible idea for screening – when we come to the point where we can see there are clusters of people, instead of picking a couple of people out of that cluster, get a convenueer to get that group together and let them decide who will represent, also pick an alternate in case the first person doesn't work out.

Hugh points out that the self-selected persons are part of this exercise as long as they want to be, so we should start with them in the matrix right away. That may narrow the spaces to some extent. Cleo mentions that in some cases, the process of suggesting names was not very intentional. The group agrees that a date needs to be set for the smaller group of conveners to get together and try to cull the list. All Steering Committee members could attend a meeting on either Wednesday 3/1 or Thursday 3/2. **Kayla will check with the other 6 Conveners to see what would work best.** Then there is some discussion about how to work through the list, such as projecting it on the wall or printing the matrix out on paper for everyone to look at closely. **Matthew and Kayla will figure this out.** After the smaller group meets, we will reconvene the Conveners and have them assess the list and make their approval. **The Conveners will meet again next Monday, 3/6 at 5:30 to finalize the list.** Matthew will be out of town on 3/6, but this does not necessarily need to be a facilitated meeting.

Brian reminds the group that even though we're going through this process to identify the minimum core we need to make this effective and credible, that whenever we talk about this in public, we need to reiterate that it is not a closed process, and anyone who wants to be involved can be. Hugh adds that if someone joins the process late, or misses part of it, it's their responsibility to catch up on what they've missed.

Cleo adds that some people have asked for hard copies of our documents to be available at library, city office, and perhaps SEDA – not everyone is comfortable with using the web.

Next on the agenda – clearing up confusion between Steering Committee and facilitator about tasks. Brian suggests that we come up with a list of the jobs that need to happen over the next steps of the process, then divide them up.

Hugh reads the following list of duties from Matthew's contract:

Meeting Facilitation

Provide meeting leadership services for Sitka Tourism Planning groups including convening groups, stakeholder groups and the Steering Committee.

Seek guidance from other consultants provided by Sitka to achieve the highest quality tourism planning collaboration possible.

Organize public meetings, keep record of same and post meeting records on the Internet in a timely manner.

Provide timely updates of meeting progress to the Long Range Planning Commission Tourism Steering Committee.

Design Sitka Tourism Planning Internet website to provide public access to Sitka tourism planning information.

Provide an Administrative Assistant and supervise his/her work.

Administrative Assistance

Contact and invite public meeting participants.

Arrange for meeting rooms.

Organize logistics for meetings such as refreshment services, visual aid devices, media coverage.

Provide written summary record of meeting events.

Provide written list of meeting attendees

Upload summary record of meetings and other data to Sitka Tourism Planning Internet website
Coordinate local TV recording

Cleo mentions that they don't need Matthew to facilitate Steering Committee meetings. Hugh adds that this is all contingent on how much money we have and how long it lasts.

The Committee and Matthew agree that meeting agendas should be set jointly between the SC and Matthew. Cleo will do this unless she is out of town – then Julia will. Matthew adds that it will also be important to debrief the meetings to get the SC perspective on what happened and how to proceed. This can be done with Cleo after the meeting or the next day.

Agenda for Convener meeting 3/6:

Starts at 5:30

We will have completed matrix and will present it to the Conveners, ask if they see any glaring omissions.

If it meets with their approval, we'll need a way to divvy up invitations.

If they do see omissions, hopefully they can fill the holes with other names from the existing list.

Then the Committee discussed setting a date for the first Stakeholder meeting.

This meeting will cover orientation, introductions, etc. It could be a weekday since we're not diving into content at this one – the big stakes will be at the 2nd meeting. Matthew believes the first meeting could happen in 2 hours, and the Committee agrees that 2 hours is max for weekday. By then, the SC will need to have ready the expectations of how many hours it might take to grind through this stuff, to understand the challenges and get them to consensus about the current situation of tourism.

The SC also needs to start anticipating what information the SH will need. Julia suggests we bring this up at the Conveners meeting and ask them what data/information is out there and would be important to this process. The SC also should have some ideas about when content experts might come in.

The Committee decides to have the first SH on Monday, March 13. Hugh mentions that Eric McDowell, potentially a helpful content expert, will be in town March 16-17. Others believe that will be too early in the process to schedule content experts, but it would be a good idea to encourage everyone to attend his presentation – March 17, 1 pm.

The process plan is one item that needs to be developed prior to the first SH meeting.

Matthew shows the committee an example from David Chrislip's book, which includes some benchmarks of where we need to go, how to steer, how many steps/phases to the plan, how many meetings will that take, where to interface with public, etc. These would all be things the SC should map out for the SH. Matthew suggests one way for them to think about it – he encourages them to think about what information they would want to have on hand if they were trying to come to consensus about the current state of tourism in Sitka. That may help them with ideas about what they need to provide to conveners. It is also suggested that they could ask Chris Beck, the information expert they have retained, what would be important to give the SH, but his contract isn't finalized. Eric Jordan, from the audience,

comments that in addition to experts, data, etc., a big part of the information is the stories SH will bring. **Hugh agrees to send around Chris Beck's contract, and adds that the SC needs to take another look at the budget.**

Kayla mentions that she took notes on the questions that were asked at the public meeting, and says she and Matthew believe it would make a great start for an FAQ. She asks the SC members if they would be willing to write the answers they gave at the meeting to be included in the FAQ. Everyone agrees, and **Kayla says she will send them the list of questions.**

There have been several questions about who fields questions from public. **Julia volunteers to receive those, and either answer them or send them to someone else or the whole group.** Matthew says that an email address has already been set up through SEDA, and that Maria can help Julia figure that out.

Cleo mentions again the importance of placing hard copies of the documents in public locations. Hugh suggests we talk to Cheryl Pearson at library and ask if she will print off notes from meeting and put in a folder. Matthew says if you work off the website, there is even an executive summary written for each document, which could be helpful to include also.

Publicity for public meetings: Julia suggests we have significant publicity for the first Stakeholder meeting. Brian says someone mentioned to him that we're missing a corner of the population to not be interviewed on problem corner. There is some conversation about publicity for the SH meeting, and Matthew asks to clarify – the SH meeting is primarily an invited meeting, do we really want all that publicity? Brian answers that we do, because it's the last chance for people to self-identify as SH. **Brian volunteers to do an interview on Problem Corner this week sometime, and Hugh says he could join him in that.**

Process map – Matthew talks a little about the example in Chrislip's book, and discusses the need for the SC to set some parameters for the SH, and to think through what would happen if we come to an impasse? Can there *ever* be a vote? How would that vote be structured? Are there back-up people to call on? And other emergency situations that may need guidance. He encourages the SC to run themselves through the scenarios and think about what they would NEED to know vs. how much would they allow to emerge. They also need to set some benchmarks for the number/length of meetings. He points out that there are 7 weeks until May 5 – how far do we try to get by May 5? The SC seems to agree that coming to consensus on the vision/mission by then would be a realistic goal.

Eric Jordan expresses concern that no one is talking about coming to consensus on what is the most likely future for Sitka without any intervention (i.e. if we weren't engaging in this process), then contrast that with this process to identify where we WANT to go as a community.

Matthew mentions that another thing for the SC to consider is that Chrislip lays out the process in 3 major stages, and at the end of every stage is a community event. One community meeting is planned for May, and if we only get through the first phase by then, it

will be great timing. He says we may need to look at setting another public meeting after the 2nd phase.

Information for the SH: Will the first SH meeting be too soon to get as much info as we can from Chris Beck? Even if the SH don't cover content in the first meeting, we could have a good sample of broad information that they'll need anyway available for people to start looking at. It could be handed out at end of the meeting as homework.

Matthew offers to sketch a process map as he sees it, based on what he knows and feels confident about, then give it to SC soon for their input.

Upcoming meetings:

Mini-Conveners to work on the SH list: either Wednesday 3/1 or Thursday 3/2 at 6:30.

Conveners to approve the SH list: Monday, 3/6, 5:30.

Stakeholders: Monday, 3/13, no time.