

**Sitka Long-Range Tourism Plan Collaborative Process**  
**Steering Committee Meeting**  
**15 May 2006; 5:30-7:30**  
**Centennial Hall**

**Summary:**

**In attendance:** Cleo Brylinsky, Julia Smith, Stef Steffen, Brian McNitt, Dorik Mechau, Phyllis Hackett, Peter Gorman, Matthew Turner, Kayla Boettcher

**Agenda:**

1. Discuss agenda for Stakeholder Meeting May 22.
  - A. How will we determine if we have a quorum for the summer meetings?
  - B. Can we set up a strategy to maximize attendance for summer meetings?
  - C. Planning ahead for content experts at summer meetings.
2. Set dates for summer Steering Committee meetings.
3. Increase members of Steering Committee
4. Talk about Andrew's letter to Mr. Stein.
5. Decide if we need to do something about our under-representation problems or not, and if so, what to do?
6. Time line for this project and need for a work session with the Assembly to talk about the time line and budget.
  - A. Info we would need for that meeting.
  - B. Who wants to be there?

**Stakeholder meeting for May 22**

Items already on the agenda:

- Finish presentation on fish allocation (subsistence – Linda Behnken)
- A couple of items that have been presented but had a few remaining questions – hope close up those
- A few people from other committees that may be ready to present

Some of 1A, B, & C (see agenda, above) might be items to speak with Stakeholders about.

*Item A: quorum for summer meetings?*

Matthew explains that its not so much about a “quorum” (which implies voting), but rather if we want to set a threshold, or a minimum representation that we need to have at SH meetings in order to proceed with the meeting? We could agree that if we don't meet that threshold we can still do some work, but not things that involve decision-making. We need to have consensus that there are enough people there to make representative decisions. If we don't have enough people there we'd have to revisit those topics again.

Establishing a minimum number could be one way to look at it, or we could look at the diversity, perhaps through the Perspectives and Experiences – if we're missing too many of those, we could decide not to proceed.

- One committee member suggests we talk with Stakeholders to see what they think.

- We could set up phone tree to get definite commitments from people beforehand; if we don't have the threshold we need, then we'll cancel it. The phone tree could be the responsibility of Steering Committee members and group facilitators.
  - One of the group facilitators is present – he is asked if that seems reasonable – he suggests we could start with email, asking for a reply, and call if we don't hear from them.
  - Kayla points out that if it's just a matter of email, she could easily do the whole group in one swoop.
  - A committee member comments that making phone calls could add the extra incentive to get people there
  - Kayla will email the phone list to Steering Committee and group facilitators
  - Cleo will call the Stakeholders who haven't attended a meeting in awhile

Dorik comments that initiating this contact with Stakeholders is vital; during the summer of the sold waste collaboration – one thing that was effective to help move the group forward in research and information gathering was that it was being done by small groups/committees. If that could be done here in identified areas, especially ones that wouldn't be as subject to critical scrutiny, that might be a workable way to go.

- Stef responds that's kind of what we're doing, setting agendas for the groups to do their research; assuming when we have monthly meetings, there will be some more freedom between meetings for people to do their homework;
- Cleo mentions it has suggested that the groups get together on their own in between meetings
- There have been complaints that extra committee meetings would take too much time when we were meeting weekly, but maybe we could encourage more of that now with less frequent meetings

The group decides to see how the group looks on May 22. Even now, we haven't had every Perspective and Experience represented but we've still held the meetings, are we saying some P&E are more valuable?

- Peter comments that he's experiencing the difficulty of underrepresentation already in his committee – the 3 members that represent a similar perspective (and a balance to the rest of the group) haven't been at last three meetings; without them it's ground his group to a halt. He says he has an 8-page paper to present, but we've just sat on it because we don't want to send it out without the approval of those 3.
- Brian asks what's been going on with business group? John Litten hasn't been here...
  - Cleo says there has been an exchange of emails and phone calls with John this week, he formally resigned from the committee, he's just too busy. He gave suggestions for people who could take his place, and said he could come in advisory capacity, but doesn't want to be viewed as committee member.
  - Stef asks if he officially resigned, or just said he was too busy to attend? Cleo believes he stepped down.
- Brian observes that other business people haven't been there either – is that coincidental, or their reaction to process? The group agrees we need to find out. There is discussion about how we can't force anyone to be there, but it's difficult to

have success without all the Perspectives there; their absence could grind this process to a halt, might be what's happening. Members say they don't think that's the intent of the business folks, but if they're too busy to come, it could have the same result.

- Cleo says she talked to John Dunlap at the public meeting; he said he is really supportive of the process, but wasn't sure how much he could continue attending during this busy season. She said she found his comment particularly encouraging because he was skeptical about this process to begin with, but he said he finds value in the process.
- Phyllis testifies to the busy schedules of cruise ship people, particularly Fred.

The group agrees that making phone calls to all the Stakeholders to encourage their attendance would be a good strategy to encourage them to attend. The goal is to call have the group facilitators and/or Steering Committee members call the Stakeholders prior to Monday's meeting, and prior to each of the summer meetings. There is particular discussion about the need to call the Stakeholders in Peter's group, per the earlier discussion about the imbalance in perspectives he's experiencing. Cleo says she doesn't feel there is a need to contact John Dunlap, since he's already indicated that he's too busy, but Phyllis offers to talk with him again anyway. Stef emphasizes the need to get commitments from everyone for the specific dates we've reserved, and stress the need for everyone to be present for the group to move forward. Cleo points out that its not just about getting the numbers there, because there is some overlap in perspectives; but we definitely want at least one person representing that perspective. For example, in the case of Peter's group, which is dealing with questions about cruise ships, he has a presentation that includes data from Fred and Sandy, but wouldn't want to present to the whole group without their endorsement of the whole presentation. Peter comments that if all those key players really are too busy this summer, maybe we put the cruise ship questions on hold until the fall. Dorik observes that just getting them to attend one meeting – the meeting in which they would present – doesn't achieve the whole goal; they are needed in the analysis of the data as well. Peter agrees, and says he really wants some more committee time to get the group together and figure out what's missing.

Stef will call Fred; Phyllis will call John Dunlap.

1C: planning ahead for content experts; encouraging SH to invite experts to present where appropriate, rather than reinventing the wheel and feeling all the responsibility for digging for the information.

- Brian suggests maybe we should go through the top issues, figure out if there are places to schedule content experts, and ask the group facilitators if those would fit in with the work they're doing
  - Peter says if we have a little more time during Monday's meeting to talk in groups, each group can figure out who's working on what, and tell the whole group how many presentations they're currently working on, and what their commitment for the summer will be. Based on that, we'll have an idea on what's solid, estimate from that how those meetings will go and how much time the presentations will need.
  - Committee members agree that's a great idea – put more responsibility and control on the groups. It is agreed to give the groups an hour at the beginning of the meeting to reevaluate what's going on, and then come back to the whole group with their plan about how they're going to work through

these during the summer. Based on this, we could put together the schedule, which hopefully will also promote group work in between the meetings to prepare their presentations.

Matthew comments that it would probably be helpful if Steering Committee members could sit in on the groups. He's heard some comments from SH that the committees aren't working, that many Stakeholders are just working as individuals. He offers to do some framing about how to proceed with the committee work, and told the SC members that it would be critical to have them helping the groups to keep that focus if it starts to stray during that hour. SC members could also catalogue concerns that arise from the groups. It might be good to spend a little time talking about process, about how the committee work is going, then look at the content of the presentations. The group comments that the clearer we can be on expectations for committees, the better – need to help them understand what we hope to have come out of the committee. Peter reiterates that having a date to present is a great incentive; if you're on the schedule, you'll work to get it together.

Cleo says she feels like we have a good idea about 5/22 agenda. We haven't decided about how to determine if we have a threshold at the summer meetings, but we have a resolve to figure that out. Matthew says maybe we could have a contingency plan – we haven't set a threshold, but if it's looking thin, maybe we could do some of the other loose ends, like define Quality of Life, or something else...the group we have gathered works as far as they can on that topic but doesn't close it - we put that out there via email to see if anyone disagrees.

- Brian voices concern about this – if we don't have the representation to do a presentation, then a discussion on quality of life would be counterproductive – that's a core issue. Maybe there are other issues that we could tie up, but people will feel “they went ahead without me on this, why should I go back now?” We can't force this process to happen; if we're going to move forward, we have to have a balanced group, if that means we can't do it in the summer, then we don't. When we first talked about this, we decided to let up in the summer; if we get to November and we see that it's going to take more time, then that's what it's going to have to take. If we go forward without the balance, it will be worse than not doing it at all.
- Dorik voices his agreement, that this ought to be a decision, not only of SC but of SH too – all that come to the next meeting. We're all in this together, how do we make it work for the long run. Many people might say let's tie up what loose ends we can, and then look towards fall; there would be momentum lost, but there's more at risk by moving ahead with inadequate representation.
- Peter says the group that's there now, those 30, they're committed; there were a lot of people that wanted to go every week through the summer – maybe half that really wanted to keep going. He adds that the Stakeholders were asked to make a commitment to this process, and if we missed a meeting, it is our responsibility to catch up on what we missed. Let the process go on, it's still the SH responsibility to make up what they missed.

Committee members agree there needs to be a balance between continuing the process and making sure the perspectives are adequately represented. The Steering Committee will work to get a commitment from Stakeholders regarding their ability to attend the summer meetings, and see where that leaves us. The committees will meet for an hour at the beginning of the meeting to map out the presentations they could give during the summer,

and when. Having an agenda for the meetings might pull people in for topics about which they are particularly concerned.

### **#3: Adding members to the Steering Committee**

Originally there were 3 LRPC members – Hugh, Julia, and Cleo. Stef has also been coming to every meeting because we've been short on SC members. The LRPC invited Brian and John to join the Steering Committee because they were viewed as being credible members of the community, engaged in lots of things, and having different perspectives. If John is unable to continue, we need a replacement for John's perspective. Phyllis Hackett has expressed an interest in being involved somehow. She says she is very interested in the process as well as the issue. Cleo asks her if she is interested in being a member of the Steering Committee. Phyllis asks about the time commitment and is told that when the SH meet every week, SC meet every week and attend SH meetings, as well. There is also some stuff to do in between meetings. Phyllis says she thinks she can do that, there is a possibility that it could get to be too much in the fall. Someone suggests that perhaps John Litten would be more available in the fall, if Phyllis gets too busy.

John also suggested other names, and Cleo says she thinks the committee could use even more help. John suggested Rob Allen Sr and Gene Prewitt. Julia agrees to call Bob and see if he's interested in joining the Steering Committee. Someone says Gene's not here all the time, here in the summer, but lives in Arizona in the winter. The group decides to start with Bob and see what happens.

### **#2: Summer Steering Committee meetings**

The summer SH meetings are set for May 22, June 19, July 17, and August 14; regular weekly meetings will begin again September 11. The group decides the Steering Committee should meet the day after each of those meetings to debrief. In addition, they choose to meet the week before Stakeholder meetings to plan for the SH meeting.

Meetings are set for Tuesday noon on the following dates:

May 23 Aug 8  
June 13 Aug 15  
June 20 Sept 5  
July 11 Sept 12  
July 18

Cleo will check on Centennial Hall availability for those dates.

Kayla will continue to advertise meetings. The group also decides to advertise meeting agendas when they are known – this might help draw people in for particular topics they are interested in.

Cleo mentions that the SC might need to have an additional meeting, especially to plan an Assembly work session. Stef says if we're hoping to get in the FY07 budget, they wrap that up in June. Someone should talk with John Stein about the timeline for the budget.

### **Andrew's letter to John Stein**

*Stakeholder Andrew Thoms has drafted a letter to John Stein regarding the transportation study that was just approved at the last Assembly meeting. The Assembly approved \$25,000 be spent, and some of the debate during the Assembly's deliberation included the notion that this study would be helpful to the tourism*

*process. Andrew's letter highlights several of the Stakeholders' identified pieces of needed information that could possibly be answered through this study and he requests that the questions be included in the contract with the engineer. The letter has not been given to Mr. Stein yet; Andrew was advised to pass it through the Steering Committee first.*

Cleo sums up her understanding of the letter: Andrew understands there's a transportation study happening, he's turning that into an opportunity for the SH to get the information they need instead of it being just a random study. The Assembly used the tourism process as a selling point to use the money, because it would be useful to have this information for the process, so Andrew is proposing that the study incorporates items the Stakeholders have already identified as necessary pieces of information.

Other committee comments:

- We need to talk about this study itself; how does this mix with this process in general? It's potentially a real problem.
- One of the problems the Stakeholders are working with is when studies are single sourced; all of a sudden, this drops out of the sky - \$25,000 for a transportation study given to a friend, nobody sees the RFP, that seems to me that a SC member isn't protecting the process.
- Hugh isn't here to defend himself – that's how he does things, he just does goes ahead and does them; I'm hesitant to ascribe underhandedness to him.
- Regardless of his intent, there are some problems; we have this large list of issues that the Stakeholders have prioritized, and the assembly has given us a limited amount of money. If the assembly gave us \$25,000, I'm not sure where a transportation study would fall in our priorities; I think if we were to ask for another \$25,000 it would be an uphill battle
  - maybe or maybe not
- This study is so closely related to our work, the least that could have happened was that Hugh could have discussed it here before moving on it
  - Hugh did tell the SC about this at the last meeting
  - But the way it was justified at the assembly...because this is critical information for the process...I'm not sure it would have been so easy to pass by the Assembly to say we want this to be done for the dock. Bob Loiselle said the dock contractor would do this work, but now all of a sudden, the organization promoting the dock asked the city for the money to do this study because the contractor doesn't want to anymore.
- So we need to make the best of it – we somehow need to see if the contractor for this study will address these Stakeholder questions. So how should we pitch it to the city?
  - If we agree this is the right approach, might be best to have letter from SC to John and Hugh, listing what we'd like to have done.
  - Does anyone know what's happened with this contract or know what's being asked for?
    - No one does – the Assembly just granted the funding a week ago. A couple of SC members guess that the contract is already done and sent.
  - Brian offers to talk with John S and Andrew to see what's happening; also talk to Maria at SEDA. Stef agrees to go with him.
  - It probably isn't too late to add criteria to the RFP

The group agrees that we should try to make this a win-win situation – it could really give us some important information. We need to find out the questions that are being asked in the RFP already and then include ours.

- “And if we don’t have the opportunity to have input on this, we just go in as persons to be heard and tell them it’s not benefiting the tourism plan like they said it would.”
- Unfortunately, this may be a reflection on how the Assembly views this process. I don’t know how to say without being accusatory, but I really wonder if any of them pay attention to what’s going on here. Apparently there was no connection in designing this contract to the SH, except to say this group could use it. I don’t know how we get the Assembly more appreciative and understanding on the process, but if we wait until it’s time to go into the new timeline and ask for more funding and they’re out there in limbo with respect to what work’s been happening, we may not get a positive response. In the best of all possible worlds, we need to have a real work session – not just 1/2 hour before meeting – to have SC and SH make a substantive presentation about the process and progress so they’re clued in, but I don’t know if that’s possible.

### **Under-representation problems:**

There is concern about lack of Native involvement. Steering Committee members feel they have made repeated attempts to invite, and had people enthusiastically respond, but don’t follow through. They are positive about it when they’re invited, but they don’t actually show up. Someone suggests that maybe we should get on the Tribal Council’s agenda, to take a strategy of keeping them informed and stop trying to get them to meetings. At Council meetings we could tell them the schedule and regularly remind them about what’s going on. Another idea is to have an official from the City or Assembly make an official request to the Tribal Council to have people participate.

Other SC member comments:

- Sometimes a formal letter is required to show respect to their government and get on their radar; Tribal Council should be made aware that we really want them involved.
- If Julia is successful in getting Bob Allen to join, he has strong ties to that community, that might be helpful – a push from within can be affective.
- In the same letter, maybe we could ask for time on their agenda to update them, and also encourage them to get people to our meetings.
- Greg Dudgeon (through Park Service) was really talking with Woody Widmark, encouraging from that angle, Park does a lot with the Tribe government to government.

Someone asks who (from the Tribe) has been approached?

Tonia Rioux, Gerry Hope (very early on), Rachel Roy was in early talks – got Tonia involved; Camille was invited several times early on, others. One SC member comments that calling people and inviting them clearly isn’t working – we need a new approach.

- Brian and Stef will talk with John Stein about the possibilities of a letter coming from the City when they ask about Andrew’s letter; they’ll ask if it can put on City letterhead.
- The suggestion is made to copy Assembly members on the letter – the more you’re in their face about these things, the more they’ll regard you.

### **The possibility of a work session with the Assembly**

The Steering Committee agreed they can talk about this item at the next SC meeting.

During the course of the meeting, Matthew has done some calculations based on the updated budget that Cleo handed out. He says that just the pay for him and Kayla to attend the scheduled SC and SH meetings through October (not allowing for work done in between meetings) will cost \$6590 for both of them. There's about another \$1000 for May that hasn't been included in the budget yet. Meeting time alone will be over budget easily by \$2000. He figures that the current allotment could stretch through September, leaving October as a crunch month. Stef adds that we don't have an updated budget amount for advertising, and there may be food expenses that haven't been figured in yet, also. SC members feel the Assembly is willing to give us more, and they reiterate the importance of getting a meeting/work session with them soon.

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May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006

City Administrator John Stein

cc: Sitka City Assembly  
Sitka Collaborative Tourism Planning Process Steering Committee  
Sitka Collaborative Tourism Planning Process Stakeholders  
Sitka Collaborative Tourism Planning Process Facilitators  
Hugh Bevin, SEDA

Dear Administrator Stein,

As a stakeholder in the Sitka Collaborative Tourism Planning process, I want to thank you for supporting our request for more information on certain issues that will affect Sitka's future as a result of expansions in the visitor industry. Specifically, I am referring to the recent move to hire a consultant to investigate the effect a cruise ship dock at Sawmill cove will have as buses transport cruise ship passengers on Sawmill Creek road and through the city center. As stakeholders, we are well aware that the development of a cruise ship dock could have a huge impact on the future of Sitka and that the question of transportation and buses on Sawmill Creek Road is of huge importance.

As you know, the stakeholders have identified a number of pressing questions that we must gather information on and consider in developing any future visitor plan or vision. Both you and Assemblyman Holst stated at the May 9<sup>th</sup> assembly meeting that the stakeholders group wants the data and will need it when they start up again in the fall. I want to make sure that you all know what the stakeholders have identified as a need so that when you write up the contract for the study, information the stakeholders need will be included. I have listed the information below. These are taken from the Sitka Collaborative Tourism Plan website, <http://www.sitkatourismplan.org>. I have added italics to points that I have added where I feel the current transportation study could answer a part of a specific question.

### **Under the section, Community Issues**

3 c) Carrying capacities of vehicle traffic/pedestrian/boats systems which optimize safety and quality of experience (including trails, roads city and state and harbor system)

5 f) Pros and Cons of a Cruise Ship Dock - cost/benefit analysis and opinion poll  
*[cost/benefits and pros/cons of buses could be dealt with the transportation study]*

## **Under the Section, Cruise Ship Industry**

1 b) Can infrastructure support volume? What infrastructure is needed, what do we currently have?

1 c) Benefits/impacts to the community (positive/negative)

*[again, costs/benefits of increased traffic, increased public transportation possibilities]*

1 e) How many local businesses depend on the cruise ship industry for their survival

*[Will transportation companies be owned by cruise ships, locally owned companies, or city owned?]*

1 g) What is the maximum number of cruise ship visitors Sitkans can sustain - infrastructure

*[What will we need in terms of transportation to sustain varying levels of visitors arriving at Sawmill Cove, ie. Number of buses, number of bus runs, road width, etc.]*

2 j) What is the impact with two cruise ship sites?

*[how will a new transportation system tie these sites together?]*

## **Under the section, Culture and History**

6 n) What are transportation needs for independent traveler?

*[Will an independent traveler be able to get out to Sawmill Cove on the new transportation system to be able to visit the shops and attractions there?]*

## **Under the section, Planning**

2 b) What is the capacity & impact on infrastructure, support services

*[what added road maintenance costs will the city face with a new bus system in place?]*

4 h) Local transportation studies

*[What has already been done, what were the recommendations, what can we take or learn from past studies?]*

4 i) Visitor traffic pattern studies

We are sure that you will make sure that the contracted parties include much of the above data in their final report.

Thank you for supporting the collaborative process and supporting the gathering of information in the areas that we have identified as being crucial in order to develop a vision for the future of Sitka's visitor industry.

Sincerely,

Andrew Thoms  
Stakeholder  
Sitka Collaborative Tourism Planning Process.