

Sitka Long-Range Tourism Plan Collaborative Process
Steering Committee Meeting
13 June 2006; Noon
Centennial Hall

Summary: The Steering Committee set the agenda for the June 19 Stakeholder meeting. They also review the list of requested information that they have responsibility for, which includes a discussion on collecting community and visitor opinions. Finally, the group decides to look into having panel presentations on a few topics in September: business-related questions, cruise ship-related questions, and possibly fish-related questions.

In attendance: Brian McNitt, Phyllis Hackett, Sandy Lorrigan, Wendy Alderson, Judy Ozment, Matthew Turner, Kayla Boettcher

Agenda

Set agenda for Monday's Stakeholder meeting

Information needs: Steering Committee, business items, unscheduled items

Timeline

Agenda for Monday

The first question on the table is whether the Stakeholder group will continue to discuss fisheries issues at this meeting. Cleo passed along information that she has spoken to Stakeholders on both sides of the issue and is trying to help them work together to resolve their concerns. Committee members believe it is unlikely that presentations on these controversial questions will be ready to present to the whole Stakeholder group on Monday – even if it gets resolved between the two immediate parties, it should really be passed through a subcommittee before coming to the whole group. Someone else mentioned that one of the key players has indicated that she won't be able to attend Stakeholder meetings again until the fall, as the summer season is too busy. One Steering Committee member suggests that we table the rest of this presentation until September, when all parties can be present again. Everyone is in agreement, and Brian offers to send an email to all of the involved parties and the rest of the Steering Committee members. Kayla mentions that in addition to this fishing topic that's already been opened, there are others on deck that could also be "hot button" presentations if they aren't passed through the appropriate channels, such as the financial comparison between sport and commercial fishing. The Steering Committee agrees that these questions will also be contentious, and also because this is a busy time for fishers, we should probably table all of those topics until September. The group briefly discusses the possibility of putting together a panel of experts from diverse perspectives and having a fish forum to address all of these questions at one time.

Matthew passes out the list of presenters for Monday's meeting, and shows the Steering Committee that there are 9 presenters listed to present 15+ topics, but we have received data on only 2 items. Judy, who is scheduled to present, asks a few questions about the expectations of her presentation. She has prepared an abstract, but has lots of background information for that abstract. The committee recommends that she give a minimal presentation on the abstract, making it clear that there are other issues she could address from all the background information if the Stakeholders wanted her to. She is also

encouraged to turn all of her sources in to Matthew and Kayla and they will post them on the web.

There is some question about whether we realistically have time for all the presentations that are on tap. Matthew says if each of these presentations has been worked through the committee structure, then yes, each should only take 10 min. If they've worked in the structure, 1/4 of the Stakeholders have already seen it, and the presentations have been reduced to key points. Brian asks if we know that the presenters are prepared, and Kayla tells the group that she sent reminder emails to them a couple of weeks ago, and also yesterday. Someone asks if the Stakeholders are supposed to meet with their committees on their own time outside of the meetings, and the reply is yes, they would ideally find some way to communicate with each other about a group member's presentation. Committee members discuss the possibility of building in some subcommittee time during Monday's meeting. Someone says that one subcommittee's time during the last meeting was consumed with just one issue, so it didn't really help. The Steering Committee decides to schedule 1/2 hour subcommittee time during Monday's meeting, and a Steering Committee member will join each committee to help facilitate and remind the groups to only spend 10 minutes on each topic – if it takes more than 10 minutes, it's probably not ready for the whole group. This subcommittee time can be used to review the presentations scheduled for Monday's meeting, and to make sure those presentations are culled to key points. One person points out that having an additional facilitator there would be helpful to keep things moving, however there's caution in moving past things too quickly, also...we can't be judgmental about whether a question is important or not, because it is important to the person that's asking. The committee decides that the easiest way to handle that is if there are still too many questions that the issue is not ready to be presented yet. Matthew will enforce time limits on the presentations, but the committee agrees there is some flexibility in those time limits, e.g. if a discussion lasts longer than the limit but looks like it could wrap up, then we should see it through, but if it looks like a dead end, then it gets tabled.

Monday's agenda:

5:30-5:45 Start off with welcome/update from SC members and Matthew:

5:45 – 6:15 Subcommittee time

6:15-8:30 presenter(s) [with breaks in appropriate places]

Other notes for Monday's meeting

Phyllis would like to remind the Stakeholders about putting money in the food fund.

Steering Committee members also talk about contacting SH to encourage them to attend Monday's meeting. Kayla reviews the process from last time, when the SC asked the group facilitators to call all the members of their committee. She points out that what we don't know is if the group facilitators were bothered by doing that.

Phyllis will call Linda Speerstra and ask her to make calls.

Judy will call Peter Gorman.

Kayla will resend phone list to group facilitators, Phyllis, and Mim's replacement (Mim is out of town for this meeting).

Someone raises the question of how the group feels about Stakeholder proxies – having someone else from their same perspective (e.g. another dancer or fisher) attend the meeting

for them if they can't. The group agrees that the ideal situation is to have the same person consistently in attendance. However, if that's impossible, it's better to have a proxy than to have that perspective unrepresented.

SC list of needed information

From the overall list of requested information that stakeholders developed, several items were assigned to the Steering Committee to take responsibility for. Matthew hands out the list, which is divided into three categories.

- **Opinions:** a list of questions that are essentially asking residents or visitors their opinions/preferences on a number of topics. One SC member comments that opinions aren't really in the realm of this process – that our goal is to become mini-experts on all these topics and then start to think about how that impacts where we are and where we want to go. The problem as we talk about these issues is that everyone has opinions about these topics, and this process is about avoiding opinions and basing strategy on fact – at the end of the process, in theory we'll know more than other community members, and this group will be better positioned to make decisions for the whole community. And what happens if we spend all this time coming to consensus about strategies and then we take a survey and find that the public opinion differs from the ideas we came up with? One person suggests that one of the current situations is public opinions; in the strategy phase, if public opinion doesn't agree with Stakeholder recommendations, we might need a strategy to inform public and bring them along. Another person points out that some of the studies the group is looking at are surveys of people's opinions, and they're being accepted as fact. So where do we draw the line? The group agrees that presenters need to be clear when they are presenting an opinion poll. Committee members generally agree that collecting new opinions is a better idea for later in the process, but some thought needs to be put toward how/when to collect these opinions, and which questions to ask? If we want accurate information, we need good surveys, which will cost money, and perhaps because of that it's a moot point. One suggestion is to ask the SH who could benefit from the answers to the questions and see if they'd help fund it, such as the SCVB. If we hear that there's a visitor industry survey that's already going to happen we could try to tie into that. Sandy Lorrigan from SCVB is present, and says that the State does an exit survey with visitors every other year – it will be given again next year. SCVB and other entities can buy into that survey. Sandy estimates that it would cost \$15,000-20,000 to conduct a valid, credible community survey with just a few questions on it. Brian offers to email Hugh and get his estimation.
- **Specific info:** a list of specific items requested to have on hand, such as McDowell studies, or Gateway Plan. Somehow the SC needs to say these have been gathered, and point people in the direction of finding them. We first need to make sure they've all put together, then present to SH, show where to find them, and then put red dots on the cards that request those items. Kayla will cross-reference the list with ones we already have, ask Stef what he has, and email Phyllis if there are some still missing.
- **Parking Lot:** things the SC pulled, said for one reason or another that we aren't going to work on these. Brian observes that most of the items on this list are strategies or questions that would be impossible to collect objective information about. The committee still agrees that these items shouldn't be discussed or considered during this phase.

Other info needs

There is some concern about Stakeholders from the business perspective dropping out of the process, and it has been suggested that the process may feel anti-business. There is concern that they could kill the results in the end if they don't agree with them. Hugh has recommended that we do a well-advertised public business forum, something that would bring to the attention of the business community the items on the Stakeholders' list that are, in fact, considering development and marketing strategies. To illustrate that these items exist, Matthew and Kayla pulled out all the items that they thought were pro- or neutral business, and they distribute this list to the SC. Based on the communication they had with Hugh, Matthew and Kayla suggest that perhaps an expert panel could be put together for these questions, also, and put this whole list of questions before that group to be answered in one forum. M&K also suggest this type of panel forum for the cruise ship questions. These are issues of interest to the broader community, and it might be possible to structure it so it meets the SH needs and only focuses on the questions they have raised, but it also provide this information to the rest of the community also. SC members express interest in doing this, but caution against letting the forums become an opening for members of the public to vent their frustrations and opinions. Someone suggests that the questions be rewritten before handing them off to the business panel, saying if a business panel saw this list, they wouldn't do it, because not all the questions make sense to a business person, or they may appear loaded. Maybe a committee of Stakeholders could work on rephrasing the questions. The SC agrees to look into having a few panel presentations in the fall, after the busy season. The likely topics are the business questions, cruise ship questions, and perhaps the fish questions also. It is suggested that one Steering Committee member take responsibility for putting together each of those sessions, but no specific assignments are made at this time.