

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

**Summary:** The Steering Committee debriefed last night's Stakeholder meeting, including a reflection on the subcommittee structure, and the need to make the list of Stakeholder concerns more visibly connected with the requested information needs. The SC is on the STA meeting agenda tomorrow night. SC members divvy up some of the remaining specific information requests they will make available to the SH, and discuss some potential survey options.

**In attendance:** Stef Steffen, Phyllis Hackett, Wendy Alderson, Hugh Bevan, Matthew Turner, Kayla Boettcher

The committee began by debriefing last night's Stakeholder meeting. Re: Judy's presentation, some committee members wish she had spoken at greater length about the issue of air space issue, specifically about what it could mean for Temsco and their permits and use of air space. One of Judy's topics is still open, so committee members hope the group can go into that more when we revisit that topic.

Matthew tells the group that we're in a grey area on strategy – there are some specific info requests, like mechanisms that our community can use to make change, which could be construed as “strategy” (e.g. with zoning, or with Judy's question about mechanisms to maintain control over resources), but they might also be interesting to consider at some point. Matthew says he's not sure this is the right time to start talking about these things, but it's a good seed to plant with the SC – when would be the appropriate time to consider the strategies and other communities' ideas for solving these problems? One SC member suggests we base that strategy stage off the original list of SH concerns – after making sure we've collected all the info we need to make decisions about those concerns, start looking at potential solutions for that category. Matthew cautions about losing the macro picture of what the tourism plan will do and get us into writing policy for the city. He says the challenge to this group will be to get the group to step back from the individual questions and look at the big picture. Kayla suggests having the list of concerns more visibly related to the requested bits of information, so the group can go back to those and relate to those original concerns to gauge if we have enough info. The SC agrees that this would be helpful to have them side by side to put back into context, and that it would also be helpful to do that on the website.

**STA meeting**

Stef tells the group we're on the STA meeting agenda tomorrow night for 10 minutes, to update them about the process. He outlines his plans for that time, which include explaining a little about what we've done to include Native community in collaboration, perhaps to express some frustration about these efforts, and ask what can we do to assure that the Native community has a voice in this process. There is some discussion about whether a representative from the SH group should also try to attend and present, but the SC eventually decided that since this started as a government to government thing, it is probably better to send the chair of an assembly-appointed commission. Hugh recommends that Stef

capsulate on subsistence issues, cultural issues, and other things where we could absolutely use more input from their community. Someone points out that one of the categories of concern is cultural history, including impacts to historical settings, and sharing accurate information about indigenous culture. Stef and Hugh plan to attend the meeting and present. There is also some conversation about finding a way for STA to provide feedback about their perceptions about how this process is going so far. Someone mentions that it might be helpful to talk with Woody beforehand to see how aware he is of this process, and what he knows about it. Stef agrees to try to reach him tomorrow morning before the meeting.

### **Specific info taken on by Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee has accepted the responsibility of making sure the SH have specific studies available, as requested by them on the needed information list. There are a few things remaining on their list:

- Pertinent sections of the Sitka Comprehensive Plan
- STA/ANB-ANS/SeaAlaska Corp/Shee Atika – plans, operations
- Sawmill Cove Industrial Park – plans, operations
- McDowell Report

There is also an ongoing idea about putting together panel presentations to address numerous SH questions on the following topics: cruise ships, businesses, and fishing.

Hugh speaks about SCIP – he says some things are written, but there’s no comprehensive plan. It’s very situational. A waterfront park plan developed in 2003 and is being followed, but others are being made up as we go. He says it might not be too hard to get a SCIP board member to come talk to the SH group. The committee agrees that would be helpful, and Hugh says he’ll try to get someone to the August meeting.

Re: the idea about panel presentations:

Matthew and Kayla review with committee members the idea of putting together a diverse panel of experts on the topics listed above, and assigning the relevant SH questions to each panel. Matthew would facilitate these presentations like a SH meeting, ensuring that the panel presents only on the requested topics, and that audience members don’t divert the discussion. Potentially, these panels could be more widely advertised, encouraging the broader public to attend and learn about these topics. There would be some SC work involved in putting the panels together, such as assembling the panel members, and perhaps rewording some of the questions to make sure they are objective and getting to the point of what’s currently happening. There is some urgency about deciding whether or not to take this path, because there may be Stakeholders working on pieces of information that could be answered by a panel – deciding soon would relieve them of their homework on those topics. Someone says it makes a big difference when an expert presents – the information is clear and concise. Another person mentions that some of the requested information could be seen by the panel members as proprietary, and they wouldn’t have to share it. This leads the group to a discussion about the wording of some of the questions, and how we’ve all learned a lesson about the importance of working through the questions better before we even get to this stage. One Steering Committee member suggests that the committee divvy up the questions and start talking with SH to see if it would be stepping on any of their toes to put these questions before a panel, but action is not taken on this suggestion today.

Stef will make sure the City Comprehensive plan is available for SH to look at.

Re: STA, etc. – the group decides to narrow the focus of the questions to asking each of these groups about their plans for tourism in the future. If they don't respond, then at least they were asked. One committee member suggests another group to explore is GoldBelt to see about connections they have down here. Hugh will talk to Bob Loisel and get an initial feel for the relationship among some of these entities. Stef will open a dialogue with STA to figure out their plans. The committee decides ANB/ANS may not be relevant here.

At the last SC meeting, the committee also began to review the questions asked by Stakeholders that involved collecting opinions from residents and visitors. After that meeting, Brian asked Hugh what he estimated a brief (5 question) telephone survey of residents would cost, and Hugh said \$12-18,000 was the quote he got from McDowell. McDowell just did a telephone survey in Juneau about resident impressions – Hugh will send those results to the SC. Kayla points out that there are visitor opinions on that list of requested information, also. Phyllis wonders about the survey they did last year for charter boat owners, and another one for SEDA/SCVB/another entity. Matthew says some of these questions might be able to be answered through key informants or content experts, like “what do visitors want/expect/value?” He suggests this may be another time to bring in a panel of key informants from different perspectives – there are four questions on the SC list that might be answered by a key informant panel. Someone says it would be cool if the SH group would identify doing a survey as a strategy, and someone else says its' definitely been brought up, but money is the drawback.

Stef mentions that he saw an email from Hugh promoting funds available for products related to tourism studies through USC.

The committee turns their discussion back to last night's meeting, particularly to debrief the subcommittees, and how well they are functioning. One person mentions that she feels it's gradually starting to sink in – that it's noticeable when the presentations have gone through the protocol and when they haven't. One example of how a committee didn't fully work came last night when a presenter announced that she'd changed the wording of her question, and one of her biggest challengers was in her committee. The Steering Committee members ponder if the committees really understand what their role is, but they feel having committee time was really productive last night. One SC member said she thought they decided at the last meeting that a SC member would sit with each committee and try to help them stay on track, but there were only 2 SC members at last night's meeting. The group discusses that having enough SC members present at any one time has been a consistent problem from the beginning. One person feels part of the problem is that the chair of the committee is not in town enough. This person is frustrated that she took on this job knowing she'd be gone half the summer – it's hard when you don't have someone keeping the communication going around; there are lots of little things a chair can do to keep it hang together. SC members express some reluctance to add more members, because if the SC gets too big, you start to lose things off the edges. Another person believes that having a consistent presence from the chair could help, but the whole group has to buy in and keep informed of what's happening, especially what happens during meetings they miss. Another person says the SC somewhat acts as a board, and with any board you shouldn't ask more work of your group than of yourselves.

Because the issue of whether or not to go ahead with panel presentations was not finished, the group turns their attention back to that. One SC member says it would be difficult to make those decisions without the rest of the SC here, that they need critical mass before deciding to go ahead with that plan. One of the content ideas for a panel is the fish questions, given that the SC decided to put all fish presentations on hold until the two debating sides have found a way to present their perspectives. But there was a presentation about fish last night, and someone wants to know why that happened if all fish questions are off the table. Kayla says there are two issues – one is that her presentations was already prepared by the time the SC put fish topics on hold last week. But the other issue is one of who was supposed to tell Bev about the SC's decision? Kayla points out that she doesn't feel that should be the job of her and Matthew, but it was unclear how to proceed with that decision after last week's meeting.

At this point, Phyllis says the SC needs to have a meeting when it's mandatory to have all the SC members there – if the scheduled time doesn't work for everyone it gets changed. She says the SC really needs to get on the same page and make some decisions together about the things that have been discussed here tonight, among other things. She says this is a great process, but very cumbersome, it's high maintenance, and it takes total buy-in everywhere. The work should be evenly separated through the process, there are clearly delineated areas and if everyone does what they need to do from the start, then it would work. The next scheduled SC meeting is July 11, and the priority on that meeting will be to plan the Assembly work session scheduled for that evening. The group agrees they need to schedule another meeting to talk about these process issues, and make sure that everyone can attend. Phyllis volunteers to circulate emails to determine a time.