

**Sitka Long-Range Tourism Plan Collaborative Process**  
**Steering Committee**  
**March 13, 2006; 5:30 p.m.**

**In attendance:** Hugh Bevan, Julia Smith, Cleo Brylinsky, Stef Steffen, Jay Stelzenmuller, Matthew Turner, Kayla Boettcher

Cleo has two updates for the committee:

- Last time we were together, talked about possibility of getting food for long SH meetings; Cleo called Colleen Pellett, she gave advice on contacting SEARHC – they provide a lot of food for not much money.
- Centennial Hall (Maksoutoff Room) is available Mondays through May 1, except April 3. This might be a good suggestion for the weeknight we have the Stakeholder meetings.

Matthew presents the SC with the Process Map he has developed.

4 broad phases:

- orientation (tomorrow)
- defining the issues (5 weeks) – issues that concern us the most
- defining the vision (1 week) – revisit the mission statement (this is strategically placed deeper into the process, after the Stakeholders have identified some of the issues; the group is more cohesive by then, we don't want to get bogged down in this issue; possibly could augment the mission statement by defining some principals/values – things people feel strongly about stating)
- defining strategies to reach the vision (12 weeks) – rely on principals/values so we don't stray from that – final presentation may fall on a continuum of easy-to-solve and we have proposals, to those that are too contentious

Orientation meeting (Phase one – tomorrow night)

Proposed agenda:

- Ask for a show of hands of who is completely new to this process – balancing orientation for those that are not familiar with those that are.
- Talk about attendance and need to dialogue with the community outside meetings
- Present Process Map
- Break – also is time for people to fill out questionnaire – contact info, Perspectives and Experiences (P&E), also a brief bio, pictures?
- Recognizing redundancy and scarcity exercises – step forward for each P&E; recognize the diversity, look for times when you're matched with the same people often; everyone can see how the group is stacked; also see if there are categories where there are just a few or no representatives.

In cases where there are clusters of people/redundancies, it might be hard for people to voluntarily step down from being a SH. We're still talking about what we're going to do, we haven't done it – it might be easier after a few meetings for them to feel comfortable that someone else could reflect their perspectives. Part of the reflection at the end of every meeting will be “how did you contribute?” “Are others taking care of your concerns?” But everyone can't say someone else

will do it, because we could lose a whole group. Maybe suggest to groups of people that they decide amongst themselves.

- Stakeholders' points of view: get everyone into a circle (first and last time that will happen?). Ask "how does the visitor industry impact you?" have people write down their responses beforehand, think about it – Matthew explains "go-round" – time to express your thoughts/feelings, don't comment on others – listen to others, don't base your comments on what others have said. Depending on how many people – limit each response so the whole exercise takes only 30-45 minutes. Gives everyone a chance to get that first chance to dump it out – feel they've been heard, say why they think they're SH. It will also show how long this process could take if we have 50-80 people. Need to appreciate the time it takes for large groups to get work done.
- Establish future schedule
- Debrief – take a quick temp of the group.

Hugh suggests that at the end of the meeting, we should send people home thinking about what they'll discuss at the next meeting to help them prepare for the next meeting, encourage them to start absorbing feedback from community members.

The SC agrees with this plan for tomorrow night.

Matthew proceeds to explain the rest of the process map:

*Phase 2 (5 meetings):*

First meeting will be a big one – as a Saturday, or split into two meetings.

Need to survey the group about the information they need to collect and absorb for this process – what do we agree on, what is self-evident, what do we need to work on, how much work will those things take? Essentially this will be an open dialogue where we track divergent issues – not trying to solve anything, but more of a brainstorm where we see the divergence. Then, this brainstorm gets sorted into categories (urgency, time, accessibility of info, do we need content experts or do the SH do homework, does it get provided to the whole group or just smaller committees) – this maps out the next 4 weeks.

- Need to decide how to best present this information so the SH can absorb and digest – does everyone read the reports, or small groups read different reports and then present them to the large group, or what?

Next 3 meetings is the presentation and discussion of information, including content experts and group presentations (maybe open space style?), doesn't matter too much if the information is seen as biased, as long as there is a processing in the group about how they will handle that information, if it's neutral, is it thorough enough, etc.

Week 5: sorting the issues – this one almost has to be a Saturday. Same as the first day, only more educated. Go back, find where we have consensus, what's fact v. opinion; new categories now: how controversial it is, for example...rank the issues according to how/when the group can deal with it.

If we can make it through that, we can map out the Aug-Oct sessions, and we'll have an idea what additional information we need to gather over summer. We can publicize that plan for the fall - give community interest groups a chance to respond to things,

Trying to get through Phase 3 by summertime – can fit that Phase 3 meeting before Phase 2 is over to get consensus on the mission statement.

The SC asks Matthew what practical needs does he have for the SC for tomorrow night. Matthew says it's important for SC to be there, especially in the beginning. Need to build trust, see the SC as engaged. Need to be a step ahead of SH. Might be good for the SC to run the scenario of what information they would need if they were going to have these conversations and start preparing that – the more we can have that ready, the faster that part will go – where we can really slow the process is when we identify information that is hard to get. Need to look for data from different sources. There may be data that's hard to get – if we get to the end of the timeline and see there are things we need more information about, it could be gathered and processed during the summer (in a less aggressive approach). It will likely happen that we'll see where we need more work/information – that will land on the SC and a few diehard SH to put that together.

Hugh mentions that Eric McDowell is going to be in town this week – it might be an opportunity to tap into his resources and knowledge.

Hugh also just got the new charter report, which was done by McDowell. He thinks as far as tourism business is concerned, there are really only 5-6 sectors of tourism business in Sitka – might be fairly easy to gather info for them. There are other issues/values at stake than businesses, of course. And we may need to look for data about Alaskans that travel to Sitka – not just out-of-staters.

Matthew suggests that something the SC could do is lay out all the data and look at it yourselves, or contact people that deal with this professionally and ask them what's missing in what we have or what we're looking for. Might be worth getting Eric McDowell together with the SC to discuss this. Or might be a good Chris Beck question – what do people miss in this process that we can get if we're on top of it? (In an email, Hugh already asked Chris what kind of information we should be expecting to look for.)

Back to plans for tomorrow night:

Will it be broadcast? These kinds of meetings don't really make for good television.

Need a microphone? Maybe 2 – to make sure everyone can hear.

How should the room be set up? Maybe lecture-style to begin with, then we'll clear out the chairs at the break for the activities and go-round.

Bring name tags

Cleo mentions that she'll be gone March 20-30; won't be here to be the committee chair, so Julia will take over in her absence.

Proposed meeting schedule for SH:

At least 30 hours between now and May 4: seven weekday 3-hour meetings; two or three 4-hour Saturdays. Try to have snacks for future 3-hour meetings. Catered from SEARCH,

SeaMart, Lakeside, others? – fruit, veggies, cold cuts, etc – hard to have big tables of stuff, because people are constantly going back and forth – maybe stuff in the middle of each table?

We should take a vote about what time to start – some people like the break between work and meeting, others would rather start early and finish early.

First public meeting – May 5? Not on Friday – maybe on Thursday, May 4. Maybe bring some food to entice people? Check on Naa Kahidi availability for that night.

Meeting ended at 6:40.