

Sitka Long-Range Tourism Plan Collaborative Process
Steering Committee Meeting
8 June 2006; 5:30 p.m.
Centennial Hall

Summary: The committee made plans for the work session they have scheduled with the Assembly on June 27th at 6 pm.

In attendance: Cleo Brylinsky, Phyllis Hackett, Stef Steffen, Hugh Bevan, Dorik Mechau, Kayla Boettcher

Chair Report

Cleo updated the group on the following things:

- A letter was being written to STA board with the help of John Stein – Cleo and Mr. Stein finished it about a week ago, he planned to send the letter after that, and the plan is to present at the next STA meeting which is the 23rd or 24th. Cleo is not sure if she will be back by then; if not, she will let the rest of the Steering Committee know and get someone else to attend.
- Cleo won't be here for the next Stakeholder meeting (June 19) or the SC meetings on the 13th or 20th. A room at Centennial Hall is set up for the meetings, and Kayla will advertise. Other SC members will have to help Matthew and Kayla plan the agenda for the SH meeting. Cleo plans to be back by the day of the work session with the Assembly, which is the 27th at 6:00. Phyllis will do the food for the next SH meeting
- Re: fish allocation issue – Cleo called Tina about how to proceed. Cleo's initial thought was to get them together with David Chrislip, thinking he might help to diffuse the tension. But when Cleo talked to Tina, Tina was feeling discouraged, too busy, reluctant, etc. and wasn't even sure if she'd continue with the process, so getting David involved might be moot. Cleo also talked to Linda, who agreed that her committee would be willing to consciously go through the process steps again, including asking for divergent opinions and keep her presentations in her committee until those issues were worked through. Linda's goal will be to include Tina in that. Cleo has tried several times to reach Tina to close that conversation, but she hasn't been able to reach her.
 - One SC member asked why we are spending so much time and budget on this issue, and others reply that because this issue has reared its head, we need to show the Stakeholders that we will deal with conflict instead of avoiding it. Someone else says that certain people feel it is really important that the city has a voice in fisheries issues and how they impact us locally.
 - SC members also comment that that's what Linda's committee should be working on – boiling down her presentation to the relevant bullet points. If it turns out its impossible for the SH to agree on some common points, we may need to consider taking that issue out of this process – perhaps it should be it's own process?
 - The group discusses how this is an example of what happens if the Stakeholders don't adhere to the criteria they established for presenting. We need to stick to the process, be vigilant that each workgroup follows the

routine. One SC members says Matthew has to be the enforcer – cut people off, or not let them present if they haven't gone through the steps.

Assembly Work session

A work session with the Assembly has been scheduled for 6-7 pm on June 27.

Cleo highlights 3 things she'd like to present to the Assembly: talk about the budget, the timeline, and give them info about what's happened so far.

Budget and Timeline

Hugh put together a worksheet showing the current budget situation and his projections on shortfalls if we continue at our current pace. It looks as though there is enough money to pay for work done through September, but it doesn't look as though the process will be finished by then, and we'll need an extension of time, and therefore, money. Projecting that we'll need to work through December, his worksheet shows a shortfall of \$22,584. Someone from the LRPC will likely ask for additional funds as the original contract was with the LRPC. As the committee reviewed the original timeline and the status of the project, they observed that the Stakeholders are still in the "building a shared understanding" phase, which they originally hoped would be finished by summer. As the process looks now, the group will remain in the shared understanding phase through the summer. It is likely that there will be a few Stakeholders who don't attend the summer meetings because of their work schedules, and they will need to be brought up to speed in September. The following revised timeline is proposed:

Through August: information phase

September: Stakeholder re-orientation; Stakeholders sort conclusions

October: Stakeholders define vision

November: Stakeholders define strategies

December: Stakeholder refine strategies and prepare report for Assembly

January: present at first Assembly meeting

One SC member comments that this seems pretty optimistic, and that December is a hard month to get things done. Another points out that this revised schedule is only 60 days longer than we originally had, and it would be dangerous for people to think that they have a cushion and start to relax because there's still a lot to do. Someone says we really need to emphasize how far behind we are, and do something with the Stakeholders to help the process move faster, such as getting the committees to do more work on their own time between the meetings. Others respond that that's a great idea, but you can't make volunteers put in even more time, especially this time of year.

The committee also discusses when/how they expect to tap into Chris Beck, the content expert that has been contracted to help with information gathering and report writing. A clarification is made that phase 2 of this process (the phase of actually writing the plan) has not been budgeted at this point. Someone mentions that they could expect some hard questions from the Assembly about expectations for that phase, and if we'd be returning to ask for more money a 3rd time. Other committee members don't feel that request will be as difficult because when we reach that phase, it's easier to show that we're just turning over this work to an expert to write it up. However, getting Beck on board might be challenging, since he has no involvement with the process at this point. The committee discusses the possibility of bringing him down a couple of times this fall, especially to lead exercises with the Stakeholders to help them move from vision to strategies. Originally he was budgeted

\$6,000 for this phase of the process, but that was to include an interim report on what the Stakeholder group accomplished. Someone wonders if that report will be necessary, since the admin assistant has kept such thorough notes. A contract with him to write the actual plan will be separate. The Steering Committee discusses what they expect from that plan, and what they think the Assembly will expect – Chris Beck wrote the housing plan, and they anticipate something similar to that, which included non-specific strategies such as “purchase the benchlands, have a housing summit”, etc. Others say they hope for strategies that have a chance of achieving the mission statement.

In the end, the Steering Committee decided not to ask for a time and budget extension from the Assembly on the 27th, but to focus their work session time on updating them about what’s been happening and emphasize all the work that has been done for \$15,000 so far. Since the budget will sustain the process through September, and also because there are other city budget factors that may frustrate their request, they decided to wait until September to ask for an extension. Cleo reports that one Stakeholder she spoke with said she wasn’t sure she was going to stay involved with the process, and she was waiting to see if the Assembly granted more money before she invested any more time into it. The committee agreed to update the Stakeholders about their decision to postpone the request for more money.

Other information to present at work session

Cleo suggests that the committee use the website as a way to have informal dialogue with the Assembly members. She would like to have some SC members and Stakeholders each present a portion of website, discuss that portion of the process, and invite questions/dialogue between the Assembly and each of the presenters. This way there will be several voices and perspectives bringing the information to the Assembly. Committee members generally agree that the website gives a demonstration of accomplishments and provides Assembly members with an overall orientation to what’s been happening. One committee member stresses that he expects the Assembly will want to know how we’ll get from this information stage to defining vision and strategies, and that the LRPC and Steering Committee will need to be able to convince them that their money is being used well. He suggests that the work session presenters use the website to project some of the visions that may come from the current topics that the Stakeholders are discussing, but other SC members disagree, saying that we can’t present visions or ideas now because the Stakeholders haven’t developed them yet. There is a bit of discussion about how it would be dangerous to present end ideas now because it would lose the whole point of the process unless those ideas came from the Stakeholders after they’re done all this work. One Assembly member has joined the meeting at this point, and he suggests that perhaps the presenters could give examples of hard questions that they’re going to make recommendations about, such as whether the community should focus on cruise passengers or market to other travelers.

In preparation for the work session:

Cleo will put together a skeleton of an agenda before she leaves town, including which portions of the website to highlight and who will speak about each.

Cleo will ask a few Stakeholders if they would help present. Suggestions made were Wendy Alderson, Jeff Farvour, and Ken Rear.

Cleo will ask the presenters if they can meet at noon on Tuesday the 27th, just to put it all together.

Kayla/Matthew will see if the website can be projected live during the meeting.

It was suggested that the Steering Committee ask Dan Etulain if he would broadcast this session live – it could be a useful public educational tool, especially if he can tape the web site stuff.

Other discussion

Reengaging business sector

There is some concern that Stakeholders representing the business perspective are dropping out of the process. One SC member says that based on her conversations with them, it's not because they have dropped out, but they are too busy during the summer. Someone asks what's in it for the businesses, why should they stay involved? He says the process hasn't included any dialogue about opportunities to expand visitor business, and primarily businesses feel like their participation is out of self-defense. Other SC members believe that these topics have been raised, such as how to expand in off-season, bringing in a target types of visitors, how to get them here and keep them there, engage community more, etc. The committee agrees it would be a good idea to pull those items out of the list and highlight them in various ways, including:

- Develop them into an ad
- Send in an email through the Chamber circuit
- Make an arrangement on the website of topics by area of interest – so not just “what's in it for the businesses?” but also what's in it for the other perspectives as well – there is so much information on the website, it's easy to get lost.
- Highlight these items at the work session on the 27th.

Recruiting people to be SC members and SH

At this point, Cleo says she's not interested in recruiting more Stakeholders – she's more interested in encouraging the original ones to stay involved. She's working on calling them – she will divvy those names out to other SC members to make some calls too.

Cleo also sent out an email to all the Stakeholders, asking them if anyone would be interested in joining the Steering Committee. Only 2 people responded – one said she'd like to be, but is too busy; another said no but gave Cleo the names of 5 non-Stakeholders who might be interested.