

Tourism Advisory Board Meeting Agenda / Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 24 – 9:30 am (Assembly Chambers)

Meeting Call to Order: Ross Silkman – President – 9:33 am

Roll Call: Present Jeff Butcher, Barb Mulford, Karen Hess, Rhonda Hinson, Judy Heinmiller, Ross Silkman

Absent Jason Gaffney

Also Present Tanya Carlson, Annette Smith, Darsie Culbeck

Approval of excused / unexcused absences: Heinmiller moved to excuse Gaffney, Mulford seconded; all in favor.

Approval of Agenda: Carlson added Visitor Information Booth to Tourism Director update. Butcher moved to approve the amended agenda, Heinmiller seconded; all in favor.

***Approval of Minutes:** March 27, 2012.

Public Comments: Annette Smith urged the Board and the Tourism Director to consider taking on the project of replacing the signs in Fort Seward. Carlson assured Smith it is on the things to do and a topic on the agenda for this meeting.

Chair Report: *Beer Festival After Party*

Silkman believes that there is an opportunity for the town to do something with visitors from the time the Festival closes to the time the bars get rolling. Silkman envisions live music with lots of water, etc, but no alcohol and no food. This enables people to get sobered up and not detract from the restaurants.

Last year the Chamber threw together the Sudsy Pickle Challenge as a fundraiser for the Chamber. There's the possibility of acquiring a band to play somewhere in downtown. Mulford will take it to the Chamber Board.

The complaints to the Fair come from the fact there is nothing to do after the Festival closes and a bunch of drunken people released upon the town.

Moving

Silkman and his family have received a great offer to go teach for two years in the Marshall Islands. They will be leaving in mid-June and resigning from the Board. Carlson had asked him to stay through the May meeting which will be his last.

Heinmiller wishes him well and everyone will miss him.

New Business: *Tour Permits*

Silkman met with the Manager and Culbeck about Tour Permits. Culbeck is at the meeting to assist with knowledge on the history of Haines' tour permits and why they are the way they are.

Culbeck gave a bit of the history which came about due to a tour operator doing crazy stuff and then traffic issues in various areas, rapidly growing amount of tours, etc. Culbeck does not think that Tour Permits will go away but there is the possibility of streamlining the process.

Silkman also mentioned creating the criteria for Tour Permit. There are good bad aspects of the Tour permits depending on where it may benefit the company / individual.

Mulford mentioned how the code kept mentioning unfair competition and she doesn't understand what it is supposed to relate to. There is also all the fees involved with the Tour Permits and that they are supposed to cover the administration costs. How much does it actually cost the administration to deal with Tour Permits versus how much money is brought in. Mulford wants to see more business here and the system discourages this. She also feels that the tour operators are being treated unfairly compared to other businesses recalling a point Bart Henderson made in our previous TAB meeting. Silkman asked the Manager why the tour operators are being singled out and he suggested the utilization of a public resource so it resonates differently than other industries. The Manager feels that in long term this is something that should be managed via zoning.

Hess feels this is something that should be taken slowly to avoid any backlash from the public. She supports streamlining the process and making them a multi-year permit. If someone violates their permit then they individually would get looked. Silkman asked Lapp from his perspective how the Assembly would feel about extending the permits to a multi-year permit.

Culbeck suggests that TAB find the redundancies in the code, fix things that are wrong and bring the suggested changes to the Manager.

Carlson suggests that rather everyone going out and researching things on their own that a subcommittee meet to go over changes, etc and then bring it back to the full board. Hess motions to form a subcommittee to work on tour permits, Mulford seconded; all in favor. Both Hess and Mulford volunteered to be on the committee. Gaffney will most likely want to be on it as well.

Old Business:

Tourism Economic Impact Study

The study came in at \$10,500 for the winter study and \$19,000 for the summer study. The borough is pretty strapped for cash this coming year. The plan is to go ahead with the winter study and work on getting the summer study cost down and begin next year.

The feeling of TAB is to have the summer study done before winter study as it's the bigger piece of the economic pie.

Hess brought up the bed tax going to the general fund and not tourism. Carlson feels that it would not be beneficial for Tourism to go after those funds. The 4% tax is very small and many people in the community already feel tourism receives more than enough money. It would not be good for tourism to go after that as well and take it from the general fund.

Alaska Marine Highway 50th Anniversary

May 5th is the Haines AMHS 50th Anniversary celebration at the PC Dock. Entertainment and speaker lined up for the event. The museum has the boards to go into the windows of the Gross Building and they created small version to on the dock for the event. The theme is the history of the AMHS. We also hosted a local essay contest to win a Golden Ticket for AMHS. Two AMHS employees are judging along with the Mayor, Museum Director and Library Director. Still working on music for the event.

TIA Yukon Conference

The Conference begins next week. Everything has come together. The welcome reception is set the ABEF with the Jilkaat Kwaan Dancers and artists all ready to go. Friday night is Community Fun Night. We still need volunteers for the events. Everything will be spread out from Dalton City, Fort Seward and Downtown.

Directors Update:

Tourism Community Night

TCN is set for May 16. The focus for this year is digital marketing. Some of this idea came out of the Tech Summit Carlson recently attended. There is so much out there and constantly changing. Internet is very important now and there are many local businesses that either do not have a site or don't keep it up to date. James Alborough will be the keynote speaker and then we will offer seminars during the summer.

Out of this Carlson would like to offer seminars for business owners to learn more about what they could and/or should be doing. These will be offered throughout the summer and we will work with businesses to see what would be the best day.

Fort Seward Signs

Carlson said she's had this on her list of things to do since her first summer. The signs look awful and really need to be replaced it's just never worked its way up the 'to do list'. It is now on the top of the list. The information is good but we'll look at it with the museum and see what if anything needs to be changed and then let companied bidding on the project some up with designs that compliment the Fort Seward area.

Tech Summit Recap

Tech summit was fantastic and well worth the money. This has been budgeted for the next fiscal year.

Community Shuttle

River Adventures has the contract for the cruise shuttle and events. Tara Bicknell will be driving.

Visitor Information Booth

A new Visitor Information Booth is being constructed on the land side of the dock. The old one is molding and falling apart. It will be taken away when the new dock starts getting demolished. If you move it now it will fall apart.

Board Comments:

Mulford asked if anything has happened with the Governor's picnic. Silkman said they got a note saying it was received and they'll hear more later.

Mulford also asked about picture point. With locals complaining that tourism took over the beach that everyone likes to use is there any chance that picture point could be the new beach for people to enjoy. Carlson & Lapp commented that part of the grant was that an intertidal protected area be set up which mean nothing can be changed to create a beach, only the turnouts can be developed.

Hinson commented on trash cans. It seems that when the visitors leave so do the trash cans which means there is nothing through the winter. Now there is not snow and there is still no trash bins. Is there any way to get more trash cans around town?

Butcher mentioned that he was able to join Carlson at the LA Travel & Adventure Show and was impressed with how Carlson represents our community.

Set Next Meeting Date: Friday, May 31, 2013 - 9:30 am

Assembly Chambers, Safety Building

Butcher motioned to adjourn, Heinmiller seconded; all in favor. Meeting ended at 11:22 am.