

## **Tourism Advisory Board Meeting/ Meeting Agenda**

**Tuesday, January 20 – 9:30 a.m.**

**Meeting Call to Order: Judy Heinmiller**

**Roll Call: Present** - Chris Schelb, Juanita Lidholm, Judy Heinmiller, Jeff Butcher, Jason Gaffney, John Hunt (arrived 15 minutes late), Gregg Johnson

**Absent** -

**Also Present** - Lori Stepansky, Michael Ahmuty, Bart Henderson, Kori Goertz, Bruce Messerschmitt, Danny Gonce, Stan Selmar, Tom Bolen

**Approval of September, 2008 Minutes:** Johnson motioned to approve; Schelb second, all in favor.

### **Public Comments:**

Board member Johnson wanted to discuss the AP&T Connelly Lake project in relation to Tourism for Haines. Representatives present from AP&T spoke about the project and their thinking of increase of population, cruise ships, and visitors overall. AP&T indicated at this point, they are just trying to get in to the permitting/licensing stage to begin studying the options for development of the project. Manager Bolen reported the subject was to be discussed at a Committee of the Whole meeting with the Assembly and presented at the Assembly meeting next Tuesday.

Schelb motioned for the Tourism Advisory Board to take a non-binding position of support for the AP&T proposal for the Connelly Lake Project and the final decision of the Haines Borough Assembly; Johnson second. All in favor: Schelb, Lidholm, Heinmiller, Johnson, Butcher, Gaffney; all opposed: Hunt.

Member of the Public Henderson commented on how tourism is valued to the community and expressed concerns about Haines making an increase of cruise ships to the community not being a priority. Henderson spoke about the challenges in the current times and the volatile situation Haines is in and wants the community aware of how the system works with the cruise lines and our relationship with Skagway. Lengthy discussion followed regarding the demise of the cruise industry for Haines, its history in the community and the threats of it to the future. Henderson requested the board initiate and support a proactive approach of the Haines Assembly to write a resolution for the cruise lines indicating Haines would like an increase of ships to Haines and work with the administration for investing in infrastructure to show the desire.

Heinmiller asked board member Gaffney to draft a letter and resolution for the Assembly; Gaffney accepted.

**Approval of Agenda:**

**President's Report:** N/A

**New Business:**

**Election of Officers – *(The board is to elect a chair and vice-chair)***

Hunt nominated Heinmiller to position of Chair; Schelb second. All in favor.

Hunt nominated Johnson to position of Vice-Chair; Schelb second. All in favor.

Hunt nominated Michael Ahmuty to a non-voting seat on the board as specified in Article III, Section 5 in the board by-laws, Schelb seconded; all in favor.

**Budget – *(It is time for department heads to submit their budgets to the borough manager. The Tourism Director would like to request a few of the board members be involved in the process.)***

Stepansky reported the process of Borough departments submitting their budgets was taking place and requested the board be more involved in the process. Heinmiller and Johnson agreed to set up an appointment with Stepansky the following week. Details would be discussed at the following board meeting.

**Visitor Center Staffing – *(In light of Haines conference business and increased functions of the Tourism Department, Director Lori Stepansky is working to resurrect the Tourism Specialist position and would like board support.)***

Stepansky reported Visitor Center staff person, Christa Rayl, was leaving her position for a position in the Borough's finance department. Stepansky noted the increase of conferences and conventions as well as the work load has increased over the years and additional staffing was needed. Stepansky is pursuing re-creating a position which existed when she began her employ with the Haines Borough called Tourism Specialist through discussions with Manager Bolen. Stepansky requested the board's support for approving this position with Borough Management.

Hunt moved to send a letter of support to re-create the position of Tourism Specialist; Schelb second. Hunt amended motion to a send letter of support to re-create the position of Tourism Specialist to the Borough Manager; Lidholm second. Heinmiller will write the letter.

**Old Business:**

**Bathroom/Pavilion Project – *(Borough Manager, Tom Bolen will provide an update regarding the designs and progress of the project to the board.)***

Manager Bolen presented the latest designs from PND and a proposed new location for the bathroom facility and pavilion at the PC Dock along with potential truss scenarios for the PC Dock. Manager Bolen indicated the structures have been moved more in to a focus of a waterfront development project with long-term vision of the needs for the area. Manager Bolen also indicated he was researching and likely going to purchase or lease an ATCO mobile building for temporary bathroom facilities at the PC Dock this season as long as needed instead of the port-a-potties used in the past.

Discussion followed regarding the pros and cons and other challenges of the suggested designs, revised location, and truss issues with the PC Dock.

**Directors Report:**

**International Sub-Committee of ATIA Marketing**

Stepansky reported she was appointed to the International Sub-Committee of ATIA's Marketing Committee. The committee meets several times a year via teleconference and/or in person when possible.

#### **Conventions – 2009**

Stepansky reported the American Legion Convention would be held April 22 – 24 with accommodation challenges because of the annual Bridge Tournament. Stepansky also reported the SE Conference was scheduled for September 15 – 17 and a bid has been submitted for the Alaska Chamber of Commerce Convention September 22 – 24. Award of this convention will be announced by the end of the week.

#### **Smithsonian New Harmonies Exhibit**

Stepansky reported the Sheldon Museum/Haines was one of four locations to receive the privilege of holding this exhibit for 6 weeks and a group has been established by museum curator, Jerrie Clarke to organize a regular schedule of concerts throughout this time period. Stepansky indicated she has spoke with Clarke and offered assistance to market all aspects as this will be a draw for regional visitors to Haines as well as a lure for Alaska Highway traffic to visit Haines.

#### **Director's travel schedule**

Stepansky reported on travels already scheduled and that of additional conferences and meetings she believed would be worthwhile to attend through April which included: Yukon Fish and Game banquet in Whitehorse this weekend; LA Time Adventure Travel Trade Show with SATC in which she is president; Tourism in the Economy in Ketchikan, WACVB Tourism Tech Summit; ATIA Marketing Meetings in April; SATC Retreat also in April.

Some discussion followed regarding the SATC booth at the LA Time Adventure Trade Show.

Board member Hunt requested a section called Board Member Comments be added to the agenda on a regular basis.

Hunt thanked Stepansky for her work on the Australia/New Zealand Trade Mission and welcomed new board members.

**Set Next Meeting Date: Thursday, February 19, 2008 – 9:30 a.m.  
Assembly Chambers, Public Safety Building**

11:30 p.m. - Hunt moved to adjourn; Johnson second; all approved.