

# Tourism Advisory Board Meeting Agenda / Meeting Minutes

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**Friday, August 30 – 9:30 am (Assembly Chambers)**

**Meeting Call to Order:** Barb Mulford – President – 9:33 am

**Roll Call: Present** Barb Mulford, Michael Marks, Barb Mulford, Rhonda Hinson, Judy Heinmiller, Karen Hess, Jeff Butcher

**Absent** Jason Gaffney

**Also Present** Tanya Carlson, Jamie Knudsen, Debra Schnabel, Stephanie Scott

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

**Approval of Agenda:** Butcher moved to approve the agenda, Marks seconded. Mulford motioned to amend the agenda to include Picture Point ad-hoc committee under new business. Butcher moved to approve the agenda as amended, Marks seconded; all in favor of amended agenda.

**\*Approval of Minutes:** June  
July

**Public Comments:** *Economic Impact Study*

Debra Schnabel feels that generally the assembly was not opposed to study something but they feel the study methodology was too simple and the reasons for it were not clear. Usually a study helps answer a question or solve an issue. It seems it would be a lot more dynamic that there be a question before us that once we have the data what will it be used for, why do we need the data, should we forget about cruise ships and concentrate on special events, should the government get involved in the link between Haines and Skagway, why are we doing this, what is the question we are trying to answer. Stephanie concurs and says that she has received many emails/calls regarding the link between Haines and Skagway and how we can get more independent travelers here.

Hess says that the study has been discussed more as a defense. Every time someone goes to the borough to request information on how much money is brought in by tourism the borough can't answer it. Because of this there is no data that can back up any request for special projects or fund or even answer the question what does tourism do. Hess also mentioned that there is already a private company offering transfer between Haines and Skagway and she doesn't see why government should get involved.

Scott asked what is it that the tourism department wants to do that we can't find statistics for? Scott feels that the statistics McDowell Group is going to compile is something that anybody can put together.

Carlson said that both the tourism department and state fair have asked the borough about this data and it has been told that we can't extract just what tourism does. Businesses can be extracted but revenues from tourism versus local cannot.

Carlson took the Assembly's comments back to McDowell group. One question was in regards to ROI. McDowell can go into each sector of travel and show the impact of the sector on our community. They can show the impact of having an event coordinator but they reminded that this position never comes back directly to pay for itself; the money this position may bring is spread throughout the community. They can look at the impact of specific event as well. Looking at the Haines/Skagway transportation, this would have to be an entirely separate study which would constitute people on the ground surveying visitors and looking to see what the growth possibility is in both cruise visitors and independent travelers. Rough estimate over the phone for a study like this would be \$20,000.

Hinson said if you don't know where you are you have nothing to measure for where you are going. Schnabel said it was a valid point but she doesn't want to spend \$30,000 to get there. Schnabel says she would like to hear that "we need to do this before we can do this." She would encourage the TAB to be a lot more specific, be a lot more offensive and advocate more for the industry and tell us more where you think tourism should go so the Assembly can go yes, let's do that.

Hess motions that TAB ask the Borough Assembly to direct the manager to get as much data that directly affects tourism as possible; Hinson seconded; all in favor.

**Chair Report:**

*ATIA*

ATIA is October 6-8 in Sitka. ATIA is very important, works with the state and could possibly assist with programs and funding in the future.

*AMHS Class Ferry Update - 2016*

This meeting went through the plans for the new ferries and that they will be in service by 2016.

*Independent Travelers / Independent Cruisers*

There's a market there.

**New Business:**

*PC Dock Revenue & Expenditure Analysis*

Hess had requested a breakdown of this and it was sent out prior to the meeting. Carlson said the port tariff ordinance will be in its first public hearing next week. The ordinance was written with a \$0.25 per foot increase on the face of the PC Dock and since no one could remember what specifically came out of some the meeting last year regarding the lightering float it was written at \$20 keeping it status quo with previous years.

## *PC Dock Upgrades – Last Call 2013*

Holland America has decided to not lighter for their last docking.

## *Communication to Shop Owners / Tour Operators During Unexpected Events*

Concerns had come to Mulford because there was no communication about the surprise Princess Ship. Mulford feels the store owners should organize something to accommodate this. Mulford would like to see the downtown revitalization committee be formalized because they could take this on and form a calling tree. Carlson explained the order of operations from the tourism department and the first priority is getting the tourism staff and volunteers where they are needed while also fielding hundreds of people pouring off a cruise ship. Heinmiller likes the businesses taking responsibility and asked if Carlson would be willing to make one phone call to begin the tree. Carlson said she would be happy to after the businesses actually come together and form their tree.

## *Picture Point Ad-Hoc Committee*

Darsie Culbeck is heading this project and putting together a 5 member ad-hoc committee and there is a seat from TAB. Heinmiller would like to volunteer to fill the seat. Hess moved that Heinmiller be the TAB representative, Butcher seconded; all in favor.

## *Old Business:*

## *Upcoming Events & Conventions*

Next weekend is the disaster preparedness drill. The Museum conference is at the end of the month (September 26-28) and the Juneau/Yukon bar association is doing something the first part of October. Unfortunately we know nothing about the bar association but are working on finding something out.

Butcher added that there is a representative of the Juneau Access Road would like to come up and educate some Haines residents on the possibility of a future road.

The Chamber will be hosting a chamber luncheon to discuss corporate personhood.

Carlson is working with Sitka and Juneau to try and host the WACVB Forum in a couple of years (2015). We would like to highlight southeast Alaska. Haines would not be able to host because of the type of lodging required for the conference.

## *Directors Update:*

## *BackRoads Alaska*

Carlson has been working on updating the website as well as itineraries. She has posed the question to several cruise execs of “what can Haines do to attract more ships?” One item she is working on is bringing back the old double port option that NCL used to do. This will be presented in the itineraries for the cruise lines

### *Upcoming Schedule*

Carlson will be out the last two weeks of September then ATIA in October and Alaska Media Road Show at the end of October.

#### ***Board Comments:***

Butcher thought it was an interesting meeting with an Assembly member asking TAB to step up to the plate. It was nice to hear that.

Marks offered to step in for Heinmiller if she has to miss any of the ad-hoc committee meetings for Picture Point.

***Set Next Meeting Date:*** *Monday, September 30, 2013 – 9:30 am*

Assembly Chambers, Safety Building

Hinson motioned to adjourn, Hess seconded; all in favor. Meeting ended at 11:24 am.