

Tourism Advisory Board Meeting Agenda / Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 31 – 1:30 pm

Meeting Call to Order: Michael Ahmuty – 1:40 pm

Roll Call: Present - Ross Silkman, Karen Hess, Jason Gaffney, Michael Ahmuty

Absent - Judy Heinmiller, John Hunt, Jeff Butcher

Also Present -Tanya Carlson

Approval of excused / unexcused absences: Heinmiller emailed she would be out of town; Gaffney motioned to approve Heinmiller's absence, Silkman seconded. Neither Hunt nor Butcher notified Ahmuty of their absence; Hess motioned for unexcused absences on both, Gaffney seconded.

All were in favor of approved and unapproved absences.

There was no motion to approve or not approve absences last month. Michael Ahmuty, John Hunt and Jeff Butcher were absent during the April 25 meeting. All notified of their absence ahead of time. Gaffney motioned to approve all absences, Hess seconded, all were in favor.

***Approval of Agenda:** Hess motioned to approve agenda and consent agenda, Gaffney seconded; all in favor of motion.

***Approval of Minutes:** 4/25

Public Comments: N/A

Chair Report: **Spoke with Matt Boron – State DOT Manager Haines regarding pullouts**

Ahmuty spoke with DOT manager Matt Boron about pull outs along the Haines Highway and spoke with State Parks. The Eagle Preserve charter says there shall be no designated pull outs. With so many visitors coming to Haines and there are no good spots for people to pull over with the exception of the few pull outs there and these are not available during the winter as they can't get plowed due to design.

Ahmuty mentioned that there is no designated boat launch along the highway either and this is something that needs some thought as the road is worked on in the future. Hess mentioned that there is a good spot in the Klukwan area but they are opposed to opening it up to mass use and people fishing in front of the village.

The pullout at 21 mile can't be plowed due to the curb placement. This makes the usage of this pullout nonexistent in the winter. Hess mentioned that Pete Lapham told the developers at the time that they would not be able to plow if a curb was developed there but one was put in anyway.

Is there a way we can get rid of the curb and place a different barrier between the road and pullout that can be removed in the winter; much like the barriers at the PC Dock.

New Business: **Kluane Chilkat Bike Relay – Camping & Community Events**

Hess asked Silkman if there was a way part of the Fairgrounds could be opened up for camping. Silkman said that their insurance would not allow it. The fair has taken out a permit for Camping at Tlingit Park through the borough. Traditionally, beerfest goers don't utilize the Parade

Grounds so the Vietnam Wall wouldn't be an issue on the same weekend as beerfest. There were more campers on the beach than previous years. The temporary camping permit is difficult because they don't advertise it so the commercial parks don't lose guests. Carlson mentioned the same difficulty. We need to come up with a cutoff where people can start being directed to the back-up area rather than making them check with all of the parks for availability before being shown the back-up.

Ahmuty thinks the borough should be proactive in setting up overflow areas for big weekends and possibly even charge for use. The fee would assist in clean-up of the areas after the event. Hess doesn't think this assembly will go for. She feels this Assembly will make the events limit participants before opening more borough areas for camping. Carlson feels that charging for the overflow would be a good option. Hess said it was good in theory but for those who do not want to pay they would still get pushed to the areas we don't want them. Hess does feel that port-a-potties should be available for these events. Gaffney said the key is budget. Silkman said they were \$500-\$600 each for a couple of days.

Ahmuty said he would draft an informal letter to the borough manager about overflow and port-a-potties. Silkman said the Fair is planning on growing the event even further next year. The fair has been told they should cap the beerfest at around 600 because that's how many the town can accommodate but the Southeast Fair put more than 12,000 people through the door last year compared to 1200 for beerfest.

BackRoads Alaska – Logo & Update

Carlson said she would get the logo out to Tour Operators for placement in vehicles or wherever else they would like to place them. Hess mentioned that she pointed out the logo and meaning to those guests saying how much nicer Haines is compared to their day in Skagway.

Ahmuty would like to see about a half page design in the buses and store fronts.

Carlson said the Alaska Rod's requested the logo to make t-shirts to sell. Carlson said she was fine with this as it helps get the logo out in the public. She wants to make sure that each store in charge of ordering and managing their own inventory. Gaffney said they should all sign a confidentiality agreement since the logo belongs to the Haines Borough and Sitka CVB.

Ahmuty asked if there was a BackRoads Alaska url and said if it's not taken we should buy it.

Hess asked if there has been any word or feedback from any of the cruise lines. Carlson said she hasn't heard anything in a while. She feels NCL is still the best bet but they are even concerned about our capacity. We have only one fishing boat that is booked all the time; we have only a couple of flight companies who don't want to work with the cruise lines because they are booked on their own all the time. Gaffney also reminded that with the onset of the ECA rule coming up it will also affect our chances of getting more ships in our port. Carlson mentioned that there may be a couple more tours coming in the next couple of years.

Carlson also mentioned that she told the borough Manager after the cruise meetings that we should go meet with the cruise lines at least every other year. However, with a trip planned in January for Orlando it makes sense to check back in with them at that point. The Manager agreed.

Old Business: Tourism Community Night

Carlson said the event went well. The kids did a great job. Carlson believed there were about 65-70 people in attendance.

Season Kick-Off Celebration

Ahmuty said the date of this event was challenging. We had about 25 crew members some plus one team of other visitors in town. Several community members did stop and watch. We would like to do another one for the Statendam crew. Carlson would like to see us do more with the crew. Gaffney said that we should also look at a yearend celebration as a thank you. Carlson would also like to a bbq similar to what the harbor did. Carlson is also considering holding an afterhours for local because so many locals seem to have no clue what we do.

Directors Update: Community Trash Cans

There is a lack of trash receptacles in our community. Gaffney's concern is the amount of waste that gets disposed in the dumpsters that are not locked. It comes down to cost. Carlson agreed that dumpsters should be locked but more trash cans should be in town. **Ahmuty said he would add this in his letter to the borough manger in regards to events.**

1st Shop Walk

It did not go well. There were a lot of participating businesses which took it to over 3 hours. There was only one guide that participated. Chilkat Guides were unaware and the Eagle Foundation forgot and scheduled their guides for training. Carlson said the tour companies who utilize local guides need to be pushed to get their guides to participate. Just because they're local doesn't mean they know all the shops or what they all offer. Ahmuty asked if we did a write up of all the businesses, Carlson said other than what is in our planner, no. Ahmuty said it would be good to get the ship's port talk person out on a shop FAM as well.

Meeting / Convention Packet & Bids

The packet is just about complete. Tammy has done a great job. We will be using the new packet to bid on the TIA Yukon Spring Conference for next year. Carlson is a little concerned with hotel space but if the Halsingland will open we should be able to make it. Ahmuty asked how many rooms we've lost. Carlson said we are currently down 30 rooms. The conference will be either the last week in April or the First week in May.

30th Anniversary Pin / Visitor Survey

The Visitor Center has created a visitor survey which is currently being conducted. The pins will be an added part of the incentive to fill them out. Steve Vick donated some DVD ROMS that he created years ago. He is trying to get rid of them so we are including those with the survey incentive as well as our old Haines video. The surveys are at the visitor center, Hotel Halsingland and Captain's Choice.

Senator Murkowski Visit on Friday

Senator Murkowski will be in Haines tomorrow and will be attending several functions throughout the day.

Board Comments: Silkman would like to see event shuttling included in future shuttle contracts (beerfest, bike race and fair). The borough manager is concerned it will compete with the taxi service. The taxi said it doesn't affect him much.

Election of New Chair: This will be postponed until next meeting.

Set Next Meeting Date: **Thursday, June 28, 2012 – 1:30 pm**

Assembly Chambers, Safety Building

Meeting adjourned at 2:44 pm.