
Citizens' Taskforce Minutes

Monday, September 14, 2015 6:00 PM
Sealing Cove Business Center

Investment Committee Members: Rob Allen, Maxwell Rule, Lawrence Spottedbird, Dyan Bessette, Cynthia Gibson, Mary Magnuson, Jack Ozment
Tristan Guevin (Assembly Liaison)

Meeting began at 6:03 PM.

Present: Rob Allen, Maxwell Rule, Lawrence Spottedbird (arrived at 6:24), Dyan Bessette, Cynthia Gibson, Mary Magnuson, Jack Ozment

Facilitator: Doug Osborne

Staff: Deputy Clerk Melissa Henshaw, Municipal Administrator Mark Gorman, Assessor Wendy Lawrence

Assembly Liaison: Tristan Guevin

Members of the Public: Shannon Haugland, Emily Kwong, James Poulson, Matt Hunter, Rebecca Himschoot, Shirley Robards

Official Welcome by Deputy Mayor Hunter and Municipal Administrator Mark Gorman

Hunter welcomed and thanked the group for volunteering and told of this critical strategic planning process, looked forward to the recommendations from the task force to the Assembly, and noted that the Assembly may or may not approve those recommendations. Gorman told of State funding issues, the opportunity to recommend to the Assembly, staff's role, and thanked Osborne for facilitating.

What is your background and what inspired you to be a part of this new task force?

Allen, CEO of Sitka Community Hospital told that he grew up in Sitka, stated his education, and volunteerism of many boards including a term on the Assembly. Magnuson, served on the Long-Range Planning Commission, recently bought a business, and would like to rein in spending. Rule, CFO at Hames Corporation since 1993, has a public accounting background, and told of interest in strategic/planning approach of taxes and rates. Bessette, told of school administration and budget background and of concerns with the younger public being able to afford Sitka. Ozment, a retired engineer and Sitka resident since early 1990's, served 4 years on the Assembly would like to help keep costs of City in line for fixed income citizens. Gibson, has lived in Sitka since 1993, a certified financial planner, she was optimistic. SpottedBird, Sitka Tribe of Alaska Manager, came from Seattle last year to live in Sitka, and felt he had a responsibility to find solutions.

What hopes and concerns do you have related to this work of this group?

Magnuson – Reign in existing spending patterns and identify core responsibilities of municipality. Rule – Infrastructure was a concern, needs vs. wants, determine cost, sources of money, and the need for public comment. Bessette – That the Assembly listen, to keep citizens in town, and had concerns the process would be rushed. Ozment – Reasonable livable City budget, citizens leaving. SpottedBird hoped to bring a different perspective, new

ideas, and was concerned of the value the Assembly will see. Gibson – Balanced budget, compromising and alienate people. Allen – Provide Assembly information and was concerned with creditability.

Elements and/or criteria need to take into account

Osborne asked the question, *In order to have a successful final product what elements or criteria does the Citizens' Taskforce need to take into account?* He listed ideas of criteria/components to consider: Focused, realistic, supported, politically achievable, helpful, vetted. Criteria/components added by the task force were: Options, achievable, prioritize, measurable. Guevin spoke to the vetted component, told of the importance of public engagement, thought that most of the criteria are in line with the idea behind this task force, and the public process.

Imagine this task force is extraordinarily successful. What are the specific elements of success?

The task force brainstormed, discussed, conducted a round robin, and voted. The following was a list of the top vote for specific elements with each member having two separate votes based on a point system:

- 7 votes - written report with findings and alternative recommendations
- 3 votes – 10 year projections/long term solutions
- 3 votes – identify revenue opportunities beyond citizens
- 2 votes – be able to recommend an achievable budget
- 2 votes - City budget that covers essentials with no tax increase
- 1 vote – solutions that have support from community, administration, and Assembly
- 1 vote – consensus is reached on options
- 1 vote – create a pattern of thinking for future to keep small town affordable
- 1 vote – opportunities for community to speak
- Zero votes – people are still here and talking
- Zero votes – less than 50% of citizens mad at task force
- Zero votes – mission statement in line with goals.

Discuss general meeting intervals

Majority of the task force thought weekly meetings would be best. However, it was determined that the next meeting will be two weeks out to give staff time to gather information to present at the next meeting.

Review quorum requirements

Deputy Clerk Henshaw went over requirements stating that there must be four members present, all meetings must be held in public and advertised.

Review ways to participate over the phone

Deputy Clerk Henshaw would send out teleconference information, asked the task force to inform her if a member would be participating over the phone, and to let her know if a member would not be in attendance.

Select next meeting date and time

The next regular meeting of the Citizens' Taskforce would be held on Monday, September 28, 2015 from 6:00 to 8:00pm at Sealing Cove Business Center at 601 Alice Loop.

Discuss when to have public comment during meetings

It was determined that public comment will be heard at the beginning and at the end of the meeting with a three minute time limit.

Discuss roles of the chair and vice chair. Review overall timeline. Call for nominations, select a chair and vice chair.

General consensus of the roll of the chair was to run the meeting, maintain the agenda, report to the Assembly, and make sure everyone is heard. The vice chair roll is to fill in for the chair upon absence. Osborne called for nominations, Allen and Rule were nominated, Allen as the top vote getter. Rule was voted in for vice chair and SpottedBird was voted in as deputy vice chair.

Summarize meeting and review draft agenda for the next meeting

Osborne summarized the meeting. Gorman stated that staff would create the foundation for the next regular meeting of current expenses of city government and what resources pay for those expenses. Wendy Lawrence, Assessor and Jay Sweeney, Chief Finance and Administration Officer would present. New information and documents would be posted to the website and an email would be distributed by Henshaw when new information is available.

Round Robin closing comments

Ozment was impressed with progress and thought that a facilitator was needed. SpottedBird was excited of progress, good learning opportunity to figure out how the Tribe can fit in, how to contribute, and bring resources. Gibson was glad the first meeting took place, to have this chance to get clarity, and the city’s commitment to make this happen. Allen echoed thanks to Osborne looked forward to learning and having the public interested in the process. Magnuson thanked the facilitator, staff, and was glad to be moving forward. Rule gave thanks, thought of the process not as a budget review committee, hoped to find what was important in the community, to come up with a workable plan, and thought that radio interviews may be helpful in the process. Bessette thanked staff and thought that a facilitator was important. Osborne commented the importance of putting a date on the top goal for the written report.

Public Comment

Rebecca Himschoot thanked the task force and offered herself as a resource not as budgetary but for what is taking place in schools. She thought it important that children were represented, she is not representing the district but she teaches in the district. She asked about advertising, encouraged staff to put details in the advertising, and encouraged the task force to reach out to the School District.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:59PM.

Attest:
Melissa Henshaw, Deputy Clerk