Minutes  
Waterfront Development Committee  
Monday, May 16, 2005 – Noon  
Assembly Chambers

Waterfront Development Committee Members Present: Jeff Bush (chaired meeting), Marc Wheeler, Don Etheridge, Jeff Wilson
Absent: Stan Ridgeway, Johan Dybdahl, Dan Bruce
Other Assembly Members Present: Merrill Sanford
Staff Present: Donna Pierce, Dale Pernula, Rorie Watt, Greg Chaney, Skye Stekoll, Kim Kiefer, Frances Vlahos-Rohm

I. Call to Order
Mr. Bush called the meeting to order at 12:02PM

II. Approval of Minutes
No objection to approval of the minutes from 5/2/05

III. Public Comment (not to exceed 10 minutes total)

Sandy Warner - 4111 Blackerby, Juneau: Ms. Warner asked about the status of the deck-over upgrade of the Marine Park pavilion. She said she hoped that it would be completed. She also expressed concern about the Capital Transit buses sitting and idling at the library, which created noise and fumes issues at the Visitor’s Information kiosk. Her understanding was that the buses were to break at the paid lot instead of the library. She also asked about the possibility of public parking on the street in front of Marine Park Plaza on days with no ships docked there.

Ms. Pierce reported that $150,000 was allocated for the park upgrades but decisions were pending more complete waterfront planning. Additionally, the potential purchase of Merchants Wharf could affect the future design of the park. She will follow up on the bus protocol issues. The parking question will also be addressed.

IV. Action Items

A. FY 06 Waterfront CIP Recommendations: Ms. Pierce said there are remaining FY 05 funds in the amount of $336,000 which could be allocated for this Capital budget and $926,000 for FY06. The $50,000 for the Cultural Gateway could come from new port development funds. Mr. Wheeler moved to follow staff recommendation, and allocate those FY05 funds of $336,000 and the $676,000 from FY06 for Seawalk planning and design for a total of $1,012,000. $250,000 should be used for the South Franklin widening project. The $50,000 for the Cultural Gateway should come from the Port Development Fee. If there is any money remaining from the Seawalk planning and design, it will roll into the construction. There was no objection to the motion. This will go to the Public Works and Facilities Committee.

B. Alaska Travelers Survey – Funding Request: Susan Bell and Heather Haugland gave a brief summary and background of the McDowell Group and the Alaska Traveler Survey. The 2005 visitor’s survey is a 4,000-person statewide exit survey. She described the 2003
survey and talked about the customization possibilities for the waterfront/cruise visitor piece tailored to Juneau. Juneau will see over 900,000 cruise visitors during the 2005 season. Examples of information can include visitors’ overall experience in Juneau, the most positive and negative experiences, and demographics. The questions can be adapted to meet the needs of waterfront development. The cost for the CBJ cruise passenger piece is $11,000 for 250 surveys. There was further discussion about the value of the survey for waterfront planning. Ms. Bell assured the committee that the questions could target such things as visitor experience with safety and convenience in the area. The committee supported the project and Mr. Wheeler recommended passing the request on to the Finance Committee with funding approved out of the CIP. There was no objection to the motion. Staff will work with Susan Bell on the specific questions, and the survey will be field-tested with results to be reviewed by the committee at the next meeting.

C. Subport Plan Presentation: The main purpose of the brief presentation by Barb Sheinberg is to address the status of the plan and regain momentum for the subport plan. Allison Smith from the Anchorage Land Trust office phoned in to hear the presentation. The consultant is seeking guidance from the committee on how to proceed. Ms. Sheinberg presented project background. There is a mixture of landowners including the Mental Health Trust. The goal for the area was to try to work together on a plan promoting everyone’s interests. Several groups together signed an MOU. Several meetings with the various agencies and the public resulted in the Subport Plan. It is agreed that it should be adopted into a comprehensive plan. If the community embraces the concept, the zoning changes would be more acceptable to all. Compatibility between the Waterfront and the Subport Plans is very high. The Subport Plan has more emphasis on housing with the differences in the details. Issues include how to accommodate the concepts in the Waterfront Plan and how to deal with building height issues. The suggestion was for a Bonus ordinance. Zoning and coding are issues for the area. Changes are needed to accommodate development in the area. The proposal was to create a “Mixed Use” waterfront zone to allow for more flexibility.

A package of code changes, permitting and the facilitation of land swaps are vital to proceeding on the Subport Plan. Timing is crucial. What may work for the private sector may not fit for the public sector. Mr. Wheeler addressed the public piece exists in the Waterfront plan already. He addressed the issue of how to make a continuous seawalk through the Coast Guard building area. Theoretically, the seawalk could swing around the building face on the waterside. With a commitment to the public already in place through the adopted Waterfront Plan, a determination must be made whether further requirements for implementing the zoning and code changes for the area are necessary.

Greg Chaney presented an overlay of the two plans to illustrate compatibility. He reminded the committee that today’s presentation should remain as a broad overview. The seawalk is a unifying element in the two plans. The difficulty comes up in the specifics such as parking, security and FEMA. The community is being re-mapped under FEMA, providing uncertainty about the final permitting regulations. Staff will have discussions and try to work out inconsistencies in the two plans and come back to the committee with more information.

D. Marine Passenger Fees Project Status: Mr. Bush affirmed that in his view, it is the prerogative of assembly to decide what to do with leftover funds from Marine Passenger Fees. Ms. Pierce gave background information about the impetus for timely closeouts. It is important to respond to CBJ auditors and to the cruise industry who expressed concern about
“sitting on a lot of passenger fee money while enacting new fees”. The more restrictive federal requirements concerning expenditures must be met as well.

The committee addressed funding for the airport departure security area improvements. The imminent need for restroom construction necessitated use of funds from Marine Passenger Fees and Sales Tax. This money was replaced as Federal funds became available. Ron Swanson, Airport Board, presented a brief background on the project. The cost for the project was $305,000. Federal funding eventually came through. Additionally, the board voted to appropriate $72,000 of those for a restroom in the secured Customs area. There is reluctance to agree to pay back the Marine Passenger and Sales Tax funds. The airport board supports the use of these funds for other imminent needs at airport. They are asking the Assembly to allow the airport to keep and use the funds. The closeout is in process. Assembly action will be required to make any decision on the funding. There is an urgent need for the restroom facility. Staff will ask Mr. Hartle to respond to the appropriateness of re-programming the funds for this and the other airport projects.

V. Next Meeting
   Next meeting date to be determined.

VI. Adjournment
   The meeting was adjourned at 1:12 pm