

**Minutes of Economic Development Board Meeting
Held on June 03, 2025**

1. CALL TO ORDER - 5:30 PM

2. ROLL CALL –

PRESENT: Ashton, Privett, O'Brien, DeRuyter, Chair Dalrymple

ABSENT:

STAFF: Kate Thomas, JR Meek

3. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA - None

4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST - None

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES -

- **Approval of the Economic Development Board regular meeting minutes from April 1, 2025.**

M/S: Privett/O'Brien

All in Favor

6. DIRECTOR REPORT -

- **Economic Development Director Report May 2025**

Privett requests that the discussion be scheduled for the next Borough-wide meeting regarding vendor access concerns during the Fourth of July celebration.

Staff reported that efforts are underway to develop a targeted marketing campaign promoting the upcoming land sale, as well as the creation of a relocation guide. The guide will support Wrangell's economic development objectives and include a pamphlet featuring key municipal information, application processes, and other essential resources for prospective residents and investors.

The Chamber of Commerce and staff will reconvene later to review and revise provisions related to conventions and meetings, and to strategize enhanced marketing approaches.

Staff will submit a housing impact report to the board for review, specifically addressing the role of short-term rentals such as Airbnb on the local housing market.

The board was informed that staff reviewed the Parks and Recreation Department's presentation regarding the playground facility and noted continued fundraising efforts toward the playground's replacement.

Staff also provided an update on collaborative efforts with the Chamber of Commerce, emphasizing the positive outcomes of the working relationship and encouraging increased participation by filling open seats on the Chamber's Board of Directors.

It was reported that a new municipal code, titled PUD (Planned Unit Development), has been introduced under Title XX. This code supports SEARHC's planned housing development, with construction expected to commence on June 15th.

The Borough Assembly has approved an increase in the local sales tax and has eliminated exemptions previously granted to cruise ships entering Borough-owned waters.

Staff noted completion of certification courses through Gonzaga University, enhancing their expertise in tourism marketing and communications.

Chair Dalrymple expressed appreciation for the comprehensive work being undertaken to address Wrangell's economic challenges and highlighted the positive trajectory of current development efforts. Staff echoed this sentiment, noting the increasing complexity of their workload and the rise in applications and partnership agreements.

In closing, staff commended the board, other commissions, and the Borough Manager for their active engagement, collaborative decision-making, and continued commitment to supporting the well-being and growth of the Wrangell community.

7. CORRESPONDENCE - None

8. PERSONS TO BE HEARD -

Tracey Martin presented an update on the Chamber of Commerce's recent relocation to the Visitor Center within the Nolan Center. She highlighted the benefits of the Chamber's enhanced collaboration with Borough staff, particularly in welcoming and assisting visitors arriving via cruise ships. Martin noted positive feedback from visitors regarding their experiences in Wrangell and shared that many expressed interests in returning for extended stays.

Martin also reported that the Chamber is currently operating with four vacant board seats and requested support in recruiting volunteers to assist with the upcoming Fourth of July celebration.

Chair Dalrymple expressed appreciation for the Chamber's successful transition to its new location and commended the strengthened partnership between the Chamber and the City & Borough of Wrangell.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

10. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Review and approval to move forward with American Cruise Line negotiations.

M/S: Privett/Ashton

Move to recommend that the Borough Assembly authorize the Borough Manager to negotiate a tidelands lease agreement with American Cruise Lines, Inc. for the purpose of dock construction with Parcel 02-024-600, subject to final review by the Planning & Zoning Commission and Port Commissions, and in support of long-term economic development.

Polled Vote – All in Favor

M/S: Privett/Chair Dalrymple

Move to amend the considerations, utilizations, and repurpose of the barge ramp in context to the dock port of the waterfront property in Tidelands, consider in the planning phase that each activity is independent, but complimentary to each entity, and address ADA compliance in disease outbreak from cruise ship vessels.

Polled Vote – All in Favor

O'Brien inquired whether ACL would be responsible for completing the entirety of the fill work associated with the waterfront development, or only a portion. Staff responded that ACL will not require additional fill beyond what is already planned for the project. If needed, only a reduced amount of fill may be required. It was noted that the Borough intends to bond for the associated fill costs.

O'Brien further asked whether the proposed drydock ramp would function as a driveway. Staff clarified that the ramp is intended solely for pedestrian access. However, prior discussions included the possibility of repurposing the existing barge ramp into a structure that may accommodate vehicle traffic.

Ashton expressed concern regarding limited available space within the development footprint. He proposed that, rather than redesigning the development for additional road traffic, the barge ramp and surrounding property be repurposed to optimize spatial use. Ashton also suggested that additional planning discussions could explore alternative roadway development to allow truck and cargo traffic to bypass the main project site.

Staff reported that while a comprehensive cost estimate covering the decommissioning of the mill property, waterfront development, and fill requirements is planned, it has not yet been initiated as an active component of the current scope. Additional traffic analysis is also expected to help optimize the use of docking areas.

Chair Dalrymple requested clarification regarding the precise location of the proposed acre of development and whether it appears on the official site map. Staff responded that the map does not accurately reflect finalized boundary lines and noted that a formal permit agreement will ultimately define the area. The identified parcel represents only a small portion of the overall harbor development area.

Staff also stated that the forthcoming lease agreement will be structured to allow multiple entities to utilize the dock, rather than restricting access to a single lessee.

It was reported that September is the tentative target date for submission of the bond application.

Regarding the barge ramp, staff noted that the long-term strategy does not include reconstruction at its current location. Instead, they plan to explore alternative sites and evaluate potential impacts of future development. Staff committed to contacting Chris Murtle to initiate a design draft for the fill work.

Chair Dalrymple voiced concerns about potential issues arising during the planning phase and expressed hope that the project will proceed without delays. He also reaffirmed the project's importance for Wrangell's economic development goals.

O'Brien asked for clarification on the estimated cost and process for the removal of the old mill dock and the associated fill. Staff indicated that those estimates will be addressed in later planning phases.

Privett raised resident concerns regarding the development project and recommended that concept drawings and preliminary plans be made available to the public to improve transparency and build trust.

Staff responded that once estimates and plans are more fully developed, a public engagement process will be initiated. This would include an opportunity for community members to review and provide feedback, pending approval from the board to move forward with such outreach.

Chair Dalrymple asked whether ACL has communicated directly with other communities to gather feedback or suggestions for improvements. Staff indicated that they would collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce to verify community input, particularly from southern communities, which have reportedly provided positive feedback.

Staff also noted that the proposed development may represent one of the most favorable profiles for accommodating cruise ship traffic. They referenced previous remarks from Viking Venus staff during port calls in Ketchikan. Additionally, staff highlighted potential economic benefits stemming from strengthened relationships with ACL and Viking, which could further support Wrangell's growth as a tourism destination.

O'Brien proposed the possibility of relocating the barge ramp to a site near the airport, utilizing nearby rock resources to assist with fill needs.

Staff addressed a public inquiry regarding lease terms—specifically, whether the lease would span forty or fifty years. They clarified that recent changes to the municipal code now allow for a 40-year lease to be granted outright, replacing the previous requirement for a five-year lease with multiple renewal options.

Staff also acknowledged concerns raised about public health—particularly regarding Legionnaires' disease—and emphasized that additional discussion will be necessary to ensure safety, transparency, and full compliance with ADA requirements. Privett stressed the importance of clearly outlining procedures in advance to avoid placing undue burden on emergency services, particularly EMS and Volunteer Fire Department.

11. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS -

Ashton reported the successful completion of a Patent within a two-week timeframe and noted that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is currently under development.

DeRuyter announced that the Wrangell School District will welcome a new superintendent, who is scheduled to assume duties beginning in July.

Chair Dalrymple provided an update on recent developments related to the U.S. Forest Service's proposed forest plan. While the plan initially aligned with components of the Timber Initiative, the Forest Service has since issued a formal response indicating that they will not be proceeding with the proposed new forest plan. No formal motion has been introduced at this time.

Chair Dalrymple also reported the successful completion of the blueberry project. He emphasized both the time constraints encountered during the process and the overall positive

return on investment. The project yielded favorable results, particularly in relation to land trimming and development outcomes.

12. NEXT AGENDA ITEMS -

Staff announced that the next Economic Development Board meeting is scheduled for September 2nd. The agenda will include discussion on the Trust Land Management exchange and review of the conceptual design for the Waterfront Development property.

July was identified as a tentative month for addressing additional agenda items. Chair Dalrymple is expected to participate remotely, while DeRuyter will be absent.

13. ADJOURN - 7:17 PM

ATTEST: _____
J.R Meek, Secretary

Bob Dalrymple, Chair