

**Minutes of Economic Development Committee Meeting
Held on June 04, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER: Call to order at 5:30 PM

2. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Chair Bob Dalrymple, Austin O'Brien, John DeRuyter, Brian Ashton

ABSENT: Jillian Privett

STAFF: Kate Thomas, Matt Henson

3. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA: NONE.

4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: NONE.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Approval of the Economic Development Board meeting minutes from March 5th, 2024.

M/S BA/JD move to approve the regular meeting minutes of the Economic Development Board from March 5th, 2024.

Approved by all in favor.

6. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

- a. Tongass Forest Plan Updates from the USFS/CBW Liaison, Bob Dalrymple

Chair Dalrymple asked O'Brien to introduce himself. O'Brien stated that he wants to act in a hybrid role to help represent the Forest Service and the community.

Ashton stated that he has found funding for salmon restoration and incubation through the National Science Foundation.

Chair Dalrymple provided a report. Dalrymple asked O'Brien for an update regarding the SASS Blueberry Project. O'Brien stated that the project is underway and under contract. He also mentioned that site maintenance around Nemo Loop has continued despite public criticism. Dalrymple stated that this project falls under food security priorities of the USDA.

Dalrymple stated that he has been trying to find more information on the SASS-FM program. O'Brien stated that the USFS has had to prioritize the Tongass Forest Plan revision over the SASS-FM program due to limited resources. However, there are specific areas that the USFS is targeting based on comments received from the comment period of the SASS-FM program. Dalrymple stated that the original letter to the USFS regarding SASS-FM should be revised and sent directly to the USFS to start conversations between the city and USFS.

Dalrymple provided updates to the partnership with the CBW and USFS regarding the Forest Plan. Provided information regarding USFS public outreach efforts and educational resources. Stated that they have officially filed a letter of intent at the beginning of May pushing the project forward and that review, and assessments have begun. Ashton asked how long the assessment period is. Dalrymple stated it will likely last until the end of 2024 with a completion date of 2028.

Dalrymple stated that he has been following Julie Decker's work in Mariculture and its rapid growth within Southeast Alaska. Stated that this area of industry can be very beneficial for Wrangell. ADF&G has a division in this industry.

SSACA has refined its systems and has become incredibly efficient. The organization has broadened its business to include tourism.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Letter requesting the National Outdoor Leadership School to consider Wrangell as a satellite campus locale.

Director Thomas provided an administrative report.

- b. Rain Coast Data Southeast Alaska Business Climate Survey Report

Director Thomas provided an administrative report.

Dalrymple asked if the responses from Wrangell can be parsed out. Thomas stated no but there will be a separate economic report shortly.

8. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Tommy Wells, Executive Director of the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce: stated that things are going well with the Chamber. Stated that the main mission is resetting and getting reorganized.

9. DIRECTOR REPORT

- a. Economic Development Department Report for March and April 2024.

Director Thomas provided an administrative report.

Stated that staff has an interest in working with Ashton to draft letters to various agencies to entice research in Wrangell. Ashton stated that there is no regional engine to train people in combatting climate change. Dalrymple stated that local land assets give Wrangell and competitive edge.

Thomas stated that the Alder Top land sale is anticipated for the Fall of 2024.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

11. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Review and discussion of Economic Focus Groups to support business and industry expansion

Director Thomas provided an administrative report.

Ashton stated that he likes the idea because there needs to be a space for these types of discussions. Thomas asked if there is anything missing from the focus areas. Dalrymple stated he thinks that timber could be included as local lumber can be used if graded properly. O'Brien stated that with new forest growth on the horizon, the community needs to ask if they want to be a part of local timber sale. This would affect recreational opportunities on and off island with existing road systems. Thomas stated that timber is still a renewable resource and can still be supportive of the local economy.

The board agrees that this idea is liked and approved by the whole board.

DeRuyter asked what the Port and Marine Service Center need. This should help inform discussion questions.

Thomas stated some focus groups may prove more difficult to bring together than other due to comfort level of having discussion. A schedule will be published to the board soon.

- b.** Review of USDOT Thriving Communities Site Visit Agenda and an invitation to the board to participate.

Director Thomas provided an administrative report.

12. NEXT AGENDA ITEMS

Thomas stated that her notes reference Entitlement Lands and Comprehensive Plan discussion. More discussion to follow on the Forest Plan.

Dalrymple asked for a discussion on childcare. Stated that it has been a couple years since the last discussion on this topic.

Dalrymple asks that any additional topics be sent to Kate.

13. ADJOURN

Adjourned at 7:36 PM

Next Scheduled meeting is for September 3rd at 5:30 PM.

Chair

ATTEST: _____
Secretary