DRAFT MINUTES
VISITOR INDUSTRY TASK FORCE
THE CITY & BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA
January 11, 2020 10:00 a.m.
City Hall – Assembly Chambers
Public Testimony Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 10:04am

Members present: Chair Carole Triem, Vice-Chair Craig Dahl, Holly Johnson, Meilani Schijvens, Paula Terrel, Dan Blanchard, and Kirby Day.

Members absent: Assemblymember Wade Bryson, Alida Bus and Bobbie Meszaros.

Others Present: Assemblymember Loren Jones, P&R Deputy Director Michele Elfers, Deputy Municipal Clerk Diane Cathcart, P&R Administrative Officer Myiia Wahto, D&H Port Operations Supervisor Scott Hinton, Mayor Beth Weldon, Port Director Carl Uchytil, City Manager Rorie Watt, School Board President Brian Holst.

II. PUBLIC TESTIMONY – three minutes per person

Linda Blefgen – Auke Bay, Comments on industrial tourism, cruise ships offloading large volume of garbage, details on types of garbage. We have limited space for landfill. Fred Meyer shelves empty during tourist season. Staff says crew is emptying stock of items. Recreation areas, we are being pushed out, too many people. Eaglecrest summer plans will push people out. Limit number of ships and passengers, one cruise ship free day. Lack of local governance on cruise ship industry. 7 countries have ports limiting ships. Cruise ship industry worst violator of environmental law.

Cam Byrnes – works on docks in summer, Gastineau Guiding now. Inability as city to deal with numbers, visitor experience diminishing. 2017 was year it changed, first time things felt out of control on docks, glacier and Auke Bay. Better infrastructure now, but city can't keep pace with numbers of people. No way to keep pace, infrastructure takes years to plan. Numbers need to get under control, need to address this problem. Top of this list needs to be dealing with the numbers. Self-regulation, meaning letting cruise companies take care of themselves, came up at Nov. meeting. It doesn't mean anything, cruise ships can only regulate number of ships and how many they bring. Quality has gone down, ships keep coming.

Robie Janes, Mountainside– Tourism part of his life growing up, new people and opportunity comes to this town. Agree with management issues. Opportunities immeasurable in short term and long term. Lots of people come up for tourism and stay, economic benefits, clear that tourism isn't going away. We can work together to manage how tourism works and all logistics. Focus on this, focus on how to make regulations that work for the growth of Juneau and community members in Juneau. We can work together and have regulations, tourism is one of biggest beauties.

Kimberly Metcalfe – Downtown, Disappointed in make-up, only one member out of 9 has history of activism and questioning cruise industry. Air and water pollution, increase in tourists, takeover of S Franklin and ghost town in winter, aircraft noise, increase in small vessel traffic, harassment of whales, health and safety issues, likelihood of marine accidents, industry extorts small businesses. Cap number of ships that dock here. Shut down all tourist traffic on basin road. Close gate at basin road year round. Zone for large scale tourism.

Bill Leighty – Downtown, referenced refuge Juneau innovation presentation, most urgent need to understand what CBJ, what can we legally do to manage visitor industry and volume of people arriving. If we don't have legal help then who should we hire? Comply with several ordinance climate change action plan, renewable energy strategy. Increased carrying capacity by increasing infrastructure. Congestion, helicopter noise, and emissions. We are a monopoly, act as a monopoly. Restrict supply so price goes up and volume goes down.

Bob Bartholomew – Douglas, Maintain a high quality of living for citizens and visitors. Bring industry and community closer together. Benefits of tourism exceed cost of what we give up as a community. Not on a sustainable path, assembly action needed. We are not actively managing the industry. Focus on 6 ships is over capacity, happened one day a week last year. It will happen this year many weeks 2 days a week. We will stretch our infrastructure, tour providers, stress citizens. Get back to local control. Use CLIA agreement template to reach another agreement, don't rely on what coast guard and lawyers allow us to do. What is our vision, negotiate with industry and take back local control.

Judy Crondahl- Downtown, Library roundabout, too much traffic to go to Main Street. S. Franklin tourists don't know where to go or what to do. Requests survey on how satisfied visitors are, infrastructure not serving residents or visitors. DO not permit any more cruise ship docks, prohibit lightering of anchored ships, implement doubling of sales tax on stores not open year round. Impose sales tax on all activities and tours in Juneau (on board tax too).

Bob Janes – Mountainside, Opportunity is hope. Grab onto opportunity while we have it, find ways to hope. Up tourism management, we need to manage it better as a region, city, and neighborhoods. Plan and build infrastructure, community will depend on to manage ourselves well. It will bring jobs and money. Don't retreat to limitations, how much unemployment is connected to limitations? Juneau Ocean Center he has been working on for 4 years. Norwegian Cruise Lines (NCL) offered to put Juneau Ocean Center on land and help finance it.

Joshua Adams – Regulation can be a quagmire. Duration of season. He buys historic properties. Lots of money going out of town to bank accounts. Tourism season used to go from April to September, now season is May to August. Cruise industry wants to cram in people in short period of time to make money. Downtown properties paid year round for only a few months of use. Large corporations taking large swaths of rental properties. They remain empty all year long but provide housing to no one the rest of the year. In January, Downtown is boarded up slum. If they are going to be here, let them be here.

Mike Ward – Taku Glacier Lodge, Blackerby. Grew up at lodge, families business. Gave history of lodge, constructed 1923, rich history of Alaska. Provide history, culture, and salmon to

visitors. Can do this because of tourism. Improved engine technology over the years, practice green living with solar panels, recycling and waste management programs.

Brian Flory – Valley. We agree on so much, arguing about less and it is important to realize that. We are arguing on excesses in recent years. #1 problem is helicopter/flightseeing noise. Can't hike a trail without noise of helicopters. One day off a week without ships, independent tourism would flourish.

Laurie Sica – Careful with cap consideration, invite challenge to host, accommodate, and think big. We have plenty of room and should be able to share wealth. Juneau would benefit from good logistical planning, more shore excursions.

Jamie Letterman – Valley. We don't have authority to deny people to travel and visit us. We do need to regulate. As operator we do a lot to mitigate, remind staff, monitor season from perspective of residents. We need to regulate to keep things monitored, follow TBMP guidelines, and follow complaints and concerns. This is my livelihood how we make our living. We do pay sales tax onboard ships.

Dawn Wolfe – Mountainside, Board of Ocean Center, Should we consider revisiting waterfront plan? If NCL develops dock, it might be one of our solutions, not the golden goose, but one of the solutions. If we develop it, it would be perpendicular and not parallel, some people say it would impede some ships, and would limit other ships at anchor. If we have 5 docks, it would move 20 percent of traffic out of center of town and spread it out. Looking at development of uplands for what community wants, expand seawalk, underground parking, a park, it would be a nice asset to the town. We need to be open thinkers.

Don Habeger – Back Loop. Local decisions have international impacts, affect businesses cumulatively and not in isolation, world events are catalysts but do not cause deleterious impacts. Local decisions carry weight. What we do here today does reverberate around worldwide. Big companies looking to preserve long term assets for stockholders. As companies making decisions they look at deployments and where they will survive the greatest. This companies diminished all programs in AK, dismissed employees. Do not cap industry, this will send messages worldwide. We do need to manage, continue a task force.

Greg McLaughlin – Seems like task force is heavily leaning towards tourist industry. Certain members benefit financially from tourism and worry community is putting profits before wellbeing and health of community. He worked for Capital Transit. Heavy burden on infrastructure many times in summer city buses are overcrowded and there is no room for locals to get to appointments, get to grocery stores, locals depend upon transit system and many times they are turned away. There are other aspects of taxing the infrastructure, difficult for city buses to get through town, emergency vehicles have difficulty too. Huge tax burden on infrastructure of community.

Elizabeth Saya – Lemon Creek, Climate Change, we have opportunity as Alaskans to make a statement. Tour boat industry is terribly consumptive, we have byproducts in the landfill. Nothing being done to curb that. As glaciers melt and streams carry sediment, Gastineau

Channel is filling up. Can see one of the boats tipping over, this happened in Italy. Personal concern undergoing cancer treatment, talking with staff at hospital. They are so full in summer that locals can't even get in, they have to tell locals no room in emergency room. More seniors in Juneau and we increase the senior load in the summer. Put a limit on how many passengers, not against tourism industry. Let's limit.

Laura Fleming – Bonnie Brae, over tourism recognized as threat to infrastructure and marine environment. Other cities banning some ships, limit dockings because residents were upset. Destruction of life of residents, environmental impacts reasons for this. Work to find ways to stem the tide. I support tourism and workers in tourism.

Bruce Weeks – Thane, Congestion on S. Franklin frustrating. More fender-benders, loss of time waiting. City should regulate and limit growth. It is a safety issue, congestion and traffic with emergency vehicles. This is a quality of life issue. Haul out close to bridge will result in same congestion just extending it over a mile. Management. I question if task force represents sentiments of community. Survey idea is suspicious because industry will outweigh it. Few people talking about reducing or limiting what is already here, what are we going to do going forward. Restrict growth of industry in some form and work with it.

Stuart Cohen – Downtown, operated a business on S. Franklin, closed in 2017, now ecommerce. Healthy tourism sector somewhat contained in downtown where it is. Is more tourism going to make Juneau a better place to live? Look at norms in other ports, many cities don't make many decisions or don't have information when they make decisions. In head tax issue recently, cruise ships are not partners, they are bullies. Recognize that more cruise ship ports will not spread wealth evenly. It will attract more multinational businesses, retail space is occupied by jewelry stores. Additional revenue from more tourists will accrue disproportionately to people who already get benefits. Turning downtown core into tourist experience, it will alienate our residents.

James Houck- Douglas, Owns Alaskan pedicab tours, 10 employees are locals, earnings go to pay college. Business is green. Come downtown and jump in a pedicab, locals ride free. Take people to see sites, go to independent stores, and show people our capital is the gem of our state.

Anjuli Grantham – Encourage task force to consider integrating tourism industry into JRES. Goal is for 80% renewable energy for Juneau. Less concerned with numbers of people and more with emissions/carbon footprint. Create policies directed at reducing carbon emissions related to tourism. Policies that inspire de-carbonization of tourism industry.

Martha Stey – Too many tourists downtown, we don't go down anymore. We put up stanchions on Franklin for safety. On Basin Road, tourism and local traffic creates dust. Jeep tours put us over the edge. Mostly concerned – residents need real representation at table. Juneau remains environmentally beautiful and socially and culturally intact and in place. We locals make full investments. At Long Range Waterfront Plan meeting many years ago, what about option of no more cruise ship growth? What is next after dock purchased for $20million dollars? I am asking for representation and some relief.

Matt Boline – Back Loop, Manages Bear Creek Outfitters. Thankful for a summer job that turned into full time employment. WE can do this because of Juneau's incredible setting, thriving economy. Visitors provide the economy that allow his family to be here. Many businesses can provide year round charter services (Ward Air). Bear Creek supports Jerry's Meat, Rookery supports their guests. We try to keep business sustainable. We need economic stability.

III. MEETING ADJOURNED at 11:23 A.M.