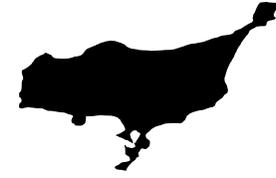


St. Paul Island Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)



Community Partners Meeting - Notes

Thursday, October 12, 2023

Meeting Objectives

- Debrief the October Community Conversation
- Review next steps and immediate follow up

Participants (alphabetical by entity)

<p><u>Aleut Community of St. Paul Island (ACSPI)</u> Aquilina Lestenkof, TUM Director John Wayne Melovidov, President Monique Baker, Governance Administrator Pat Baker, Executive Director Roxana Kashatok, Executive Assistant</p> <p><u>Central Bering Sea Fishermen’s Association</u> Jeff Kauffman Ray Melovidov</p> <p><u>Pribilof School District</u> Michael Baldwin, Superintendent</p>	<p><u>City of Saint Paul</u> Aubrey Wegeleben Phil Zavadil, City Manager Stephanie Mandregan, Finance Director</p> <p><u>Tanadgusix (TDX) Corporation</u> Chris Mandregan, CEO</p> <p><u>Agnew::Beck (A::B)</u> Molly Mylius Shelly Wade</p>
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Debrief from Community Conversation

- Jeff: it was an exciting event. Love the idea of grassroots input, from the community up. Good input. Some new ideas and could improve cost of living. Turnout was good, people were engaged. Great first steps. Felt like a strong community voice.
- Aquilina: There was one time there was a meeting after COVID, about Ravn, I was just so happy to be together. Lots of community activities right now – the focus group on child care, the blanket event. I worry about all these ideas being generated, it can feel overwhelming that we cannot act on everything. I am late in the game to be coming in, not a good sense of timing of where you are at. I’d like to see an effort to prioritize – do we have the capacity to do all of this? But overall I really enjoyed it, enjoyed being there. Good to have kids there as well.
- Ray: We can probably prioritize what people are most concerned about/what’s most impactful; might also be good to consider how easy things are to address. Exciting to get together, ideas are flowing, everyone wants to help the community survive. Fun to have the young people there.
- Stephanie: We need goals that are achievable long term, and short term. Where we talk about things – a lot of long term goals people might not see in our lifetime. “Keep having meetings, nothing ever happens.” Want to make the short term goals happen soon, good incentive to see progress. Follow through is important.
- Phil: Ditto to the other comments. Youth have those ideas too, kids are talking about this and have ideas. How do we harness that. They are the future leaders. My “hodge podge” group ended up being small business focused, naturally went that way and built on other groups. Capacity issue – worker capacity – need to put a plan in place. People are moving around between entities, but that’s good.

Human resource wise, infrastructure wise – some key folks are doing a lot. Need to make sure people don't get burned out. Key to keeping people involved and engaged. With City's funding constraints, it impacts our daily operations. We are trying to use grant and infrastructure funding to supplement, but hard when there's not a lot of funding for the day to day. Community is very aware of cost of living, want to keep things affordable so people don't move away. Would like to see partner follow up to come up with solutions.

- Phil: In the “Other” group, a brief discussion – what is the low hanging fruit. This would be easy – let's do it. Could show progress, people could see immediate results. Help generate buy in on the ideas that will take longer.
 - Jeff: Phillip always says, the things you can touch and feel can be the most important. Little things can be most important.
 - John Wayne: Yes - while still working on the long term.
- John Wayne: Appreciate getting everyone in the room, the room was buzzing, exciting to talk about solutions. Things can get challenging out here but we're still here, we're ready to tackle those challenges head on. Amazing local leadership and workforce. Our leaders have persevered in the past. We need new solutions to new problems. Seeing everyone working together and fixing problems is great and I look forward to more of it.
- Patrick: It's always great to see everyone together. Something we've been working on – we collect everyone's ideas, a lot of wants and wishes. And then the organizations and leaders have to either reprioritize or organize that work. When we do these things in the community – how can we bring the community along with not just the discussion of what they want, but take a moment to look at what other revenue streams need to make those things possible so they're not disconnected? In the Tourism Development Study – we heard, “yes, I want a hotel,” but also “no, I don't want increased visitation.” I don't think we fully captured that idea but made some progress. Had people thinking about research from standpoint of how it contributes financially – to the store, to the airport. People can hopefully take that view home. Can get closer to some realistic strategies.
 - Aquilina: I have concerns with your phrasing of “bring the community along” – we want the community to be directing. Want direction to come from community.
 - Patrick: We are taking the direction from the community but we need the revenue to achieve the end goal the community wants. Saw some progress yesterday; e.g., open to more visitation, acknowledgement of the funding side.
 - Phil: There is an education opportunity. E.g., we heard ideas on increasing the EAS increase of subsidy – that's not how the EAS process works. Some of the continued discussions need to be educational. To come to the table educated, and for folks who want to understand those details. Impart the understanding we have to have a more informed discussion.
- Michael: I thought last night was really great. People coming with ideas we haven't really explored, like winter tourism. Winter ducks, winter activities. Tracking down reindeer or viewing sea ice. A lot of great ideas. A good gathering to come together as one, find things to make life better on St. Paul. How we can make living easier.
- Chris: I was really pleased with the level of participation, how willing people were to jump into the conversation. Also a reminder of the importance of follow up. Saw someone milling around; they said, “This isn't going to amount to anything anyway.” If all we do is talk about it and it sits on the shelves, that's true. Require entities and community members to pick items from the list and take

action. I want to demonstrate the doing. If we get a nice report in a binder and put it on their shelf, they'll be right. But I heard lots of enthusiastic discussion and ideas, was fun to be a part of. Some good things that will come out of it, and we need to keep working together.

- John Wayne: It was great to see the youth involved; putting check marks of their own on the board. Wish we gave them a different color marker to compare/contrast. They were interested in being a part of solutions – maybe we could continue the conversation in the school. Some teachers that might support a follow up dialogue – a quality of life improvement strategy.
 - Anna mentioned at a TUM conversation yesterday, youth used to attend City Council and Tribal Council meetings; we could bring that back in. Youth like that personal invite. Not a CEDS thing – but we haven't had teens in the winter time in a long time. When we had a high school here, that changed. Youth have a voice but it's not here because so many of them year. Need to engage the adolescents who are here.

What New Ideas Emerged? Any Easy Wins?

- Ever since humans have been living on this Island, feels like we've always had to work hard to stay here. How do we have fun, throw it into the mix. "Low hanging fruit" – can't think of anything specific. Is there anything we can show, before the end of the year? An immediate change? Want something that will make people feel like we're here to stay. We want people to stay and want more people to come. Examples:
 - Felt really good to look out my window and see old houses with new roofs. Felt like the message was, "We're here to stay, we're investing in the community." Physical, visible.
 - New Years Eve the basketball team need to do some last minute fundraising. They asked, what do you wish for the community and yourself for 2023? Food being sold, music. A team member took down answers, made a poster. Put in the store and got so many compliments. It would be interesting to revisit it now and see what we've done.
- Community service. If you commit a crime/do something wrong, you used to have to do community service. "People get away with things and nothing happens." Washing walls, digging graves, grocery shopping for Elders. Show things are happening and helps people in need, shows we are creating accountability. Could also make it a competition for residents – how much time did you volunteer this month?
- Fisheries – CBSFA is so focused on Bering Sea stuff. We never thought about populating local water bodies with trout. Salmon hatchery is a great idea but could be expensive. Lots of interest in a smokehouse; that's not economic development but could improve quality of life.
- Cruise ship ideas- now is the time to plan for next summer. Something that would be visible would be partners putting together a package for when cruise ships come in, and an invitation or integration with small business. (Want to be a vendor? Here are steps X, Y, Z) Cruise visitors want souvenirs.
 - Tourism is emerging as popular topic – but some concern about capacity. When we talk about cruise ships coming in - we get out in the summer. We have things going on. If we're expecting the community to entertain cruise visitors every week, do we have that capacity? People providing services, people creating things to buy. Needs to be done in a way that is not taxing the community members. Consider the limitations of summer season. People don't want to go to meetings in summer.

- If things are happening that people want to go to, they want to go to themselves, and something appealing for visitors, too – that is a good combination. Why don't we clean up for ourselves? Why don't we have fun dance celebrations for ourselves? Don't just need to do those things for our visitors.
- People love our town – say it is neat and clean. Love Alicia's pink house.
- People take pictures of residents. "Sometimes feels like I'm part of an exhibit."
- We're essentially talking through a SWOT analysis for tourism. We want to bring in the revenue but want to do it where it results in something positive. That's what we did yesterday, we shared our draft SWOTs, had Tribal members step into that analysis to see what we're pursuing. Can see the analysis of threat, opportunity, the need to balance via that exercise. What is efficient, what makes economic sense? Community development and economic development. Economic development is not as tangible as community development.
- Could have stations for visitors? Pre-recorded information as they walk around town to learn more.
- How do you tease out the low hanging fruit? Example from this summer: cruise ships. We had 6 cruise ships. They reached out to Aubrey, she was instrumental in coordinating. Did the best we could at the last minute. They all want to come back next year. What more do we have to offer next year when they come back? Also a capacity issue. The staff at the hotel were at capacity with the last tour group. If the other van didn't arrive on time, they would have been struggling with running tours around. We're here, we are ready, Sully and Barbara are ready and want to do better. Low hanging fruit. Also could be a demonstration of partnership.
- Tiny homes – lots of energy on this idea. More homes already planned, show action. More homes being built – showing people are here to stay. How many homes? What progress is being made? We need to make it real. When you have concrete info, people will buy in better.
- Identify how to do this consistently and work together – beyond annual meetings, not just during 5-year CEDS update.
 - Phil has a list of CIP projects; in the last CEDS we just referenced the CIP list. They're not exciting, e.g., lift station improvements. Unless it breaks, no one cares about it. There are things that are actively happening that have impacts on those emerging strategies.

Upcoming Activities

- Gathering happening on October 28th here, 40-year anniversary of Aleut Independence Day.
 - Will be time set aside to record stories. "I've realized I am a budding Elder."
 - Can we showcase something? Keep momentum going? Posters?
- Island X, the film showing here later this month (October 22nd) – they are blowing up the box (as opposed to thinking outside of the box). They showcased a cool part of our community in a new way. Not just documentation of fur seals and our trauma. We want to honor our history, and tell our stories, but not dwell on the negative.

Next Steps

- Immediate
 - Post a thank you to the community – via social media and elsewhere. (Done!)
 - Add summaries to the Tribe's website:
 - Community conversation notes.

- Survey results.
 - Community open house results.
 - List of accomplishments from last CEDS.
- Prep for sharing some of these highlights on October 28th.
 - Agenda is already set; will be potluck style. Could do something on the walls.
 - To share on posters:
 - Project overview: process/timeline; contact info; website; what is economic development
 - What we love about St. Paul
 - Challenges and related solutions (featuring 1 example of “low hanging fruit” for each)
 - By sector:
 - Industry SWOT
 - Accomplishments and an example for each of what’s currently planned
- After: Draft CEDS
 - Would like a draft to utilize in the nearer term.
 - Follow up on what partners are doing – capture in the CEDS. Educational component.
 - Emerging strategies; with prioritization and low hanging fruit. Also identifying who will lead implementation.
 - Pre-feasibility for some recommendations?
- 30-day public comment period
 - During the comment period: a subsequent community gathering to share short and long term strategies, why they have been selected (can include some education); also highlights from the data.
 - Also have a digital option? Podcast, radio, newsletters. Make it accessible.
 - Maybe not just one method. I never have time to listen to podcasts, although I’ve done a few. Not limiting it. Both digital and paper, for both young and old.
 - Overall: the expectation is to bring it back, have a review.
- Future
 - Consider quarterly community conversations, ongoing. Education and discussion on the topics. Topics on the big concerns (both QOL and sector specific). What’s being done, opportunity to get together. Coming back to digital: can we post videos capturing the conversations? Talk with Ethan about doing documentation, Facebook live, etc. 360 camera.
 - Is part of the plan to continuously talk about these things as partners? That was a recommendation in the past CEDS but hasn’t really happened. Needs to be a commitment to continue to do this. You have the CEDS, you’re looking at it. 2-4 times a year. As a five-year plan, quarterly probably makes sense. Monitor and adapt the CEDS to reflect the work that is happening. Concept of a living document. Actively monitored by all partners.