

STAKEHOLDER GROUP MEETING NOTES

MARINE TRADES

June 11, 2008

Attendance: 17+; nearly half of which attended the community kick-off meeting

Introduction/Overview: Mr. Wise provided a brief review of the strategic planning process and objectives, and stressed the desire and need to hear from core stakeholder groups before putting pen to paper

Groups Providing Written Input Were Asked to Provide Highlights:

- Marine Trades Association:
 - They were organized in September of 2006 out of concern that local government (Port, County, City) priorities, policies and projects could threaten their livelihood
 - They wish to be constructively involved in the formation of all Port policy-making

General Comments:

- The direction of the Port must change – the past ten years the Port has not valued the Marine Trades community or shared its values – the Port must better support this unique resource and community asset
- Many people in our community in general, and the Marine Trades community specifically, do not have great wealth – they are here because of the unique lifestyle available here; this way of life (which includes our local non-profit organizations) should be preserved and maintained
- The greatest issue confronting us is how to integrate this unique lifestyle we enjoy with affordability?
- Past Port Commissions did not seek to nurture and support our community's unique character and looked too much outside the community for development and growth
- In 5 years? The Port should be the best, most unique experience on Puget Sound
- "Dialogue" and communication is not enough – the Port must follow through on the plan once set: public process must bear tangible fruit
- We must understand that we will likely not achieve agreement among ourselves – no one will get everything they want
- The Port must balance economic development and growth with maintenance of our special character
- The Port should develop an explicit policy addressing new ground leases versus leasing hard stand space – and recognize and balance the difference between direct revenue benefit to the Port (e.g., hard stand spaces) and broader indirect benefit (ground leases to larger tenants that provide improvements and employ significant local labor)

- Often, these indirect benefits can be more broad and meaningful to the community as a whole

How Would You Measure a Successful Port Operation in 5 Years?

- If we're perceived as providing the best and most unique maritime experience on Puget Sound
- The PoPT must still exist – to do so, it must get ahead of the curve of increasingly strict boat yard and shoreline/environmental regulations; new and innovative boat yard practices must be researched and applied – simply following the regulations is insufficient – we must do better
- We (trades and Port) must collaborate more effectively in our environmental mitigation strategies and stay ahead of the regulatory requirements – perhaps offer education/certification courses in boatyard environmental mitigation
- Is not construction of a hardpan sand blasting facility being considered by the Port (copper-based paints used on hulls are the issue)? How would such a facility work financially?
- The Port of Port Townsend, and Port Townsend's marine trades community must be the leader in environmental standards and practices in the region; we should achieve such leadership and use it as a marketing tool to promote our marine trades industries here
- Port should consider offering marine bio-diesel as well – “turn lemons into lemonade”
- A coupon discount program could be initiated to reward the purchase and use of equipment and supplies that promote responsible environmental practices
- The environmental issues discussed are huge – where will the dollars come from to support the Boat Haven in achieving a leadership status in environmental stewardship? The Port has historically been reluctant to go to the public for approval of bond issues – but the Port benefits the entire community – we should ask the community to pay for critical infrastructure improvements
- Staff noted that the Port has consistently raised the property tax by the maximum amount (1%) allowed under state law without necessitating voter approval/override
- The Port and the Marine Trades must clearly define the role of the trades in the local economy and make the case to the community that taxpayer support is warranted – we also need to promote public/private partnerships wherever possible
- If the Port is interested in actually generating significant additional revenue in this community, it must look to support the commercial market; there is an untapped market to haul out and launch 200' and larger vessels – a commercial haul out facility is needed, along with a satellite upland location – such a facility could provide significant work for local subcontractors and craftsmen
- Why couldn't the community build and maintain its own ferry?

- Space does not exist in our community for a large scale haul out facility
- Even if we didn't have a new large scale haul out – just 6' more width would open up the opportunity for so much additional work – it's frustrating to be only 6' shy
- The “ace in the hole” for our community is in partnering with non-profits; the trend towards this being a retirement residential community has only been reinforced in recent years; such a community will not support a large commercial ship yard
- Port Townsend has become a bedroom/retirement community; affordable housing for people who work here no longer exists; there is no youthful workforce to replace the current generation; how can the Port of Port Townsend be expected to solve such complex deep-seated problems?
- To even begin to solve such issues, we must become more engaged and participate more as a Marine Trades community
- Getting back to what we want to see in the next 5 years or so – we need more launch ramps and berth space for smaller boats – things have been trending too much towards catering to larger more expensive vessels
- We need better maintenance of existing boat ramps – and more information provided to the community as to the location of ramps (i.e., non-PoPT ramps)
- Over the next 5 years – the Boat Haven should be transformed into more of a “campus” style environment – perhaps even including dormitories for students/workers
- The Port must do a better job of maintaining existing facilities – and should avoid deferring maintenance where possible
- In general, Port facilities need to be “spruced up” a bit – we as a trades community can take on some responsibility in helping to make this happen
- The Port should sustain the continue the hard work of listening and facilitating constructive dialogue with its core customers/stakeholders

What Are the Key Issues Facing the Port and Your Stakeholder Group Over the Next 5 Years?

- The growing rich/non-rich (poor?) divide – should the Port cater to the emerging demographic of this community as a wealthy retirement residential haven, or should it seek to slow and change the demographic by directing its resources to sustainable marine trades development and our working waterfront heritage?
- Point Hudson must be repaired and maintained to a level akin to Officer's Row at Fort Worden
- The Port must commit itself to improving and maintaining customer service – from the managerial level on down
- Port decision-makers must remind themselves each day what the Marine Trades do for this community
- Growth – growth in the marine trades locally is desired – and specific policies should be adopted and implemented by the Port to promote and support the right kind of growth; we need a breadth and diversity of Marine

Trades businesses that benefit the whole community, no merely direct revenues to the Port

Miscellaneous Comments and Questions in Closing:

- When are we going to do this again? We must!
- The discussions occurring in these forums need to make it to the community and decision-makers without being filtered by staff and the consultants; the comments/notes from each stakeholder meeting should be posted online, and if necessary, corrected based on stakeholder input
- All must take greater responsibility individually and collectively to sustain and maintain our local marine trades – this will also require ongoing and close collaboration with the Port
- We need to more coherently “brand” and market the Marine Trades (collectively) of our community