



Seldovia Gazette

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Thursday, Jan. 12, 2006

Just another day in paradise

- [Local News](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Opinions](#)
- [Spotlight](#)
- [School](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Seldovia.com](#)
- [Gazette Services](#)

[2 Cents Worth](#) | [Letters to the Editor](#) | [How to submit a Letter to the Editor](#) |

2 Cents Worth:

“Do you think Martin Luther King Jr. Day is a significant holiday?”



“ Oh yeah I think it is a significant holiday. I think he played a large part in the movement for civil rights.”

Rob Rurka



“Yes, I do. I feel he was an important part of our history.”

Michelle Massion



“Yes, I think it is very significant.”

Tim O'Leary



“Sure.”

Mikey Geagel

Letters to the Editor

A big Thank You to the city maintenance crew!

City of Seldovia
Attn: Mr. Kurt Reynertson, City Manager
P.O. Box B
Seldovia , Alaska 99663

Dear Mr. Reynertson,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you, the office and maintenance staff for their work in isolating the city water, so that we could make water valve repairs under our building. Manfred Kirchner & Steve Kroll persisted in locating, digging and isolating water valves during poor weather conditions to help us with our problem.

A big THANK YOU again to your maintenance crew, we could not have made the repairs without their help.

Sincerely,
Tim & Isabelle Harbaugh
Mad Fish Restaurant

Thank You, ALL volunteers for your service!

Library	Planning & Zoning	Parks & Recreation	Chamber of Commerce
Arts Council	SOS	Fish & Game	Fire Department
EMT's	Dispatch	Trails	CIRCAC
City Council	PWSRCAC	PAC	Local Emergency Plan Committee
School Aides		Mayor (Editors note: we added this - thanks to Mayor Wyland also)	

In reflecting on the happenings of 2005, it reminds all of us that a POSITIVE OUTCOME of a devastating major event in our city is largely due to the commitment of VOLUNTEERS. To every single person who gave of their own time to accomplish something for the good of others, please accept a profound "THANK YOU" for being so generous to think of others first. Too often, we take volunteerism for granted and we all know this community would not operate without eager, selfless people stepping up to help.

A few volunteer groups that are always on call are our Firefighters, EMT's, and Dispatch. Everyone knows how much we rely on them. It is a huge commitment to not only volunteer time to be a responsible member of these groups but there is a bigger investment of time to attend training to improve skills and above all, keep every person involved safe.

Due to Seldovia's isolation from the land mass, we truly are on our own to take care of our environment. Now we are facing the possibility of a tsunami or earthquake. Of course we will all respond to the need of safety. Trained and prepared responders will help those who need it.

Please step up and give any amount of time you can. For those who have been Firefighters or EMT's in the past, please consider how your expertise might help the trainers. Maybe you would just like to help take care of equipment. Maybe your expertise is in mobilizing equipment. The key to helping make things better is a desire to work well with others and stepping up to do the job. Kind of sounds like what we learned in elementary school.

Thank you, again, to all volunteers. It is a humble but very heartfelt statement.

Dick Wyland
Mayor

City Council meeting

Jan 12, 2006

My husband, Jim, and I attended the City Council meeting held last nite to support the property owners who's properties will be effected if Ordinance 06-05 is adopted.

During the public comment period we did not hear anyone speaking in favor of this Ordinance being adopted. We only heard frustration on the part of those property owners who's properties would be effected.

During the Council's discussion it was blantly clear that the majority of the members had already decided, before the public input, how they would individually vote. It was also made clear that there would be no more public input asked for, nor would any questions be publicly answered or public clarifications made. One of the members strongly indicated that it had been, and would be, the burden of the property owner to seek and understand the ramnifications of the change. What did that mean?

During a 5 min recess, Jim and I decided to gather some information/clarification for two of the property owners that were unable to be present. I spoke to the City Manager and asked what types of businesses would be allowable, perhaps a B&B or an apt rental? He advised me that neither of these types of businesses would qualify, only a retail or service business. In the meantime Jim spoke with a council member who advised him that a B&B would qualify. So who are the property owner's to get answers/clarification from to get it right?

In my opinion the council members will be voting on a zoning change that even they have obviously not researched or agreed upon. It was a great disappointment to me to learn that clear knowlege and understanding is not a burden they share with the property owners. I cannot help wondering if those council members in favor of this zoning change feel any obligation to insure that the property owners, and themselves, be given specifics before the final vote is taken on January 20th? With the attitude projected at last night's meeting, I think not.

Sincerely,
Happy Schneider

A response to Happy Schneider and other individuals needing clarification on the re-zoning issue

Jan 13, 2006

This letter is in response to a recent letter submitted by Happy Schneider in the January 12th edition of the Seldovia Gazette.

Mrs. Schneider makes several references and statements that I feel cannot go unchallenged. I will try to take them one at a time.

“ During the Council's discussion it was blantly clear that the majority of the members had already decided, before the public input, how they would individually vote. It was also made clear that there would be no more public input asked for, nor would any questions be publicly answered or public clarifications made. One of the members strongly indicated that it had been, and would be, the burden of the property owner to seek and understand the ramnifications of the change. What did that mean?”

I do not believe that the Council Members had made up their minds prior to the meeting of January 11. They did have a lot of information prior to the meeting concerning the issue just as the public had as this has been a topic of discussion for over 3 months.

There have been no less than 8 public meetings that addressed the issue at hand. Specifically:

- October 3, 2005 Planning and Zoning Meeting
- October 17, 2005 Planning and Zoning Workshop
- November 7, 2005 Planning and Zoning Meeting
- November 16, 2005 joint Workshop with City Council and Planning Commission
 - December 5, 2005 Planning and Zoning Meeting
 - December 14, 2005 City Council Meeting
 - January 9, 2005 Planning and Zoning Meeting
 - January 11, 2005 City Council Meeting

At each of these meetings or workshops the subject of zoning changes were brought up. At each of these meetings and workshops the public was properly informed via postings on the City web site, in the Seldovia Gazette newspaper, on Seldovia.com, and physical postings at the Post Office and City Bulletin Boards. All these meetings were open to the public in order for them to come and voice their opinions. At all of these meetings discussion concerning what changes this would have on the affected property owners and the

City as a whole were held.

Letters announcing the January 11 Ordinance/Public Hearing were specifically sent to those owners directly affect the re-zoning on December 28, 2005. Only one individual, Mr. Chris Wheeler, has stated that he did not receive the letter.

Notwithstanding the numerous meetings and workshops specified above (where the public had ample opportunity to voice their opinion) this was a topic that has been discussed in unofficial settings such as the Seldovia Gazette and casual conversation. The point is that if the Council Members, as the public, had a lot of opportunity to discuss the change and had quite a bit of information available. Again, I do **not** believe the Council had already made up their mind prior to the meeting.

Despite this amount of time and prior meetings and workshops, the Council did elect to hold yet another public hearing and delay any vote on the Ordinance for another full 9 days. As such the Council decided to hold a special meeting on January 20 before voting on the Ordinance.

“During a 5 min recess, Jim and I decided to gather some information/clarification for two of the property owners that were unable to be present. I spoke to the City Manager and asked what types of businesses would be allowable, perhaps a B&B or an apt rental? He advised me that neither of these types of businesses would qualify, only a retail or service business. In the meantime Jim spoke with a council member who advised him that a B&B would qualify. So who are the property owner's to get answers/clarification from to get it right?”

A B&B is a **home** occupation where lodging, and no more that one meal per day, is provided by the **homeowner** for compensation to transient guests on a day-to-day basis. I am sorry if one of the Council Members stated that a B&B would be OK in a Commercial Marine district. It would not. As pointed out above, a B&B is first and primarily a home, and secondarily a temporary lodging for guests. In a Commercial Marine district, while a residence is permitted, it is only as an ancillary use, meaning that the primary permitted use must be commercial related. The primary use of a B&B is a home with an ancillary use of temporary lodging. The permitted uses in a Commercial Marine district include retail and service. “Service” could include such things as charter services, hotels or inns, guide services, laundry mats, banks, etc. Restaurants, bars, and stores would be considered retail.

“In my opinion the council members will be voting on a zoning change that even they have obviously not researched or agreed upon. It was a great disappointment to me to learn that clear knowlege and understanding is not a burden they share with the property owners. I cannot help wondering if those council members in favor of this zoning change feel any obligation to insure that the property owners, and themselves, be given specifics before the final vote is taken on January 20th? With the attitude projected at last night's meeting, I think not.”

It is my opinion that the Council is very well informed and has done the research necessary to make an informed vote. If Ms. Schneider’s comment is based upon the receiving the B&B information, it is totally unwarranted to characterize the entire knowledge and research accomplished by the Council and Commission based upon a spur of the moment comment that the Council member may not have fully understood or heard correctly. I personally know that the Planning Commission, Mayor, and the City Council Members take their obligations and responsibilities very seriously, as I do as City Manager, and that they work extremely hard to do and recommend what they deem is in the best interests of the **entire Seldovia community**. To suggest otherwise is totally out of line and I take very great exception.

Kurt Reynertson
Seldovia City Manager

The Seldovia Gazette values freedom of speech. We welcome original, insightful letters from our readers on issues that are of concern to them. However, due to space considerations, please limit letters to 300 words. We also reserve the right to edit all letters for clarity, grammar, and taste. Letters must be signed and submitted by Tuesday at 5 pm in order to be printed in that week’s press. We accept letters submitted by one of three ways: by email at tomg@seldovia.com or maryg@seldovia.com, by fax at 907-234-7526, or by mail at Seldovia Gazette, P.O. Box 97, Seldovia, Alaska 99663.

Seldovia Gazette Newspaper