



Seldovia Gazette

Serving Seldovia, Alaska and Kachemak Bay southeast

Seldovia, AK

43 °F / 6 °C

Light Rain

at 6:40 PM



[Click for Forecast](#)

Thursday, Oct. 25, 2007

Just another day in paradise

[Local News](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Opinions](#)

[Spotlight](#)

[School](#)

[Classifieds](#)

[Archives](#)

[Seldovia.com](#)

[Gazette Services](#)

[How to Submit a Letter to the Editor](#)

[Email a Letter](#)

Letters to the Editor

Letter on the Kachemak Bay Ferry . . .

Dear Editor

Please include the entire contents of the following letter that the City of Seldovia has issued in regards to the Kachemak Bay Ferry and Feasibility Study that was recently completed. This letter was sent to all federal, state and local officials and other people directly involved in the funding and management of this project.

Mayor Dick Wyland
Seldovia, Alaska

Date: October 18, 2007
Subject: Kachemak Bay Ferry Project

This letter expresses our opposition to the present Kachemak Bay Ferry Plan. The City of Seldovia strongly recommends that this project and the dispersal of funds relating to this project be halted until a window of negotiation is reopened wherein the public and the City of Seldovia have an ample opportunity to provide input on the change in scope of the current project. We are deeply concerned about the change of scope of this project and the viability, integrity and potential negative impact to Homer, Port Graham, Halibut Cove, Jakolof Bay and the City of Seldovia .

As stated in the original Seldovia Native Association (SNA) proposal, the purpose of this project was to determine the feasibility of a new passenger and vehicle ferry to provide daily service between the Homer, Halibut Cove/Peterson Point, Jakolof Bay/Tutka Bay, Seldovia, and Port Graham/Nanwalek-English Bay and to then design and construct a feasible ferry. The City of Seldovia passed a Resolution in support of that approach and aided SNA in the acquisition of an additional \$1.5 million dollars from the State of Alaska for the ferry project. SNA agreed to work cooperatively with the City of Seldovia and other communities of Kachemak Bay in the planning and development of said ferry but to date they have failed to do so.

Jakolof Float . . .

The city's proposed acquisition of the Jakolof float is very troubling to me. The State wants to get rid of the dock and will give the city \$380,000 to take it over. Now the first thing out of our elected officials' mouths are "revenue stream, dock fees and payment plans". The dock has been free to the public since it was built. Now the city has all this cash for deferred maintenance, which should go a long way if used correctly, and the first thing it wants to do is charge the public? What's wrong with this picture? Is the city going to provide a harbor master, running water and electricity? Someone to shovel the snow and chip the ice? Yeah, right. I don't hear any talk of what the city will do with this money or what the city will do for the public to deserve getting charged. Only how much the city will make off this acquisition. Like I said, what's wrong with this picture?

Buck Brown
Seldovia, Alaska

The feasibility study has been completed and clearly demonstrates that it is NOT feasible to design, build and operate a ferry as outlined in the original proposal. SNA has also stated that it will be turning the Kachemak Bay Ferry Project over to Seldovia Village Tribe (SVT), which is not acceptable to the City of Seldovia since SVT continues to claim exemption from property taxes and continues to refuse to collect sales tax in their facilities. This loss of tax revenue will have a severe, long term impact on the City of Seldovia .

SNA-SVT have opted to completely change the original scope of the project whereby they plan to design and build a 150 passenger, seasonal only, tour boat that will only provide service to Seldovia and possibly the Halibut Cove area. The potential negative impact of this arbitrary decision on the City of Seldovia and the potential havoc it may wreak on the entire southern Kenai area is very high and we strongly recommend that this project and the dispersal of any funds relating to this project be halted.

We submit the following points:

- The City of Seldovia has had no input into this project's development since supporting SNA/SVT in acquiring federal and state funds for the ferry and the City of Seldovia was not provided with any updates or information on any aspect of this project until three months after the feasibility study was released. SNA's CEO stated publicly in January 2004 that "I have promised them [the City of Seldovia] I would work with them to keep them completely informed. We might not agree but at least we'll know what's going on every step of the way." SNA/SVT have ignored all requests for information and the City has, in fact, been left out of the loop since the beginning of this project. In addition, SNA/SVT completely disregarded the Steering Committee that was established to monitor and help manage the progress of the project and they never held a meeting.
- The "Kachemak Bay Ferry Project Design, Development and Feasibility Study" was prepared by SNA for SVT and released on May 18, 2007 and a copy was received by the City of Seldovia on August 17, 2007 . The City of Seldovia was offered no opportunity to collaborate or communicate with SNA/SVT on the content of the study's feasibility, change of scope or social and economic impact.
- There have been no public input meetings during the development of this project. In fact the only opportunities that the Public has had to respond to the plan were as follows:
 - 1) A questionnaire was sent out by SNA/SVT and the results of that survey were not even included in the feasibility document. We can only assume that the results very negative to the project.
 - 2) Two feasibility study presentation meetings were held, one in Homer (September 18, 2007) and one in the Seldovia (September 19, 2007). The question and answer session at the Seldovia meeting was abruptly halted before the scheduled end of the meeting, leaving many citizens questions unasked and unanswered.


- The City of Seldovia questions the long-term viability, without subsidies, of this down-graded tour boat plan.
- The feasibility study clearly states on page 1-2 paragraph 1.7 that “Service was intended to be provided year-round and could potentially replace the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) existing service to Seldovia.” This is unacceptable to the City of Seldovia and most of the community and was not part of the original plan that the City of Seldovia agreed to.

The City of Seldovia stands adamantly opposed to the Kachemak Bay Ferry Project in its current form. The ferry project was originally dedicated to the social and economic development of all Kachemak Bay communities and its scope has been degraded to a privately owned, seasonal tour boat for a non-profit, non-taxable private entity. The City of Seldovia does not believe that either the federal, state or borough governments ever intended to subsidize such a project with tax payer dollars.

The City of Seldovia and our community are open to a cooperative, negotiable approach to this project. To date, the City of Seldovia has received negligible cooperation from SNA/SVT on this project and has been completely excluded from the feasibility process. Until this attitude changes and the community and the City of Seldovia are allowed to proactively participate in this process, we withdraw our support and strongly recommend that this project and the dispersal of funds relating to this project be halted.

The contents of this letter have been unanimously approved by the Seldovia City Council.

Richard Wyland
Mayor, City of Seldovia

(Click on button below)	Special Interest Forum: From time to time, topics of discussion will come up that are not a good fit for the Letters to the Editor section . . . usually due to things like the length of the letters or the need to post responses sooner than once a week on Thursday. Click the "Forum" button to enter this section. If you have a topic that you would like started, please let us know.
	No Forum Currently Running

