

## **CBJ Visitor Industry Task Force February 1, 2020**

My name is Bridget Smith and I have lived at 137 Sixth Street up the hill for 37 years and in Juneau for almost 52 years.

Every summer, tourists take photos of our flower boxes and we chat. When I ask what they think about Juneau, they wax poetic about our scenery but a sizeable percentage of them say they didn't realize how crowded it would be and how they have seen the same shops in other places. It's a fair assessment.

Like many others in Juneau, I travel and I like to travel to places where the residents are happy to see me. I know that some Juneauites are not happy to see tourists because of feeling overwhelmed by the increasing numbers. Juneau residents should have a stake in what their community looks like and how it feels too. I have heard many people say they never go downtown in the summertime. If it feels too crowded for residents in the summer, don't you think it is too crowded for visitors too? What is good for them is good for us. I don't want Juneau to become a place that is loved to death.

I have been hearing some pretty hostile criticisms toward local tour companies. That sounds like a circular firing squad to me. Most of the owners of the tour companies are our neighbors. As a community, we need to stand together. We need to make a clear delineation here between the community of Juneau which has local tour companies and the cruise ship industry which is a collection of international corporate giants, none of which are headquartered here in Juneau and none of which have their CEOs live here.

I have worked for a local tourism company and I have family members who do so. Tourism employs people who buy groceries, pay rent or mortgages, have kids in schools, and support our local shops.

I want to urge this body to deal with the following:

- How many cruise ship visitors should be allowed per day? I think we need to decide how many visitors we can manage at one time. This isn't a decision that anyone else can make.
- Does Juneau need to have commercial zones and residential zones? I walk on Basin Road with my neighbors frequently and the traffic increases every summer.
- The city of Juneau needs a plan to actively manage cruise ship activity including the air pollution from the smoke stacks, the waste discharge, etc. We need to be very proactive because we are dealing with powerful interests who have not hesitated in the past to bring a lawsuit against us. Their pockets are deeper than ours.
- A substantial part of our downtown is dead during the winter. Should shops be allowed to be shuttered creating an unhealthy dead zone for half of the year?
- And lastly, downtown parking in the summer. Parking spots are continually being usurped in the summer which is one of the main reasons local residents don't come downtown. Should locals who spend money year-round be made to feel as if they are being pushed out of their own town?

Basically, I want advocacy from the city on behalf of the residents. People live here for the quality of life and people visit here to experience our quality of life. Let's work to keep it.

Bridget Smith  
137 Sixth Street  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
[bridgetannsmith49@gmail.com](mailto:bridgetannsmith49@gmail.com)