

**Tourism Development Council Meeting**  
**Minutes**  
**Wednesday**  
**July 8, 2020**  
**2:00-4:30 PM**  
**Zoom Meeting**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jody Carson, David Penilton, Betsy LeBarge, Luke Spencer

STAFF PRESENT: Samara Phelps, Lizzie Keenan

OTHERS PRESENT: Thelma Haggmiller of Slow Poke Tours, Commissioner Ken Humberston, Kimberlee DeSantis, Clackamas County Commission Staff

**Action Items:**

- Welcome/Call to Order/Declaration of conflicts – Chair Jody Carson
- Approval June 10, 2020 minutes – Samara Phelps, Executive Director  
Postponed due to lack of quorum.

**Discussions:**

**Industry Updates – Samara Phelps**

County Grants – Small business relief grants – over 460 applications received, 200 awarded. Do not know who received them yet but there was a focus on unincorporated areas. Economic Development staff will be seeking second round of funding from the state if/when available. Also working in conjunction with MESO (Micro Enterprise Services of Oregon) funding. Business Oregon will be offering technical assistance grants.

David – If there is a second round of funding, will there be consideration given to businesses that didn't meet the requirements of the first round? Samara explained that she has been sharing with EcDev staff the concerns she has been hearing from businesses. MESO and the County have been very receptive to hearing feedback on the first round of funding. If anyone has additional comments, please share with Samara or Jon Legarza in economic development.

Traveler Sentiment – From Destination Analysts Traveler Sentiment report for 7/7/20: Perception of worsening pandemic has impacted openness to personal travel and visitation in the community. Notable support for mask enforcement. Declining ability to be inspired to travel – less than 40%. Perception of travel activities as safe rolled back to levels seen in early May – ie would you go on a cruise? Would you check into a hotel? Etc.. Declining feeling of safety impacted the majority of Americans' openness to and enthusiasm for travel. This is at national level – not just CC. New data sets every week.

Ken – feels there's no point in traveling, can't imagine sitting next to people on planes who don't want to wear masks

David – real focus is now 21/22; for local travelers, how much will they really spend to support our local economy

#### Travel Oregon and Regional efforts –

In alignment with Governor's office and public health – very conservative. Looking to roll out a digital campaign – delayed to start in August, audience is Oregonians and will be focused on all 7 regions. They are doing some paid SEM and messaging focused on what people can do and how to do it safely. Applied for an EDA Grant – focused on marketing and technical assistance for businesses

From Lizzie - was just on a call about Travel Oregon Campaign – August 3<sup>rd</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>; short time frame because of upcoming political campaign season will make it very expensive in Oct/Nov.

#### OMHT –

- Building content around safe travel on our website
- Encouraging partners participation: Willamette Valley responsible reopening, ORLA commitment to safety – asking people to message commitments to these programs or others they are working with
- Looking to start SEM this summer
- Paid strategies TBD – dependent on entering Phase II

#### Year End Financials – Samara Phelps

Takes a bit to close out the year. Looking to provide more at the August meeting. Will be able to finish in the black. The drop in TRT not as significant as expected but still worked through the majority of contingencies. FY 19/20 TRT at 74% of previous year. May's TRT is 40% of previous year. Where TRT is generated: saw a decrease in mountain, increase in I-205 corridor. Mountain decreased because less diversity of options for stays. Vacation rentals strong, less so with campgrounds and RV parks.

STR – occupancy in May at 33.5%, down 52%. County is out-performing Portland region as a whole. Seeing uptick for occupancy since last month but average daily rates are staying the same.

David: as a county doing much better

Samara - often difficult to have so many different environments but that is helping with resiliency right now

Betsy: uses the program Key Data. Pulled up data for May and everything increased significantly even over last year. People not spending as much money, but many stays are one to four weeks long. Fall is pacing behind. People are making last minute plans. Number one question is about internet connectivity. Thinks fall may be good because of kids not in school but won't know until schools decide what they will do. Feels Minnesota marketing may have worked – there have been lots of cancellations from that state.

#### Racial injustice & Destination Work – Samara Phelps

Final statement from June 12 as supported by all TDC members:

As a tourism leader in the State of Oregon, the Clackamas County Tourism Development Council stands united with our partners committed to stop racism. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for residents through tourism. The community and visitors' safety will always be our number one priority.

Mt. Hood Territory does not support any type or form of discrimination and oppression. The Black Lives Matter movement has shown light on deeply rooted racism and institutional bias. We acknowledge that our destination will never truly thrive until racism and discrimination are identified, addressed and eradicated. We

are committed to prioritizing key strategies, messaging, practices and policies related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism throughout our work.

The strength of our destination depends on the work that we do as individuals, businesses, organizations and as a collective. We are committed to doing more to fight racism. We hope that you share this same commitment.

#### Tourism Development Council

Equity & Inclusion work in the County – BCC passed a resolution, creating an office of Equity & Inclusion, will be pursuing training for leadership and all employees

Industry Leadership – Travel Oregon training for regional staff, WVVA Willamette Valley Visitors Association already underway with trainings for stakeholders in the valley.

Samara would like members of TDC to share opportunities/resources/best practices so we can take appropriate actions for our community.

Ken – EDI officer should be on by end of the month. Ultimately would like to have one embedded person in each department. An Equity lens is being added into Board's decision making.

Betsy – would like to see TDC/County offer training for tourism partners. Becoming a topic in the workplace.

Jody – would like to use equity to evaluate our grant program when it gets up and running.

David – EDI training and efforts are a worthwhile investment in the destination.

Ken – those who are privileged need to use that to say how can I use this to lift people up and create same opportunities for others.

Jody – Looking forward to putting some actual activities to this – not just words on paper.

#### **Updates:**

##### **TDC Member Reports**

David – biggest focus on 21/22, many uncertainties right now. Working to maintain good relationships with partners – will benefit from that long-term. Very cautious approach. During last meeting, topic of program support was brought up – concerned about marketing efforts.

Samara – three areas – Admin support from county admin office and other departments, search engine marketing – will be reenlisting a contractor that had been used in the past, marketing strategy support which will likely be done by contract around end of August. Not in a place to bring on a staff person yet.

Betsy – Do contracts need to go out for bid? Samara – yes. Betsy – we couldn't just hire previous staff back on a contract basis? Samara – If hiring an employee, would need to follow hiring rules, offered based on seniority. For contracts – depends on the size of contract, but would need three bids minimum. Betsy – would support structuring the work around laid off staff – already know what we do. Had a really cold, rainy summer so far. Trails are open, but not campgrounds. Most restaurants are open with all the limitations.

Luke – Weather has been back and forth, rental side has been normal but retail has been increasing – selling lots of kayaks. Moved into new shop just before July 4<sup>th</sup>. Signs up, wearing and selling masks. Black Lives Matter protest in Estacada because of comments by the mayor.

Ken – Clackamas is in a better position than Washington or Multnomah counties but we are now tethered to them. Have appealed to governor's office about strings attached to CARES act funding. Working on MESO grants but would have liked to have received unrestricted CARES funding sooner.

Budget wise – have cut 18mil in the county budget over the last few years. Preparing for the opportunity of furloughs. Don't know what the state/feds will be funding. County having more frequent budget committee meetings. Will be tying funds to results – will need to really focus on priorities. Thelma – Working on a local project and found a white paper on tourism that was written 10 years ago – have asked Samara to share it with TDC. Have been participating in Oregon City tourism meetings - will be focusing on film industry. Went to a meeting with the Lewis and Clark organization in a park in Washington – finding ways to work within regulations. What are we hearing from former tourism employees?

Samara – People are staying healthy, one person has secured employment.

Jody – Willamette Falls Heritage Area is developing two driving tours. One will focus on below the falls, state heritage area, and one above the falls. Want to have ways for people to stop and get out of their cars. The above falls tour will include both ferries. Have also adopted EDI statement and will be looking for speakers in the fall who will focus on history of the area/equity. In Historic Willamette, wider sidewalks along main street are complete giving restaurants outdoor seating. Farmers market is open with vendors and visitors wearing masks.

**Adjourn TDC meeting at 3:30 PM**