

Tourism Development Council Meeting
Minutes
Wednesday
October 14, 2020
2:45-4:30 PM
Zoom Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jody Carson, Holly Pfortmiller, Betsy LeBarge, Tammy Thompson, Luke Spencer, Hans Wipper, David Penilton

STAFF PRESENT: Samara Phelps, Lizzie Keenan, Janice Nilson

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

Action Items:

- Welcome/Call to Order/Declaration of conflicts – Chair Jody Carson
- Approval August 2020 minutes – Janice Nilson, Administrative Board Assistant August Minutes motion to approve by Tammy Thompson and 2nd by David Penilton Voting was unanimous.

Discussions:

Wildfire Updates – Lizzie Keenan, Regional Tourism Coordinator

- A review of the recent wildfires was provided including information on what we know was lost, tourism assets affected, what is currently closed and how long recovery may take. Additionally, it was pointed out that the fires were on local and national news which leaves a mental impact on viewers which could be a long-term affect. Because of this, we need to send the message that the county is open and there is still recreation to be done.
- What did Tourism do during the fires?
 - Placed a fire alert on every page of Mt. Hood Territories website directing visitors to a Wildfire Resource Page
 - Instagram had updates on closures and immediate information that residents or visitors might need
 - Worked with the Emergency Operation Center, Travel Oregon and 3 RDMO regions to share information
 - Supported states lodging availability database for evacuates
 - Started normal social media messaging recently making sure to answer questions
 - Shared learnings from Eagle Creek Fire with Travel Oregon to help craft response to recovery for the entire state
 - Recently shared with Travel Oregon Commission the fire impact to Clackamas County

- David – didn't touch on federal support to the families. Have you had any update? Had chance to go back and look at part of Eagle Creek area where the fires happened. It was pointed out that vegetation is coming back at a rapid pace.
 - Clackamas County continued Emergency Management declaration so that cleanup and other issues that are coming down will remain in place from the federal government.
 - In Molalla at the Resource Center there are currently 6 different agencies including FEMA available to assist
 - People can sign waivers to allow people on their property to get the toxic waste removed for free, but that has to be done by October 16th
 - The county is looking at waiving some fees
 - Money from the Cares Act has been identified to help keep businesses afloat
- Hans raised the question as to if people who received PPP's would be eligible to apply for funds this time around as we weren't last time
 - You'll have to contact BCS for that information
 - Jon Legarza also presented on this issue as well and we will follow up with him.

Tourism's Role in Wildfire Recovery & Resiliency – TDC to discuss learnings, opportunities and preparation for future emergencies – Samara Phelps, Executive Director

- Expressed gratitude to the group for information that was shared from the calls to action messages.
- Today was the first day of fire recovery meetings which will continue through December
- 2020 is a constant evolution of action – looking for the after actions assessment and what should we be aware of to be responsive in future crises.
 - Jody – People had the perception that the entire county was closed
 - Holly – We need another hotel as we were hit really hard, really fast. The rallying of the community was fabulous. Because of the way the evacuation order was given, people who really didn't need to evacuate took rooms away from those that needed rooms.
 - Ken – There will be an after action assessment. The fire moved 17 miles the first day going 2 ½ miles per second. Life comes 1st. People will ignore warnings and the best you can do is give the best warnings possible. People need to be taught there are other ways out of town, more than just Hwy. 213.
 - David – In some areas communication is the problem. As we move forward, we need to work towards everyone having the right communication. We didn't do a good job from a media standpoint.
 - Luke – Getting accurate information was difficult.
 - Betsy – Finding internet is a problem on the mountain. Had to travel 30 miles to get reliable internet services. We need reliable communication services when things such as this happen.
 - Tammy – Better educate people to go to the Clackamas County website for up to date information. Kudos to Clackamas County on how quickly information was available on the website.

FY19/20 Year End – Draft Financials & Priorities for Budget Adjustment – Samara Phelps; Janice Nilson Administrative Board Assistant.

- We have a carryover of funds of about \$210,000 which was not expected. This is money we have available to budget into this current year.
- TRT Revenue has been better than anticipated so a priority has been staff, marketing and brand management and financial resiliency (contingency)
- Staff recommendation is to reinstate 1-2 staff positions that were eliminated in the spring. These positions are based on the scoping of work to address our needs. These positions are 1st a program support role and 2nd is a higher level position that leads communication for both marketing and communication channels as well as develop strategies. I will share the scopes when they are complete.

Action Item: A motion was made that reinstate two positions ensuring those two have the correct skill sets to fulfill needs. Motion made by David Penilton and 2nd by Tammy Thompson. Voting was unanimous.

- We will come back with the budget in November.

Industry Updates -

- Travel Oregon's survey is now live. The link will be sent out. Please send out. This is for the state and regions but with enough participants this can be parsed out by zip codes.
- Next month's meeting is on Veteran's Day which is a Clackamas County holiday. Meeting will be held at 2:45 on November 18th.

Race, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – Sharing of Materials – Samara Phelps; Barb Iverson, Vice Chair

- Materials were sent out via email today. The links are part of the curated material. Barb and I selected 3 videos as a good contribution for learning of the group as a whole.

Updates:

TDC Member Reports – Roundtable

- Holly – Business is fantastic given current positions. We were sold out for 2 weeks with evacuates and fire fighters. Other than that business as usual. Short staffed.
- David – Luke, I support your comments 100%. When it comes to emergency situations I want to be there and others to support the community as a whole.
- Tammy – Happily working at my new company.
- Hans – We're still barely there. Started distance learning camps. Had 7 kids every week so more. We would like to have more. Will be opening 90 minutes private parties and Mondays and Fridays and doing private birthday parties on the weekends with groups of up to 25. Still running in the red. We need to get the county into Phase II.
- Luke – We're in the same boat; we had to pay back a lot of reservation money during the fire. We are at an income loss currently. We continue to lose money because the roads are closed. We will refocus on the downstream but that will only cover so much. Not sure how we will mitigate the loss. We may have to curtail hours at the shop which is not encouraging. We do have support from the community. We are trying to plan the Upper Whitewater Festival which is also up in the air at this time. We did have a record setting summer season which was really good for us. Looking to the future and normal business.
- Betsy – Thinking about both of you and hope things turn around. Vacation rentals are the thing. Looking at the tax numbers, surprised the RV's didn't have higher tax revenue. This happened

all over the country in the spring. Turned out everyone had crazy busy years and were understaffed. Been a really big year for PR and how you treat people. We have been fortunate that 50-60% of the people that have to cancel have rebooked. We are not slowing down for fall. We need to learn to run business differently and safely. We have very strict protocols. Emails have gone out regarding the STR regulations.

- Commissioner Humberston - The meeting yesterday, yes we voted to move things forward. There will be hearings on things related over the next 2 months. The biggest issue will be enforcement and how we will pay for that. One issue addressed already is the sheriff no longer need meters to see if a party is too loud. Now deputies will be able to determine if it's too loud. The price of the violation is much stiffer than it has been.
- Thelma – Has concern about Tourism overall – what's going on at our next door neighbor here in Portland and the world that is listening to what is going on. Struck home when the vandalism was at the Oregon Historical Society. I have driven the route I take tours on and it will be difficult to answer questions if I take my tours on the same path. You can explain natural hazards like fires more easily. What is Travel Portland doing to address the bad publicity out there?
 - David - Between the governor and mayor of Portland, there needs to be more alliance. With the election coming up how do we prepare; there is no answer right not. We are all concerned. It has damaged Portland tremendously. Portland kind of reflects the whole state as travel and tourism. Hopefully, as we move forward there will be more distinction between the city and state. It's heartbreaking to see what happened at the Oregon Historical Society and I'm happy it has reopened. There are so many businesses that will never be able to open again. There is a lot of work to do. We are in the process of looking at resources from financial efforts to support the marketing efforts. There is lots of work there that will hopefully make a difference
 - From a practical standpoint, Travel Portland as an entity has been responsive and saying what the media is saying is not what Portland is. They been quiet in the marketplace to not compete with a real eye to get past the election. Travel Portland worked very hard securing Top Chef, airing in the spring, to put a different message out there that Portland is not what it is currently perceived to be.
- Jody – Most heritage groups are trying to come up with virtual approaches and presentations; other ways to share their stories. The Heritage Area Coalition is coming up some driving tours that will highlight places people can go without having to go inside or places that are open in trying to keep people engaged with heritage. I'm glad the historical society has opened as fast as it has. From Main Street, been doing well with outside seating during the summer months and now are trying to figure out to move forward through winter months.

Adjourn TDC meeting at 4:36 PM