

## **Tourism Development Council Meeting**

**Wednesday**

**April 14, 2021**

**2:00 – 4:00 pm**

**Zoom Meeting**

**Members Present – Barb Iverson, Jody Carson, David Penilton, Dewey Griffo, Luke Spencer, Tammy Thompson, and Hans Wipper**

**Staff Present – Samara Phelps, Ithaca Janzen, Lizzie Keenan, Janice Nilson and, Annie Bailey Austin**

**Others Present – Commissioner Martha Schrader, Tracy Moreland, Martine Coblentz, Thelma Haggemiller and Lloyd Musser.**

### **Action Items:**

**Welcome/Call to Order/Declaration of Conflicts—Jody Carson, Chair**

**Approve January 13 & March 10, 2021 Minutes—Janice Nilson, Management Analyst**

- January 13<sup>th</sup> current communications priorities and tactics – How to travel FS identified – Forest Service and Tourism Budget Reserve on the last line David 2 buckets should be important, it is listed as import
  - Motion to approve by David Penilton and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tammy Thompson

### **Discussions:**

**Clackamas County Office of Equity & Inclusion – Program, Approach, Opportunities - Martine Coblentz, Equity & Inclusion officer**

- Office established August 2020.
- Had several meetings with employees and determined more need for training and education.
- People need to have an understanding of what EDI is. We are working on training and education for all employees.
- Other piece – employees have a need of connections and community.
  - It's not enough to have diverse workforce – do people feel they belong – feel they are one and only or one of a few on their team.
  - Working on ways to create opportunities for employee resource groups, mentorship programs, buddy systems and things like that.

- Trying to create better systems of identity.
- Looking at recruiting and hiring and retention.
- When we are better internally, we can better serve our community.
- Looking at internal complaints process - HR deals with these complaints around discrimination and harassment. There is a certain threshold that has to be reached to prove discrimination so often people feel they are not getting solutions.
- Externally here to provide support for county at large and county residents.
- When we first started last summer, the county had already contracted with Coalition of Communities of Color and do an environmental scan. Just scratching the surface
  - Who are the communities of color with Clackamas County?
  - What are the Community based organizations that exist in Clackamas County?
  - Which ones are culturally specific, that are serving particular demographics and cultures?
  - Who are the folks that are doing diversity equity, inclusion work in the county
  - What grassroots groups exist?
- Number of listening and meetings last year throughout the county and out of that came a number of things that needed to be vetted.
  - Feedback – we need to do better on welcoming environment for folks of different backgrounds.
  - Need for multilingual communication and access
  - Need for education and training throughout the county, specifically racial justice and equity.
- Recommendation around access and services
  - Underrepresented need more access to service
    - More representation in leadership, especially for communities of color and in positions of power.
- This is what we learned through scans and now we need to do a more comprehensive study which will be a 2-3 year project. This is an action oriented program along with a call to action.
  - Looking at education, jobs, parks, nature. Leisure activities, transportation and housing.
- We are excited because we want to start our office with the community.

David – thank you for sharing information. Very impressed with community part – looking outward and financial sustainability of an organization or business can't get there without the social standpoint. Clackamas County – what percent of total staff is diversified?

- We will need to find out and get back to you.

Jody – appreciate comments – I became more aware during COVID. When grants became available in Clackamas County to business and restaurants, help was needed getting translation to help with the grant applications. 3 business owners on Willamette Main Street who

struggled to fill out applications and get help doing so. Appreciate that part of EOC is to provide liaisons.

David – when you look at county as a whole can you share about the communication piece?

- We have been working with PGA & working on getting information out as to who we are and what we are doing. Example – working with PGA on enhancing website; there is an article in #MyClackCo on the work that is being done.

Annie – I would love to bounce ideas with you at a later time. Lots of opportunities. I will invite myself to communicate with you in a bit.

Barb – Having a Woodburn address, I didn't know about the work. There is a huge swath of people that have Woodburn or Canby addresses that don't get the communications. Is there something we can do about that? We are in the dark out there.

Jody – Are you checking with communities? There are several that have started EDI groups.

- Yes, we are aware and slowly making connections.

Lot of our stakeholders are in the business community. There is a need of support for the smaller operators that don't have access to resources.

Lot of our stakeholders are in the business operators in the community – there is a need support for the smaller operators that don't have access to resources. Are there thoughts or Recommendations where those operators' would connect for this work.

- Yes, check with us, EOC contact is Carlina and she has much of that information.
- The Community College is in the process of hiring an EDI officer and also work with Bridgette Daisy from Oregon Workforce.

Jody – this weekend the EDI group in West Linn are helping out at the Cambodian Temple which is celebrating their new year. There was a lot of damage done there recently. They are located on Stafford near Borland and it is open to the public.

#### **Action Item:**

**FY21/22 Budget Adoption** - Samara Phelps, Executive Director

The budget is what we discussed and marched through at the March meeting.

- One line item called out was the need for Computers and Miscellaneous equipment due to the addition of staff and we agree with that. We feel we can accommodate the \$2,000 adjustment with contingency.
- Contingency is still very rough as February revenue was an all-time high. We will be using the unspent funds from revenue this year and feed into the Contingency. Contingency won't be finalized until September or October when the books for 20/21 are finalized for the year.

- We do have money in Special Projects that was held for the Short Term Rental Program. This program has been put on hold for a year. That money could still be needed in the upcoming year so we will hold on to the funds.
- Hans brings up important point about visitor services at the Mt. Hood Cultural Center & Museum. We should support existing programs before adding new programs.
- Visitor Services strategies still need to be reviewed and discussed.
  - We are still paying for the office. It would be wonderful if a lessor could be found but until that time, we are making the payments for the foreseeable future.

Motion to approve the budget by David Penilton and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Barb Iverson. Motion carries.

Going into budget process – Our process is part of the County Admin budget. The budget committee meets the last week in May. Jody, as chair, will be part of that conversation. Commissioners will be asked to approve and finalize the adoption mid to late June. As soon as a date is known, we will share.

Looking to meet with Commissioners in May.

- Tracy – Administrator Schmidt is going to bring this up at strategy meeting this week and then we will share the timeline.

## **Updates:**

### **Program Updates - Staff Team**

- Ithaca – What we have coming up is fun and exciting. We are coming up on the 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 FAM tours, focusing on areas impacted by Covid-19 and what experiences visitors can expect to see. The format is 3 virtual 1 ½ hour long events. Attendees will be visiting and receiving goody boxes aimed at each event on these virtual tours. We are doing our best to bring the most exciting FAM experience into the home. Urban is 1<sup>st</sup> followed by Willamette River to Main Street – Milwaukie, Oregon City, West Linn and Lake Oswego. This happens April 21<sup>st</sup> from 3:30 to 5pm.
- Lizzie – Forest Service and ODOT gave updates on fire and recovery. Hwy 224 will not open this summer. Maybe a potential fall opening but still TBD. Message was to support Estacada in any way possible. Fire perimeters will be closed, which means many of the campgrounds are closed. They are still doing a lot of assessments around the perimeter continue and perhaps places like Timothy Lake will be opening for the summer. There had been \$10,000 set aside to support Estacada. Pre fire that was river work but now it is to fund the Artback Murals in Estacada to help them get QR codes on the murals. This will make it possible to get information on the murals on site. Additionally Estacada will be doing a “field guide” to help navigate Estacada. A grant writer has been contracted and she along with Ithaca have been tasked to write a grant to look for funds to assist with that guide. We will do our best to help.

David – Sad news to hear as the impact of those businesses. Is there an opportunity from city or county to help them relocate a part of their business to an area where they will be able to operate?

Luke – Our business is pretty much based on that area around Estacada. I don't know if that's a great option, however, places like Blue Sky Rafting may be able to market more or relocate a piece if that were an option. We were disappointed in the decision. There's not a lot we can do other than voice and be active in working with ODOT and the Forest Service. One question there's some businesses that do and some do not support the Chamber of Commerce. On the passport, is it pay to play? Funding from the RDMO is for every tourism business and for every experience.

Ithaca – the chamber is leading the process but it will not be specific to the chamber.

Annie – Very excited about the opportunity to support Estacada. We have plan in the works to help. We have put a bug in Travel Oregon's ear as well for them to save space for them. Update to others. Many things going on but will pick 2.

Brainstorming the Oregon Farm Loops and getting the same attention Food Trails are getting. Oregon's Magazine 1859 (May/June) Food edition is coming out. Working on a story for that. They totally agreed Oregon Farm Loops are 100% relevant and they have put a person on assignment to do a 1500 word story. Have a feeling that we may have taken the feature story totally unintended. Remember the advertorial we talked about in the Oregon Visitor's Guide. It is now out. It is also available digitally. All fun and all things we have worked intensely on with our partners and communities.

Samara – Farm Loops performed very well with Covid safe experiences last summer. They have been able to leverage investments from Willamette Valley Visitors Association to increase distribution on their brochures. In addition to the 3 FAM's, with Lizzie's additional lift and a virtual offering, Welcome Centers from around the state can participate. They are high touch/high impact. In May we will have our meeting with commissioners. Working with the Portland Region to get Portland region stakeholders meeting on the calendar – Finally, Recruitment of TDC positions will be opening probably next week.

### **TDC Member Reports—Roundtable**

David – I'm almost speechless – trying to process Estacada situation and am happy to do to help, I'm happy to do whatever we need to. This year's been interesting. We will probably never volume again that we were doing before but looking a couple of days ago already have 738 bookings on the books with the Covid situation still going on. We are taking things and making them totally different than before, but there is an equipment issued that makes it difficult. It is a good problem to have as it makes us reach out and collaborate. We are concerned like everyone about the direction things are going. Good note – I got me second shot today.

Barb – We're in the middle of the tulip festival. We cut capacity, most days sold out. Timed ticketing only. Really worked well. Probably one of our best years.

Gorgeous weather. Prices have changed. Weekdays are really busy. Good news for neighbors, we have not backed up the road at all. Having a great festival.

Luke – I will say sales at our retail location are strong and hope that it continues. There is a supply shortage; we did buy heavy but even that may not be good enough. Warm weather will help to get things started for the part of our business that operates below the closure and for us that is probably the biggest part of our business. We'll cross our fingers and hope for a good season. Estacada is moving forward in allowing a dispensary which I think is good. It is a business that can survive in that part of Estacada. Happy to see they are open minded.

Tammy – No personal updates – Just going along. Different hotels in different states. Interesting to see what is happening here versus everywhere else as other states may be further ahead than here.

Dewey – Pretty much just like Tammy. Things in hotel business are picking up. Luke, I feel for you. Sold my first house last week so I may come out and buy a couple of kayaks from you. Samara, you and your staff, the things I have learned just on this call, the farm, virtual tours, great way to be going. Very nice.

Hans – We are open for some general admission as of last Friday. Limited on capacity. Only 50 in building at a time and so most slots are full. Sold out birthday spots for this weekend. Reservation only. Get online pay online as well. One thing about pandemic, it has taught people how to get online and do things. Daycare really didn't take off, so it has been shelved for now. Summer camps again in June and July. Things are not back yet, but we are going the right direction.

Martha – Update on the America Rescue Act 2021 – Biden signed it on March 9<sup>th</sup>. It is a \$1 trillion plan based on that \$65.1 billion is provided indirect aid to counties and an additional \$1.5 billion in public land counties, Clackamas County will get about \$41 million which can also be used for economic development and tourism pieces. Put on thinking hats so you don't lose your place in the cue to get some of that money during this recovery period. Today was death by meeting. This morning we talked about transportation and then to a prosperity initiative meeting and now to you folks, so were wearing a lot of hats right now in the county. And oh, I got my second shot and will be taking some time off to see my grandchildren in Boston at some time soon.

Lloyd – It's interesting on the mountain. It's busy, not so much for the restaurants, but the rental houses are full not just on the weekends, but mid-week. It's just amazing, they're not really doing much, not necessarily skiers, just renting and spending time with friends, spending time together, playing games. Having a real dilemma trying to figure out what will happen this summer.



Thelma – have first group going to the Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler Portland to Cascade locks– 16 people registered, April 24<sup>th</sup>. Sold out. In June have a military museum group wanting to come in last year and have rescheduled again for this year at the same time. RV travelers are doing a tour up the Columbia River Gorge on Father's Day for lunch at Multnomah Falls and then 2 days later going to Mt. Saint Helens for an all day tour there, so things are looking up and I haven't gotten any new calls. These are all old things that are re-visiting us.

Jody – Exciting updates for us. Willamette Main Street had a wonderful celebration for St. Patty's Day. Restaurants did specials and street vendors set up. Eating was outside and people walked up and down the streets. Were very pleased to see how many people came out. Heritage Area Coalition is happy to announce it appears efforts to get the Historic City Hall in West Lin updated and remodeled to turn it into a Cultural and Heritage Center is moving forward. We are encouraged that may happen in the next 5-10 years. Bond money needs to be spent in 3 years, so it may be sooner than that.

Thelma – We do have a new attraction in Clackamas County. It's called The Reliant. A man who had his own cruise boat on the Willamette and the Columbia and then sold and went to work for the Portland Spirit. Now he has left that and is bought a Sea Scout boat, The Reliant, and fixing up to service 25 people. Currently it's docked near Oaks Park and he's planning cruises up and down from Lake Oswego to the falls. Draws no wake so will not interfere with the fisherman. I have his contact information if anyone would like that.

Jody - Museum of the Oregon Territory is now open again from, I believe Wednesday through Sunday.

Samara – Martine followed up to David's question about diversity of employees at Clackamas County. As of September 2020, 15% identify as a persons of color. That's employees at Clackamas County.

Barb – Quick question. Locks bill in Salem, where is it?

Martha – as far as we know it is still moving forward. The reason it didn't last time was because of the lock out. Still working with the Corp. They still need to do the repairs so it can be transferred but the bill has to go through for that to be in place so the other things can be done.

Samara – It is a priority of the county

**Adjourned TDC Meeting at 3:48 pm**