



Oregon Tourism Commission Meeting

December 6, 2016

Embassy Suites Washington Square

Chair Hughson calls the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Commissioners present include: Alana Hughson, Ryan Snyder, Scott Youngblood, Nigel Francisco, Richard Boyles, Kenji Sugahara, Don Anway, Al Munguia and Kara Wilson Anglin via phone conference.

Staff present include: Todd Davidson, Jeff Hampton, Kevin Wright, Teresa O'Neill, Kristin Dahl, Staj Olson, Kendra Perry, Lisa Itel, Kate Jorgenson, Kathleen Stewart, Meredith Williams, Mo Sherifdeen, Kelda Schmidt, Linea Gagliano, Mark Senffner, Michael Sturdevant, Cecilia Suvagian, Beth Albany, Greg Eckhart, Allison George, Petra Hackworth, Carole Astley, Jenny Hill and Sarah Watson.

Chair Hughson welcomes guests, staff and Commissioners to the Embassy Suites at Washington Square and states what a pleasure it is to be here. Asks Commissioners and staff to introduce themselves as well as those present attending meeting.

Local Welcome: Carolyn McCormick with Washington County Visitors Association (WCVA) and Josh Sanders, GM of the new Aloft hotel in Beaverton and Board Chair of WCVA, provide a welcome the Commission and staff to Washington County. Provide update on all the new tourism opportunities recently or being built in Washington County.

Public Comment Period: Chair Hughson opens Public Comment.

Sue Densmore, Friends of the Oregon Caves and Chateau Cultural Advocacy Coalition - Provides the Commission with an update on the recent grant that they were awarded by Travel Oregon. Thanks Travel Oregon and the Commission because the money was leveraged in a way to get additional funds.

Commission Action: Chair Hughson asks the Commission if they received and reviewed the Commission packet including the Travel Oregon Financials. Asks if there are any questions. No comments made.

Chair Hughson asks the Commission if they reviewed the June briefing minutes and October briefing and meeting minutes and if there are any questions. Commissioner Youngblood moves to adopt the minutes. Commissioner Francisco seconds the motion. The

June 13, 2016 Commission briefing and October 3 briefing and October 4 meeting minutes are approved.

Request for Boundary Change: Jeff Hampton provides background for two requests that have come into Travel Oregon. The first request is in regard to the current Wine Region boundaries and asking to align with current Regional Tourism boundaries. If Commissioners approve this request, it would direct staff to go to rulemaking to consider the wine regions be more in line with the regional tourism boundaries.

Chair Hughson states that this issue was discussed at the Commission briefing yesterday in depth and there was consensus.

Kenji moves to direct staff to enter rulemaking to consider boundary change for the Wine Country License Plate funds.

Commissioner Anway seconds the motion. Motion approved.

Jeff Hampton discusses the second boundary request which came from the City of Dufur to be moved into the Mt. Hood/Gorge region and out of the Central Oregon region.

Chair Hughson states that there is concurrence for this regional move. Commissioner Boyles moves that the City of Dufur be moved to the Mt. Hood/Gorge tourism region – Commissioner Sugahara seconds. Motion is approved.

CEO Remarks: Jeff Hampton thanks Commissioner Youngblood and Carolyn McCormick and her team for providing and wonderful opportunity and location to hold this meeting.

Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail: Kristin Dahl introduces Kristen Stallman of the Oregon Department of Transportation to provide the Commission with a Powerpoint regarding the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail. States that the Mitchel Point tunnel had been destroyed to provide more room for the highway, but because of funds that were provided to the Historic Columbia River Highway by Travel Oregon, dollars have been leverage and new funds of \$29 million has been awarded to complete a new tunnel/trail/bridge system at Mitchel Point. Governor Brown convened an Oregon Solutions group to implement short term solutions on the congestion issues in the Gorge – Columbia Gorge Express was created and ran summer of 2016. Discussion of vision for car free travel.

Kristin Dahl discusses the Ready, Set, Gorge effort to create messaging and alleviate some of the congestion issues in the Gorge.

Commissioner Sugahara asks about leveraging the FLAP grant, further expansion in the Gorge and Towns to Trails.

Commissioner Youngblood and Kristen Stallman discuss the two sections: a six-mile length and a 4-mile length with about 10 miles still needing to be completed and connected.

Global Marketing Update - Website: Mo Sherifdeen and Kate Jorgensen provide the Commission with a Powerpoint regarding the Travel Oregon website redesign.

Commissioner Sugahara asks if the website is being built to allow for flexibility as Travel Oregon goes through the rebranding process. Kate explains that the team has worked to build a site that is flexible and responsive.

Commissioner Sugahara asks if it's possible to see the mobile comps for the new website. Kate shares that it isn't ready, but they can share what they have so far.

Commissioner Snyder states that he loves the simplicity of the site and that others copying our site should be a compliment.

Commissioner Hughson asks about the partner integration opportunities of the new site. Mo explains the framework design of the new website has been built to allow and share with regions should they want to use the framework of their websites as well.

Commissioner Youngblood asks about other language websites and what is and what will be available. Kate states that there are several international sites currently available, but the team is considering whether to create a partnership with Brand USA to provide the leverage and ability to provide those sites.

Commissioner Youngblood states that the navigability and participatory aspects of the new website are really inspiring.

Global Marketing Update – Winter/Spring Advertising: Katy Clair and Kevin Wright provide the Commission with a Powerpoint regarding the current Winter advertising and a look to the Spring '17 advertising efforts.

Commissioner Youngblood asks how to find the Zen moments. Katy explains that it will be on Facebook and Facebook live.

Commissioner Hughson states how inspiring all the presentations have been today and how the leadership inspires the partners to do more.

Commissioner Sugahara asks if the Weather Compass app will be served up through the Weather Channel mobile site. Kevin explains that yes it will.

Commissioner Sugahara asks why the Compass is based on a three-day weather cycle. Kevin states that when a weather cycle is the same for several days, the number of days wasn't a huge consideration, but wanting to provide travel inspiration was key.

Commissioner Sugahara asks if the forecast is also available to project on the Compass. Katy explains that having the information in “current” live has been challenging enough so forecasting isn’t possible. We are however already looking at other versions for future versions of the Compass.

Todd Davidson explains that the current Compass has a lot of specific details so the consumer not only sees weather but additional information about the potential travel locations chosen.

Kevin provides the Commission with a Powerpoint regarding the upcoming Spring ’17 campaign.

Global Sales Air-Canada debrief: Lisa Itel introduces Mark Sniderman of Air-Canada to provide the Commission with a Powerpoint of the efforts underway to bring more Canadian travelers to Oregon.

Mark Sniderman discusses the Air Canada service to Oregon and what efforts are underway to expand that service.

Commissioner Hughson asks about the seasonal service. Mark explains that the support we get from a destination is key. Reinforcing the service via social media year-round is really helpful and as those efforts grow we are hoping to be able to increase the service year-round as that demand grows.

Commissioner Sugahara asks if Air Canada is looking at programs like Wines Fly Free or if international service prohibits that. Mark and Lisa explain that they are looking to determine which promotions will work best for the Canadian travelers.

2017 Legislative Session Update: Jeff Hampton, Jason Brandt of the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association and Bill Perry provide the Commission with a Powerpoint update regarding the upcoming 2017 Legislative Session.

Jason discusses Measure 97 and that it was the most expensive ballot measure in history. The non-passage of the measure means that Oregon has a \$1.7 billion shortfall for the state. The pension costs are about 16% of the budget up to 30% in the next 6 years if nothing is done. Business groups are interested in an increase in taxes to help with that shortfall as long work is done to help with the cost of health care and pensions. We will stand firm on the protection of the 70/30 split that was passed in 2003. We are asking partners and local governments to be considerate of increasing local lodging taxes first rather than considering other options. One option considered at the Oregon Business summit yesterday was to look at the state 401k’s to help with the pension shortfalls.

Bill Perry discusses the legislative environment that is set for the upcoming legislative session. The House is 35 democrat and 25 republican split while the Senate is 17 democrat

and 13 republican split. The one-seat change is significant for any tax measures. Those issues that will be at the focus of the legislature are the budget debate and a transportation package for increased infrastructure. With 97 failing the transportation package will be a secondary discussion behind the budget. Those issues the industry will be watching are:

- Discussion of the minimum wage increase slated for June '17.
- Having a tip-credit or wage equality offset is a very important issue that the legislature should look at so that those jobs are not lost due to driving costs.
- Cities are going to try and change the lodging tax, but we need to stand firm in that protection of the 70/30 split.
- The flexible scheduling issue will also be one to watch during the upcoming legislative session.
- Forest plans to consider the aging and fire expectant forest that surround some of the most traveled roads in Oregon

Jason discusses the tip-pooling petition sent to the US Supreme Court and that they are optimistic about their chances of being heard.

Commissioner Francisco asks about the recreational liability issue. Bill states that Rep. Johnson is holding workgroups about that issue and that there is a lot of interest but the tone of the legislature will determine if it comes to fruition.

Commissioner Sugahara discusses the national marijuana issue, the potential of the transportation package and the tier-one obligations. Jason states that there have been many PERS reform efforts made but they continue to get struck down by the courts. Regarding the marijuana question - we are waiting to see what national policies might be put in place. It may not be in the forefront of the new administration agenda. Regarding the transportation package - the reality of the budget shortfall will have to be figured out before a transportation package can be considered.

Commissioner Snyder asks if there is consideration of a new statewide sales tax. Bill states that a sales tax has been brought before the people of the state 9 times and keeps being shot down. There are other options to consider for what can be considered.

Commissioner Sugahara asks if the legislative concept that Rep. Johnson is promoting has been reviewed. Bill explains that many of those issues will be postponed until the budget shortfall is fixed.

Todd Davidson thanks the Commission for their understanding of him being late to the meeting to attend to his son's swearing in as a McMinnville firefighter.

Chair Hughson recesses the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

Chair Hughson reconvenes the meeting at 12:10 p.m., and has the Oregon Travel Experience Board and Travel Information Council staff introduce themselves. Staff and members present include: Nancy DeSouza, Tim Pickett, Mike Marsh, Gwenn Baldwin, Mike Drennan, Ed Washington and Bob Russell.

Gwenn Baldwin provides some history of the Travel Information Council and what the opportunity to collaborate with Travel Oregon means to the Council moving forward.

Todd discusses how much he appreciates the proactive approach that Nancy DeSouza has brought to her work at the OTE and the collaborative efforts underway.

Nancy DeSouza, CEO of Oregon Travel Experience, states how much relationships matter in working together as state agencies to move efforts forward for all of Oregon. OTE is based on infrastructure, sites document that shows where information kiosks are located throughout the state, as well as rest areas. We want to partner with Travel Oregon on how best to serve visitors.

Nancy provides background on the OTE name and that it made sense when it was created but that now as a service provider, the name may not be reflective of what they do. We are not a consumer facing brand, but a service provider. Discusses a legislative concept in place to potentially statutorily change the name of the council as well as refine some agency services.

Todd states that he appreciates the discussion and the clarity of the roles and responsibilities of being defined by each agency. Discussion of the Travel Oregon rebrand process and what that means to the efforts OTE puts into their programs.

Commissioner Sugahara asks about background on the size and staff of OTE as well as budget. Nancy explains where their budget information is derived and provides an overview of the internal organizational make-up of OTE and statutorily what services they are mandated to provide. Nancy discusses how they are tied to ODOT regarding the funding they receive for the rest-area management and how the upcoming legislative session could affect that.

Todd provides some historical background on how Travel Oregon was created and that the mission and purpose of the agency is to inspire travel that drives economic development.

Combined discussion on how efforts can be combined and leveraged to make sure information is best supplied to visitors around the state.

Commissioner Sugahara asks about any large scale efforts that are coming up – specifically calling out the World Track and Field.

Todd states that while they recognize the potential based on that opportunity, nothing is in place yet.

Discussion regarding potential statewide events that could impact partnerships regarding traveler information.

Commissioner Hughson discusses a recent effort in Central Oregon regarding a new signage initiative created to help alleviate congestion on their popular trail system. Discussion of technology driven opportunities and how to leverage those efforts to help one another.

Discussion of how to coordinate efforts for which regions help support local rest areas and how the current flow of communication set up by Travel Oregon and their partners can help support efforts.

Group discussion of how to provide information to the people who use the rest areas and what the perimeters are around that messaging or business opportunities available.

Discussion of how the agencies can collaborate and leverage resources to support the tourism industry.

Nancy thanks Travel Oregon for the opportunity to come together and discuss how to support one another.

Todd discusses how much the collaborative efforts of all of those involved in the tourism industry do make a difference when we work together to drive visitors throughout the state and create jobs for Oregonians.

Sue Densmore thanks both the Board and Commission for their efforts because they do make a difference throughout the state.

Alana adjourns the meeting at 1:00 p.m.