



Oregon Tourism Commission Meeting

April 11, 2017

Best Western Plus Hood River Inn

1108 E Marina Way

Hood River, OR 97031

Commissioner Youngblood calls the Commission meeting to order at 9:08 a.m., and welcomes the Commission, staff and guests to Hood River and provides a summary for the day's events.

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

Staff Present include: Todd Davidson, Scott West, Jeff Hampton, Teresa O'Neill, Kristin Dahl, Kevin Wright, Harry Dalgaard, Katy Clair, Kathleen Stewart, Staj Olson, Mark Seffner, Jenny Hill and Sarah Watson.

Chuck Hinman, General Manager of the Best Western Plus Hood River Inn provides a welcome to the Commission.

Local Welcome

Jeannine Breshears and Lizzie Keenan of Mt. Hood Gorge provide local welcome to the Tourism Commission, staff and people in attendance.

Welcome highlights include:

- Overview of Mt. Hood region geography
- Provide summary of the regional stakeholder meeting that was just held
 - Congestion
 - Aligning region
 - Ready.Set.Gorge update

Mike Glover and Kate Schroder with the Hood River Chamber of Commerce welcome the Commission, staff and guests and thanks Travel Oregon for the work they do – it matters to the local economy and helps level out seasonality. We can now offer full-time year-round employment which helps the local economy. States that their number one initiative at the Visitor Center is to spread the wealth – disperse people around the region in order to keep the Gorge the way it – sending them “off the beaten path.”

Commissioner Youngblood asks those in attendance to introduce themselves.

Public Comment

Commissioner Youngblood asks if anyone would like to provide Public Comment to the Commission.

Alice Trindle with Eastern Oregon Visitors Association thanks the Tourism Commission and Travel Oregon for the products that they have been able to develop through Travel Oregon grants:

- New brochures and website

Alice discusses I-84 Closures she brought up at February Commission meeting and thanks Travel Oregon for their support as they have worked with ODOT to mitigate the issues of the corridor closures.

Alice discusses the Aug. 21 solar eclipse and what the impact will be across the state of Oregon. States concerns about:

- 1M people coming to Oregon to see eclipse and what those impacts will mean
- Increase in room rates and that hotels are already sold-out
- Those cities and towns in path of totality being asked to provide emergency response which they don't have budgeted or staff to support

Alice asks Commission to consider grant dollar assistance for those small counties to help with emergency response preparation to ensure that this event is a positive experience for our visitors.

Commission Business

Commissioner Youngblood asks if all the Commissioners received their packets and reviewed the financials. Asks Commissioner Francisco if he has any comments or questions that he'd like to provide to the Commission.

Commissioner Francisco discusses the call that happened with Commissioner Snyder and Todd and Jeff and everything is in alignment. No additional questions.

Commission Action

Commissioner Boyles moves to approve the Feb. 6 Commission briefing and Feb. 7 Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Munguia seconds motion. Motion to adopt the Feb. 6 & 7 minutes is approved by unanimous consent.

Commissioner Youngblood discusses the CEO Evaluation process and provides timeline. Asks Jeff Hampton to create, distribute and gather feedback on CEO evaluation. This work will be completed and in turn, reviewed at the next Commission meeting on June 19-20.

Presentation of Draft 2017-19 Strategic Plan

Todd provides the Commission with an overview of the Draft 2017-19 Strategic Plan.

Presentation highlights include:

- Plan was released for Public Comment and was shared with the Legislature, Governor and industry trade associations on March 21st, public hearing is scheduled today – and the Public Comment period closing on May 1st.
- Based on comments received, edits to the draft plan will be made and the Tourism Commission will vote to adopt the 2017-19 Strategic Plan at June 19-20 meeting.
- The entire Travel Oregon staff helped created and had input in creating the plan

- Thanks the industry for the input during the Town Halls that were held during 2016

Asks Commission if they have any questions about process of the Strategic Plan.

Public Hearing on Draft 2017-19 Strategic Plan

Commissioner Youngblood opens the Public Hearing and asks if anyone would like to provide comment on the Draft 2017-19 Strategic Plan.

Alice Trindle with Eastern Oregon Visitors Association compliments the staff on the work, the process and the draft Strategic Plan. Cites the following:

- Concern around the timeline for public comment on the plan
- States that having an organizational chart / program area cited in the Plan would be helpful
- RCTP – asks how those dollars will be spent, would be helpful to see that in the plan
- “Management” has been included in the plan and concern for how that word can be taken by other municipalities. Provides infrastructure example.

Kari Westlund of Travel Lane County thanks Commission for opportunity to comment on plan and for the work that has been done to create the plan. Cites the following:

- Happy to see hotel demand metric in the plan
- Concern about 2.5% demand growth rate and whether the state will be able to keep up
- Concern that only a few metrics are cited in plan and that there should be more
- Hope that there is a deeper budget document than what is cited in the plan
- Concern about the Administrative Budget and identifying everything there is attributable to administration

Commissioner Youngblood asks if there is anyone else that would like to provide comment. Closes public hearing on Draft 2017-19 Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Youngblood recess the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Commissioner Youngblood reconvenes the meeting at 10:17 a.m.

Tourism Economics International Research Update

Teresa O’Neill and Geoff Lacher with Tourism Economics provide the Commission with a Powerpoint presentation on Oregon’s International Market research.

Presentation highlights include:

- How Tourism Economics can view data sets to fill in holes of VisaVue data
- Reviews all the different data sources they are able to use in their research
- International visitors spent \$154B in 2016
- Oregon – record overseas visits in 2016, over 1M total visitors
- Oregon’s west coast market share is increasing in visitors and spending
- Discusses changes to origin of market mix
- Strong growth from Australia, China and Mexico

- Over \$1.2M in total spending for 2016
- Portland receives 57% of all international spending
- China's growth rate to Oregon is actually slower than the rest of the U.S., but more than rest of west coast
- Discusses key growth indicators – Oregon is up over the rest of the U.S. in spending for 2016
- Across all regions – strong and positive growth
- Travel impediments – sluggish global economy, strong U.S. dollar, and travel sentiment
- Forwardkeys show -6.5% bookings since election/first travel ban
- Travel and spending growth either stagnant or slightly down for future forecasts
- So far for 2016 both APIS and OAG numbers are positive
- Oregon's market mix is not particularly worrisome

Commissioner Sugahara asks about year-to-date comparisons by country for aggregate numbers, as well as last couple of years data. Concerns with border security and visa waiver countries.

Geoff states that the OAG numbers is true data and that those numbers are up. Would be happy to look specifically at that in future.

Commissioner Francisco asks about what attributed to large increase in spending from Mexico?

Geoff states that the data from smaller markets can fluctuate.

Commissioner Francisco asks if we have done any target marketing to Mexico?

Teresa states that without a non-stop flight, it just hasn't been a market to focus on. Travel Oregon staff will be meeting with Visit California in August to potentially partner with them on some marketing efforts. States that Brand USA has been doing some destination specific marketing.

Geoff states that Mexico was one of the slower recovering counties from the recession and that this "recovery" is the growth that is shown.

Commissioner Wilson Anglin asks what the sense is from ITB attendance what will happen with that market.

Teresa states that with Oregon's 4 non-stop flights, indicators are positive. Some larger partners indicated that there has been some reaction to the new administration, but that there is some national issues in those countries and some countries may now be more inclined to visit. Asia is a tremendous opportunity and we'll continue to leverage that opportunity with Brand USA and other partners. With this new data, across all regions, we should be able to plan more effectively.

Commissioner Anway asks about the consistency in the Canadian market and what our initiatives are to capture those visitors.

Teresa discusses the at/PAR campaign that is now in second year and continue focusing on that on the retail marketing message.

Geoff states "stable is the new 5% growth".

Commissioner Youngblood discusses his trip with Travel Oregon to China on a Brand USA mission. States how thrilled he was at the high-level of meetings, journalist and their enthusiasm to visiting the U.S. States his affirmation for the work being done in the Asia market and the budget dollars allocated to that market.

Todd states that looking back at the last recession, visitation and spending was flat due to our visitors being repeat visitors to the U.S. and they weren't as inclined to cancel their trips. Cites the US Travel Assoc. market research done during the recession and that they found that our visitors still loved America and wanted to travel here.

Global Marketing Winter & Spring Update

Kevin Wright and Bryan Mullaney provide the Commission with a PowerPoint on the Winter marketing campaign and results.

Presentation highlights include:

- Provides Winter Campaign overview and results
- Shows Oregon Weather Compass results
- Provides topline media results
- Reviews Social Media and Public Relations metrics
- Reviews Arrivalist Partnership data

Commission discussion about the “Owned” data over “Paid” data. Explanation of how they use that data to focus marketing to those people who might have already visited our websites, seem to see better results.

Katy Clair and Kevin Wright provides the Commission with a PowerPoint on the Spring marketing campaign.

Presentation highlights include:

- Overview of campaign architecture
- Targeting active adventurers
- Targeting to Boise, Los Angeles, Minneapolis and Dallas, Texas
- 5 – 360 degree videos will start launching next week featuring the Travel Oregon salmon
- Review of Campaign timing and metrics hoping to gather
- How Custom Content will be used as well as Social media placements
- June media event in San Francisco

Commissioner Sugahara states his appreciation for the creativity of this campaign.

Kevin discusses the depth of the campaign in how we are using 360 videos.

Commissioner Wilson Anglin asks about the ability to have additional locations, pictures or videos shown.

Kevin discusses that research has stated that consumer like “specificity” regarding locations, but we are aware of not being specific in order to promote dispersment.

Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance

Sara Mercier and Renee Tkach with the Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance provide the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation on the Gorge Tourism studio.

Presentation highlights include:

- Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance structure transition
- Review of work being completed by Action Teams
 - Marketing
 - Cultural Heritage
 - Car-free
 - Culinary & Agritourism
 - Gorge Outdoor
- Video on “Gorge Towns to Trails”

Commissioner Sugahara asks about tourist education in Cascade Locks and hikers potentially losing their way and if an action team is addressing the safety concerns.

Discussion of the Ready.Set.Gorge initiative and education promotion on “what to know before you hike” along trail, with the Gorge Outdoor Action Team looking at those safety issues and the “We Speak Gorge” knowing that information as well.

Commissioner Boyles asks about the gaps in the trail and what is being done to acquire that land.

Discussion of the status on the land acquisitions necessary to close the loop – hoping to have those done in the next year and how the Friends of the Columbia Gorge is buying and holding onto those lands.

Commissioner Wilson Anglin asks about the liability issues on those lands.

Renea states that the “Friends of the Gorge” is currently holding that liability.

Oregon Governor’s Conference on Tourism

Carole Astley and Kendra Perry provide the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation on the upcoming May 10-12, 2017 Oregon Governor’s Conference on Tourism being held in Salem.

Presentation highlights include:

- Pre and post-conference opportunities will be available
- Pre-conference meetings
- Keynote speakers include:
 - Adam Sacks, Tourism Economics
 - William Bakker, Destination Think!
 - Skift
- Workshop highlights
- Night out at Willamette Valley Vineyards
- More exhibitors than ever before
- Preview of Conference mobile app

Commissioner Youngblood asks if there is any additional business.

Commissioner Youngblood adjourns Commission meeting at 12:09 p.m.