



Oregon Tourism Commission Meeting

October 15, 2019

The Gorge Pavilion
395 SW Portage Rd.
Cascade Locks, OR 97014

Commissioners present include: Scott Youngblood, Nigel Francisco, Kenji Sugahara, Richard Boyles, Don Anway, Maria Ponzi, Mia Sheppard and Greg Willitts.

Chair Youngblood calls the Commission meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and welcomes the Commission, staff and guests to Cascade Locks.

Chair Youngblood states that if anyone wishes to provide Public Comment, please sign-in at the table at the back of the room. Today our agenda includes Commission Action on the 2019-21 biennial budget. Anyone with an interest in providing comment on budget is encouraged to sign up. To accommodate as many contributors as possible please abide by requirements stated on sign-in sheet and should someone state comments that are in line with yours – please state your support but not repeat all the same points.

Chair Remarks

Chair Youngblood states how excited he is to Chair the Oregon Tourism Commission for the next year and how proud he is of what has been accomplished in adopting the thoughtful 2019-21 Travel Oregon Strategic Plan & Budget. States that he's proud of the members of the Commission and their commitment to be engaged not only in their community and region, but as representatives of the statewide tourism industry. The privilege that has been given to help guide, promote and protect this beautiful state brings a sense of commitment and responsibility as we share our confidence in the great work happening under the direction of Todd Davidson, and carried out by the entire Travel Oregon staff team.

Chair Youngblood recognizes Commissioner Boyles' Iris Chardonnay which brought home a double gold from the Oregon Wine Experience and asks several Commissioners to discuss industry engagement opportunities that they've recently experienced.

Commissioner Boyles discusses his participation at Plate and Pitchfork – an agritourism dinner with Congressman Blumenauer, and that much of the discussion that evening was highlighting agritourism challenges and opportunities.

Commissioner Anway discusses his participation in the opening of the Siskiyou Welcome Center and what the opening of that center means to southern Oregon and the visitors coming into our state.

Chair Youngblood discusses a recent article in the Napa Valley Register highlighting the Ponzi family as “Legends of the Wine Industry.”

Commissioner Ponzi thanks Chair Youngblood and states what a privilege it has been over the years for her family to be working within the wine industry and how important collaboration has been.

Chair Youngblood discusses how important and enlightening it is to be in Cascade Locks; that out of adversity this community has rallied after destructive fires and we’ve been welcomed here today.

Local Welcome

Lizzie Keenan, Regional Coordinator - Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge Regional Tourism Alliance welcomes the Commission, staff and guests to Cascade Locks.

Lizzie discusses having several Commissioners participate in the Trailhead Ambassador program on Sunday, October 12, 2019. Discusses having Travel Oregon staff in the Gorge this summer who also participated in the Trailhead Ambassador program and a highlight of the summer – having Governor Kate Brown on a trail and post a thank you on Instagram the next day. Lizzie also discusses:

- 2019 Trailhead Ambassador program and their hopes for the coming year
- Opening of the North American Big Foot Center
- Transportation in the Gorge via the Columbia Area Transit (CAT)
- Mountain biking in the Gorge challenges and opportunities
- Shows video of Brigham Sisters – a collaborative video created in partnership with Travel Oregon

Gordon Zimmerman, City Administrator of Cascade Locks welcome the Commission. Discusses a hiker hub that has been created recently as part of a grant from Travel Oregon. Explains what the ongoing effects of the natural disasters of fire and ice have meant to Cascade Locks. States that Cascade Locks has grown 67% in the last 9 years and a 25% increase in population in the last 4 years. Discusses the Port of Cascade Locks, which is the largest employer in Cascade Locks, as well as highlights several new businesses, including a new visitor center within the Cascade Locks Museum.

Public Comment

Natalie Inouye, President of the Willamette Valley Visitor Association introduces Dawnielle Tehama as the new Executive Director of the Willamette Valley Visitor Association.

Dawnielle Tehama states she is a member of the Klamath Tribe and how happy she is to be back in Oregon and back in the tourism industry.

Janice Crane, Executive Director of the Cascade Locks Museum discusses her interest in dividing the Mt. Hood/Gorge region based on the different seasonality issues and her interest in seeing the increase of heritage tourism to help with that seasonality.

Commission Business

Chair Youngblood asks if everyone received their Commission packets and financials, and thanks Commissioners Francisco for being a part of financial review.

Commissioners Francisco discusses the financial review and thanks staff for that review.

Commission Action

Approval of June 10-11 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Ponzi states she was present at the meetings but not mentioned in the minutes. Commissioner Sugahara moves to approve the amended June 10 and 11, 2019 Commission Briefing and Meeting minutes and Commissioner Boyles seconds. The motion to adopt the minutes is approved by unanimous consent and Chair Youngblood states that they will be posted to the industry website.

Proposed Budget Modification

Chair Youngblood states that at yesterday's briefing we heard from staff that with a strong Q4 and finalized numbers from Department of Revenue, the budget modification we are seeking action on is: **\$3,256,783**.

I'd like to remind us all that at the June 11 meeting in Joseph, the 2019-21 budget adopted was: \$78,540,000. As was discussed and is cited in the June Commission briefing minutes – following the final close of 2017-19 biennium any resulting modification would be brought forward to this (October) meeting for the Commission action.

Regional Program – budget required (20% of \$3,256,783): **\$651,320**

Grants Program – budget required (10% of \$3,256,783): **\$325,678**

Operating Reserve – budget required (5% of \$3,256,783): **\$162,839 w/ additional to: \$1,041,776**

IOF – budget recommended: **\$1,238,008**

Total Allocation Proposal: \$3,256,783

Commissioner Anway inquires what amount was used out of last year's IOF for the fires and if that money is used regularly.

Todd states that he will get that answer regarding fire dollars. States that the IOF fund is not used regularly but held for those immediate opportunities that arise and are unbudgeted.

Public Hearing on Proposed Budget Modification

Chair Youngblood opens the public hearing on the Proposed Budget Modification. No one has signed up to testify.

Chair Youngblood closes the public hearing.

Commissioner Boyles moves to approve the \$3,256,783 modification to the 2019-21 Budget and Commissioner Sugahara seconds the motion. The motion to adopt the budget modification is approved by unanimous consent.

Chair Youngblood recesses the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Chair Youngblood reconvenes the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

Reports, Updates and Discussions

Todd thanks the people of Cascade Locks for the welcome and recognizes for all that is happening in Cascade Locks and for their resiliency.

Todd introduces Lisa Iteel, Director of Global Strategic Partnerships to discuss the recent World Athletics Championship Doha2019 and what it means to host the upcoming World Track and Field Championships in Eugene, Oregon21.

Lisa discusses the events in Doha, what it meant to have Governor Kate Brown in attendance. She shows a short video depicting how much it means for the athletes to be in the United States and specifically, Oregon.

Todd thanks Lisa for her work and leadership in Doha and what her work means for the coming years leading up to Oregon21.

Columbia River Gorge Tourism Alliance Progress Update (CGTA)

Kayla Dunn, Community Based Services Coordinator for Destination Development discusses the work of the Tourism Studios and introduces the CGTA members who will be presenting: Renee Tkach, Emily Reed and David Duncan.

Renee Tkach, Board Chair, Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance provides the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation and discusses the purpose of the network and how the work of the tourism studios helped bring siloed entities together to create a unified alliance supporting tourism in the Gorge.

Emily Reed, Network Manager of the Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance continues with the PowerPoint and states her excitement for being back in the Gorge as a longtime Oregonian. Having the opportunity to be in this role to welcome visitors as well as help protect the beautiful land and quality of life is an amazing opportunity.

David Duncan, CEO of Gray Line continues with the PowerPoint and states his passion for the Gorge and what having a car-free option for visiting the Gorge means for visitor experiences as well as managing transportation. Discusses the pilot programs of Hood River Trolley and The Dalles Shuttle that will allow further visitor disbursement into the Gorge utilizing car-free options.

Todd thanks the panel for the information and for being in attendance today.

Commissioner Ponzi discusses protecting and celebrating the land and that it will continue to be a challenge to manage both of those while welcoming visitors.

David states that in 2016, the Columbia Gorge shuttle was launched – which included buying a fleet of sightseeing buses. A perfect solution of car-free option that had to be scrapped because of the congestion. States he is still convinced that it's a great idea, but we'll need to wait for the right time.

Fire Impacts in the Gorge

Sara Morrissey, Public Affairs Manager discusses the 2017 Eagle Creek fire and introduces Stan Hinatsu, National Scenic Area and Nate Stice, Governor's Office - Oregon Solutions to discuss the impacts the fires have had in the Gorge the last several years.

Stan Hinatsu, Recreation Program Manager from the Forest Service provides the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation regarding the progress since the Eagle Creek fire.

Nate Stice, Governor's Office - Regional Solutions continues with the presentation regarding the progress since the Eagle Creek fire. Thanks Travel Oregon staff for their work and partnership. Cites several efforts the Governor's office is working on:

- Regional Fire Recovery – collaboration with state and local resources
- Planning efforts for future fires:
 - Catalogued all the resources for communities to utilize when fires happen
 - Business Preparedness guide (Exhibit)
 - Regional resilience team – how to communicate to business and how to get ready for hazards
- Governor Wildfire Council – helped unlock federal assistance for business recovery and look at fire suppression, mitigation and adaptation and recovery

Commissioner Sugahara states how impressed he has been seeing the multi-agency efforts to support the wildfire efforts. Asks if there has been any trail poaching on trails that are closed and if there is any anticipation of trail closure due to root-rock slides.

Stan states that yes, people have tried to use closed trails and it will continue to be a challenge for those popular closed trails. We do anticipate rock slides, but we don't plan on closing trails while we clean up the areas and clear trees. Due to some of the closures, some Washington trails are seeing more congestion.

Commissioner Willitts asks with anticipation of a strong fire season, if the added layers of planned support helped with suppression, or if the lack of fires just environmental.

Stan states that while there was an increased focus, environmental benefits helped to have a significantly smaller fire season.

Travel Oregon Grants Update

Michelle Woodard, Grants Manager discusses the recently awarded Small Grants (Exhibit) and introduces two groups who are Travel Oregon grant awardees.

Pat Addabbo, Oregon Adaptive Sports (OAS) discusses the work that they have been able to do because of the grant dollars received from Travel Oregon including the creation of a video – Dignity of Risk. OAS is the only 7-day a week adaptive ski program in Oregon and explains that they are working to grow summer programs as well. Provides the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation showing program areas that OAS is focusing on to elevate and impact adaptive sports.

Chris Watson of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs discuss the Old Commissary Project they are focusing on with the grant received from Travel Oregon. Provides the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Warm Springs Tribe and the Old Commissary Project.

Marissa Ahern of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs welcomes the Commission to the Gorge and continues the PowerPoint presentation regarding the Old Commissary Project.

Only Slightly Exaggerated Spring Update / Fall Campaign

Bryan Mullaney, Marketing Insight & Planning Manager provides the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation on learning from the spring 2019 Only Slightly Exaggerated (OSE) Campaign.

Greg Eckhart, Director of Global Sales continues with a PowerPoint presentation on the OSE Japan activation in early summer 2019.

Kevin Wright, VP of Global Marketing continues with a Presentation on the fall/winter OSE Campaign which launched today, October 15, 2019.

Commissioner Anway asks what the booking window is for the summer season and if focusing on just the shoulder season is losing summer business, asks if we need to increase the amount we are spending on marketing.

Kevin states that the marketing budget is fine as dollars are used in collaboration throughout the agency. Regarding the booking window, we are analyzing when people are looking at those windows and actually booking their trips. We do have some money set aside to do some consumer research to understand that booking path better – but we do know the booking window is getting shorter.

Commissioner Anway states that he's not just focused on his property but in looking at the STR report and what he's seeing across the state.

Bryan states that they analyze the 90-days after a campaign closes to look at that booking window for results.

Commissioner Anway asks at what point during a campaign we see bookings increase.

Commissioner Sugahara discusses that in looking at the country's booking results, Oregon is still doing well. Thanks the team for their continued work and his excitement for how well the OSE results are.

Greg discusses the recent good news of a new Delta non-stop from PDX to Haneda, Japan.

Commissioner Ponzi states her appreciation for including real photos of Oregon in the campaign and asks if the OSE books will be sold.

Kevin states that the books are not being sold but used as rewards/swag for our partners to give away.

Commissioner Ponzi states that with heritage and indoor experiences becoming increasingly popular tourism attractions, we should be looking for ways to incorporate those into our future campaign.

Kevin states that we are looking at those areas of interest and know those are very important.

Chair Youngblood discusses the Travel Oregon Weather Compass and how that tool was used to drive immediate and short-term travel plans; and now Travel Oregon is working with Adara to understand the entire travel ecosystem.

Kevin states that while there are good tools out there, the complexity of showcasing different regions and aspects of Oregon has become something we need to work with regional partners as they align and push their content to Travel Oregon as well.

Travel Oregon Industry Site Update

Kate Jorgensen, Content and Platform Manager and Jamie Porter, Industry Communications Content Editor provide the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation on the newly launched Travel Oregon Industry site.

Commissioner Sugahara congratulates the team for the new site.

Commissioner Francisco asks if there is a proposed refresh cycle for the industry site.

Kate states there isn't a specific cycle for site refresh but looking at new branding and technology advancements play a part to ensure we are able to serve our partners and the industry.

Other Business

Todd thanks the Commission for their patience as we ran over time today. As we've seen with the reports and updates to the Strategic Plan and in service to the industry, there are so many great things happening throughout the state.

Commissioner Boyles thanks Lisa for the presentation on Doha and Oregon21. States he was pleased at the October 10, Oregon21 kick-off event, to be informed that there would be a marathon in Portland and training camps placed around the state.

Chair Youngblood thanks the team and the people of Cascade Locks for a great meeting and looks forward to our next meeting in Florence, December 9-10, 2019.

Chair Youngblood adjourns the meeting at 12:32 p.m.

Staff present include: Todd Davidson, Sarah Watson, Jenny Hill, Scott West, Jeff Hampton, Kevin Wright, Teresa O'Neill, Petra Hackworth, Kathleen Steward, Staj Olson, Meredith Williams, Jamie Porter, Kate Jorgensen, Sara Morrissey, Emily Jackson, Bryan Mullaney, Roark Hart, Linea Gagliano, Michelle Woodard, Kayla Dunn, Lisa Itel, Harry Dalgaard, Greg Eckhart, Carole Astley and Courtney Brie Doss.