



Oregon Tourism Commission Meeting

June 21, 2018

Bear Hotel
2101 Spalding Ave.
Grants Pass, OR 97526

Chair Snyder calls the Commission meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. Chair Snyder welcomes the Commission, staff and guests to Grants Pass and provides a summary for the meeting.

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

Staff Present include: Todd Davidson, Sarah Watson, Jenny Hill, Scott West, Teresa O'Neill, Petra Hackworth, Meredith Williams, Lisa Itel, Lorna Davis, Staj Olson, Kevin Wright, Jeff Hampton, Kate Sappell, Harry Dalgaard, Carole Astley, Kendra Perry, Katy Clair, Sara Morrissey, Mo Sherifdeen, Ladan Ghahramani, Michael Sturdevant, Scott Bricker.

Local Welcome

Brad Niva of Travel Southern Oregon welcomes the Commission, staff and guests to Grants Pass and southern Oregon. With the amount of changes our office has gone through over the last couple of years, we are working to do the work the Commission is asking us to do. Travel Southern Oregon has been given funding by Travel Oregon and we are making a positive impact and investment in tourism in our community. Travel Southern Oregon will be starting a tourism investment proposal to leverage the Travel Oregon dollars to build up the tourism economy in Southern Oregon.

Public Comment

Alice Trindle of Eastern Oregon Visitors Association (EOVA) discusses that there are a number of stakeholders in place to engage in and help expand cultural tourism along the Oregon Trail - thanks the Commission and Travel Oregon for their support in that effort. EOVA along with Mt. Hood Territory across the Oregon Trail – are hosting modern Oregon trail travelers who are bloggers and social media experts Instagram their adventures along the trail.

Commission Business

Chair Snyder discusses the Commission packets and confirms that everyone has received their packets including the financials.

Commissioners Francisco thanks the staff for the financial update and states there were no concerns or questions regarding the current financials and that everything is on track.

Commissioner Youngblood states that it is incredible to see budgets that are so in line with forecasts.

Commission Action

Commissioner Sugahara moves to approve the April 29 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Munguia seconds the motion. The April 29, 2018 Commission meeting minutes are approved by unanimous consent.

Commissioner Boyles provides a report of the Nominating committee that he and Commissioner Hughson were appointed to carryout. Part of their process was to review process for one-year term. Commissioner Snyder and Commissioner Youngblood are finishing their first-term and upon asking their interest in a second term, they have both accepted that nomination.

Commissioner Francisco moves to approve Commissioner Snyder remain Chair and Commissioner Youngblood remain Vice-Chair of the Tourism Commission for one more year, term ending June 30, 2019. Commissioner Sugahara seconds the motion. Commissioner Snyder to remain Chair and Commissioner Youngblood remain Vice-Chair of the Tourism Commission for one more year are appointed by unanimous consent.

Chair Snyder states his appreciation for being elected as Chair again and what a pleasure it is to work with this staff.

Todd congratulates Chair Snyder on the team he has assembled at Public Coast and acknowledges the Gold Medal they just won at the World Beer Cup festival in Nashville.

Regional Solutions Team Update

Alex Campbell, Governor's Regional Solutions Coordinator for Southern Oregon introduces Steve Kiesling of the Gold Hill Whitewater Center and Rick Brown of the Rogue Rowing Club to provide the Commission with a Powerpoint regarding the efforts happening in southern Oregon for outdoor recreation tourism and economic development.

Commissioner Francisco asks if there is total budget for the Gold Hill White Water Park project.

Steve states that the budget is \$2 million.

Commissioner Anway asks what the length of the river to focus on is?

Steve states that Muggers Alley is approximately 300 meters of whitewater paddling in Gold Hill Whitewater Park. States that the artificial course they are looking at building in California for the Olympics would cost \$50M and wouldn't be permanent site and explains that in an artificial course, water is recirculated with conveyor belt to bring boats back. A Natural course like the Gold Hill White Water park wouldn't have some of that convenience and ease, but would create an economic impact that would carry on far after hosting the Olympics.

Commissioner Youngblood asks what the facility in Tennessee's life has been post Olympics.

Steve explains that while it was more expensive to build, it's still in use but only run a couple of weeks a year because of water shortage. Oregon's advantage is that we will have water in Aug. and Sept. especially if we have the dam and can control the water flow. Because of sponsorships, Oregon can pick up the tab to bring opportunity of hosting this event to Oregon.

Todd asks about the certainty of flow of water.

Steve states that because they do save water for the fall fish run. In August and Sept., when this Olympic event would be hosted - the water will be available.

Commissioner Sugahara asks if there are other whitewater assets in the area.

Steve states that whitewater it is already a major draw because of 2 other runs near the same proximity. City of Gold Hill has some ideas of how to build those assets encouraging use. Provide example to develop area to include rowing on Emigrant Lake, biking on a greenway and being in world class rapids all in the same area, explaining that there is also the potential of building a bike greenway bridge.

Alex states that in addition to the Rogue river rafting the Commission took part in last night with Hellgate Jetboat- there are a number of other rafting possibilities.

Commissioner Anway asks about the event that is already held in that area.

Steve discusses the King of the Road race - which runs in all 3 whitewater channels; Grandmas run, Miners channel and through Big Falls. Explains that the US rafting championships will be held here next year. Rafting is a great community sport and push

to make it Olympic sport – could be kicked off with this proposal. Could also be a great and safe innertube ride.

Commissioner Munguia asks if there is any opposition from conservation or other groups who may not like the idea.

Alex – regarding Emigrant Lake project – we don't know of any opposition. Regarding the Gold Hill whitewater park project, there are some people who are opposed with changing the path of a waterway. We have started tribal consultation and other consultation to ensure we are working with all interested parties.

Commissioner Youngblood asks if there are already drawings for boathouse project.

Rick states that an architect was just chosen last week and in the next month there should be initial renderings.

Todd thanks Alex, Steve and Rick for their efforts as well as their willingness to work with tribes and infuse culture into these projects.

Regional Cooperative Tourism Program Update

Harry Dalgaard, RCTP Program Manager, provides the Commission with a Powerpoint update regarding the mid-biennium efforts of the Regional Cooperative Tourism Program (RCTP).

Commissioner Sugahara asks what a hand-cranked audio device is.

Harry explains that a hand cranked audio device relies on manual power to provide narrative in the field at Red Fish Rocks. Harry continues with regional signature projects and investments.

Commissioner Youngblood asks about Gorge Trailhead ambassadors and if they'll direct visitors to other trails.

Lizzie states that the program was conceptualized pre-fire season. Some ambassadors are answering more fire related questions, some are answering other trailhead suggestions for those closed or congested trails. Explains that they just completed a new training and now have over 100 Gorge Trailhead ambassador volunteers.

Harry continues with regional signature projects and investments as well as reviews the RFP details for the next RCTP designations.

Commissioner Sugahara asks about RCTP guideline changes and if lessons learned will be given at high level so we will know.

Harry, state that information can be provided. Guidelines will be to ensure the process moves forward and is followed for the next designated amount of time. Continues discussion of RFP details and timeline for process and application.

Commissioner Francisco asks about "progress" slide and if there is a way to tell where regions "should" be and if they are on track with deployment of resources.

Harry explains that in the regional breakdown pages – there are timelines and where those investments are on the timelines and progress is shown in that. We will also be looking at the financials for the regions in August.

Commissioner Anway asks if there are any regions we are worried about with funding.

Harry states that no – they have all responded well and are on track. Still some learnings, but applaud regional partners for being up to task and taking project seriously and following through.

Commissioner Youngblood thanks Harry for the regional summaries. States excitement for EOVA projects and programs as they are "very cool" projects.

Chair Snyder recesses the meeting at 10:18 a.m.

Chair Snyder reconvenes the meeting at 10:33 a.m.

2017 Wildfire Impact Report

Todd welcomes Michael Sturdevant, Global Marketing Services Director and Dean Runyan of Dean Runyan Associates and cites Travel Oregon's 30-year relationship with Dean Runyan.

Michael sites that natural disasters have serious economic impacts to tourism communities. Understanding those disasters help us better analyze those impacts and how we can help our regional partners. Michael thanks Ladan Ghahramani, Research Manager for managing this process and introduces Dean Runyan of Dean Runyan Associates to provide the Commission with a Powerpoint regarding the 2017 Wildfire Report that was recently commissioned by Travel Oregon.

Commissioner Youngblood asks about air quality and of the impacts of several fires – how many different air quality sites were analyzed.

Dean states that there were several different sites near the Portland area, so data is hard to track. Continues with 2017 Wildfire report.

Commissioner Youngblood asks how "perceptions" impacted revenue loss, cites Hawaii example of recent lava flow and visitors cancelling trips to any island. Asks if there was an overarching perception that all of Oregon was burning.

Dean states that yes although visitors haven't been surveyed, it was the surveyed industry's perception that visitors believed Oregon was burning. Cites it is a real concern for Gorge where there are still some trail closures. Continues with 2017 Wildfire report. Concerns looking ahead for industry is the perception that Oregon was burned and should not be traveled to.

Todd states that managing messaging regarding wildfire perception portrayed by media on what is happening here – can change consumer behavior. This report shows us our practical losses, but it doesn't show any lingering perception of devastation that may cause people to wait to visit. Getting correct messaging out is of utmost importance.

Commissioner Sugahara asks if there were any revenue offsets found in southern Oregon where maybe fire fighters were staying in hotels whereas those overnights were not seen in Portland. Also asks if there was any offset from the eclipse.

Dean states that yes, there was some offset due to fire fighters or service providers or where people changed their trip from a fire affected area to a less fire affected area. Those service people could have counteracted some of those offsets, but certainly not entirely.

Michael explains who the report will be provided to and what happens as the report is distributed.

Todd follows-up on concern from the last Commission meeting in Brookings asking that service fees not be implemented in southern Oregon. Forest Service – has asked for authority to increase the fees but plan on postponing implementation of fees for up to 2 years for recovery to happen.

Ashland Welcome Center Update

Allison George, Manager of Travel Oregon State Welcome Center program, introduces Kathy Fry of Mayer Reed and together they provide the Commission with a Powerpoint regarding the Ashland Welcome Center.

Commissioner Anway states that his initial impression is that there is a counter in the middle creates a barrier between guests and visitors.

Kathy states that the desk is provided by ODOT and the reasoning behind using that desk as a central visitor information access point.

Allison states that rarely staff stay behind the counter for very long as it becomes a very interactive process with visitors and the desk becomes more of a concierge site.

Commissioner Anway states that a desk can be seen as more of an obstacle for staff than a barrier to guests.

Commissioner Youngblood asks if flooring considerations have been discussed in relation to the salt that will be used for roadway clearing.

Kathy explains that being co-managed by ODOT, we didn't get a lot of input of that decision.

Commissioner Anway asks who will get to staff the welcome center.

Todd states that at the other Ashland welcome center – it was Travel Oregon staff and we anticipate that it will remain the same in this new welcome center.

Commissioner Boyles asks in comparison to other welcome centers how many square feet the Ashland Welcome Center will be and how many people they anticipate it holding.

Allison, not sure but cites the PDX welcome center size and how many visitors are welcomed there in comparison.

Commissioner Sugahara asks if there is an additional outbuilding.

Kathy states there is an additional staff office behind the schematic shown today.

Chair Snyder asks about the 13,000 visitors and if that is an annualized number and if in summer peak months – that would increase.

Allison states yes, those numbers would increase in the summer months.

Commissioner Sugahara ask where the trucking entry would be.

Todd indicates that the truck access point would be further north on I-5 – for safety reasons.

Commissioner Anway asks if the police would still have an on-site office?

Allison states that it is anticipated that they would – in the office space.

Global Marketing Campaign Update

Kevin Wright, Vice-President of Global Marketing provides the Commission with a Powerpoint update on the Global Marketing campaigns.

Commissioner Boyles states that in all the other compared campaigns – they trailed off in week 21, but Slightly Exaggerated didn't. Asks what the reason behind that is.

Kevin states that in general, campaigns taper off throughout the season, but there could have been a spike due to a seasonal email. We will look and find out.

Katy Clair states that for the Slightly Exaggerated campaign there were more interaction points throughout the campaign instead of a big push just at the beginning.

Kevin states that not all campaigns are of equal length either – so it's hard to line up together. Kevin continues with Campaign presentation.

Commissioner Anway states that in the listening sessions he attended there was a concern that our focus was only on the outdoors. Asks if thought has been put into focusing on cultural assets, for those visitors coming for other reasons.

Kevin states that it is definitely something to consider in the future.

Commissioner Sugahara states his excitement about Tokyo activation and that he really enjoyed visitors guide. Keep up good work and exciting to see what's next. Could involve arts and culture.

Global Sales Road Rally

Gabi Duarte, Global Sales Project Manager provide the Commission with a Powerpoint regarding the recent Global Sales Road Rally that took place in Oregon.

Todd thanks Gabi for her presentation.

Other Business

No other business cited.

Chair Snyder adjourns the meeting at 12:09 p.m.