

Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting
February 24, 2016 – 1:00 pm
Grand Theatre – Grand Island, NE

Commission Chair John Chapo called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm.

Commissioners present: John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Museum; Roger Dixon, MECA of Omaha; Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County CVB; Roger Jasnoch, Kearney Visitors Bureau; Lisa Burke, North Platte CVB; Carol Schlegel, Red Willow County Tourism; Tony Moody, John Q. Hammons Hotels & Resorts; Jeff Boeka, Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites of North Platte; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Commission staff present: Kathy McKillip, Heather Hogue

Audience members signed-in: none

Public Comment signed-in: Kirsten Parker, North Platte; Hal Enevoldsen, Potter; Brad Mellema, Grand Island; Joe Black, Grand Island; Tom Bouse, Lincoln.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Roger Dixon motioned to approve the meeting agenda. Roger Kuhn seconded the motion. Roll call vote - Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Moody, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Motion passed.

Open Comment Period for Items on the Agenda

John Chapo, Commission Chair opened the public comment period at 1:07 pm. Comments presented:

- Brad Mellema welcomed Commissioners to Grand Island and spoke in support of the Media Tours.
- Joe Black spoke in support of the Media Tours.
- Hal Enevoldsen spoke in support of the Media Tours.
- Kirsten Parker spoke in support of the Media Tours and provided a handout to the Commissioners outlining benefits of the tours for her region.
- Tom Bouse spoke in support of the Commission's entire efforts.

With no additional members of the public coming forward, Deb Loseke motioned to adjourn the Public Comment Period at 1:16pm. Tony Moody seconded. Roll call vote - Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Moody, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Motion passed.

Approval of January 14, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Roger Dixon motioned to approve meeting minutes from January 14, 2016. Roger Kuhn seconded. Roll call vote - Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Moody, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Abstained: Chapo. Motion passed.

Financial Update and Finance Committee Report

Deb Loseke, Commission Treasurer, noted the Commission is currently at 62% of its budget for Fiscal Year 2015-2016. The timelines for the grant programs are being tightened up in the upcoming grant guidelines to be paid out by the end of the fiscal year. The Commission is currently going through an attestation audit by the Auditor of Public Accounts, this is the first audit the Commission has underwent since becoming a Commission in July of 2012. Kathy McKillip noted the Commission is viewing the attestation as a learning opportunity and looks forward to the report. Deb Loseke noted the Commission has not yet received notification from the Appropriations

Committee as to the approval or rejection of the recent Deficit Funding Request. Roger Jasnoch recently met independently with the Appropriations Committee as a representative of the Commission and expressed his concerns regarding the Deficit Funding Request. Tony Moody motioned to approve financials as presented. Jeff Boeka seconded. Roll call vote - Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Moody, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Motion passed.

Chairman's Report

John Chapo requested Heather Hogue address recent findings in regards to Commissioners and a potential conflict of interest when applying for grant funding through the Commission. Heather Hogue previously contacted the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission, who maintains that the Commission is not in violation of a conflict of interest, as long as Commissioners applying for grant funding abstain from the grant approval process. (Referencing Statute 49-1499.06 created for the Environmental Trust Board.) The Commission currently follows the review process outlined in LB449, which states the technical review committee of no fewer than three individuals representing the public sector, the private sector, and citizens at large. The technical review committee and the executive director then reviews and scores applications and forwards funding recommendations to a subcommittee of the commission. Heather Hogue noted that currently the designated subcommittee is the Commission's Marketing Committee.

Jeff Boeka motioned to discuss the Strategic Plan final draft (item 6 on agenda) at 2:00pm, at the time Bill Krueger from CSL International is scheduled to phone in via conference call to present. Roger Jasnoch seconded. Roll call vote - Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Moody, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Abstained: Chapo. Motion passed.

Commission Committee Reports

Commission 2016 Conference Committee: Lisa Burke noted the committee is meeting to discuss the fall 2016 Tourism Conference to be held in Gering.

Best Practices and Guiding Principles Committee: Deb Loseke noted the reminder mailing was sent out by the Commission in January to all county visitor committees and representatives. Her committee has been receiving and responding to inquiries from counties regarding the use of lodging tax and continues to make recommendations.

NETA Legislative Committee: Roger Jasnoch reviewed the legislative bills NETA is currently watching.

Tourism Marker Committee: Roger Jasnoch noted the committee continues to meet and plans to have recommendations available at the May Commission meeting in Omaha.

Marketing Committee/Evolving the Media Tours: John Chapo asked Dave Wegener of Swanson Russell to present his media tour findings to the Commission. Dave Wegener provided a slide presentation of the current process for the media tours and the pros and cons of the delivery of the program. John Chapo noted the program details may need to evolve to maximize the state's input and that discussion will continue at the May meeting. Lisa Burke provided handouts in support of the media tours from the Western Nebraska Tourism Coalition.

Updated Strategic Plan Final Draft

Bill Krueger, contracted Strategic Planner from CSL International phoned into the meeting at 2:10pm. All Commissioners received the final draft of the updated Strategic Plan prior to today's meeting for review. Bill Krueger asked if Commissioners had any questions or concerns. Kathy McKillip noted that CSL International recommended some organizations that could potentially provide a Return on Investment economic impact model for the state of Nebraska. Bill Krueger also noted that the plan includes a synopsis of accomplishments from the 2012 Strategic Plan. Lisa Burke motioned to approve the final draft of the updated Strategic Plan. Roger Dixon seconded. Roll call vote - Commissioners in favor: Boeka, Burke, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Loseke, Moody, Schlegel. Opposed: none. Abstained: Chapo. Motion passed.

Marketing Update/Public Relations Review

Rich Claussen of Bailey Lauerman presented recommended changes to the 2017 Co-Op Advertising Opportunities, based on lack of participation in 2016 of print, digital and newspaper advertising. Rich Claussen noted the Commission continues to strive to make the Travel Guide publication better each year by exploring opportunities including regionalization, making the listings pages more uniform, and considering inclusion of an advertiser's index. The Commission continues to increase exposure through in-kind support with the Game and Parks Commission and the N150 Commission. Bailey Lauerman recently won additional American Advertising Awards (Addys) based on the Commission's "Visit Nebraska. Visit Nice." campaign. Rich Claussen also noted that Co-Op Advertising will be made available to NACVB for their March meeting, as previously requested.

Director's Report

Kathy McKillip distributed the list of Passport Program stops for the summer of 2016. The 2016 Fall/Winter Nebraska Travel Guide will become available in August of 2016. Based on recent reports from the US Travel Association, traveler spending in the state of Nebraska increased to \$4.7 billion in 2014. Kathy McKillip noted the Commission was disappointed to learn the verbiage of LB1105 was changed, and removed the opportunity for the Commission to partner with the Nebraska Craft Brewery Board.

Grant Updates

Heather Hogue reviewed the application deadlines for the Commission's grant programs this spring: Community Impact Grant guidelines available now, deadline is April 8, 2016. Tourism Marketing Grant guidelines available March 1, deadline is May 2, 2016.

New Business

Roger Jasnoch distributed maps of the upcoming 2017 Solar Eclipse route throughout the state and inquired if the Commission plans to market the eclipse to visitors. Lisa Burke noted the North Platte CVB is working together regionally to bring visitors to their viewing sites.

Upcoming dates for Commission meetings:

May 3, 2016 – Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium

August 23 or 24, 2016 – date/location to be announced

October 18, 2016 – Annual Nebraska Tourism Conference in Gering

Deb Loseke motioned to adjourn at 3:16pm. Roger Kuhn seconded. Meeting adjourned. Respectfully submitted by Heather Hogue.