

TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

January 27, 2009

3:00 P.M.

Mt. Baker Theater – Encore Room

Members Present: Drew Schmidt, Steve Brenk, Dena Eastman, Carolyn Casey, Ed Bennett, and Brant Baron

Members Absent: Loni Rahm, Brad Burdick, Gene Knutson, and Patricia Leach

Staff Present: Nicole Oliver, Heather Aven, and Wendy Eickmeyer

1. Comments from the Chair

Ed Bennett called the meeting to order as acting Chair due to Frank Ordway's resignation from the Tourism Commission. Ed called for the election of a new chairperson.

Drew Schmidt was nominated. He accepted the nomination. It was seconded.

VOTE: ALL AYES.

Drew chaired the remaining portion of the meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes from November 25, 2008

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM November 25, 2008 AS CORRECTED.

SECONDED. VOTE: 5-0-1 (CASEY ABSTAINED)

Dena Eastman was mistakenly listed as absent. Wendy Eickmeyer should be considered staff when in attendance.

3. Financial Reports

The reports will be forwarded to the Commission for both December and January.

Nicole announced that some of the grantees did not use all of their grant money; therefore, some of that money will be returned to the Tourism fund. She reminded the Commission that City Council moved \$4,000.00 from the cooperative marketing campaign fund into the Ski to Sea grant, leaving that fund with \$18,000.00. She also mentioned that the language in the contracts is being strengthened to caution applicants that the funds are based on revenue streams.

There was some discussion about the events that happen at the end of the year, and Nicole projected that based on the budget having a higher starting balance than at more than anticipated and the amount of money in the reserve fund, there should be no issues in funding all of the grants awarded.

4. Review of applications for Board Appointment:

Nicole reviewed the seats that were opened, and announced that the Board has met the quota for residents outside of the city limits. She stated that hoteliers have 4 seats on the board and there is currently 1 vacancy.

The group suggested contacting: the Motel 6 owner on Samish Way and Gretta with the Best Western to see if they are interesting in joining the Tourism Commission.

Nicole reviewed the applications with the Commission and explained that Mary Kay Robinson would be representing the Symphony if she were to be appointed to the Board; and Susan Tive is the new development director of the Pickford.

The group felt that they would like to see the Commission be as diverse as possible with more restaurant, outdoor recreation representatives. The manager's of the Anthony's restaurants, Steve Ruguski, Todd Ellsworth, and representatives from the Fairhaven District "shopping" district and the Ski to Sea event were all mentioned as potential members.

**MOTION TO ACCEPT MARY KAY ROBINSON AS A NEW COMMISSIONER.
SECONDED. VOTE: ALL AYES.**

Action on Susan Tive was tabled until the outreach has been completed.

5. Identify Goals for 2009 – Meeting Ideas, Speakers, Etc:

The group reviewed the strategic plan for any goals that they hoped to accomplish in 2009. The group also agreed that they would like to have:

- Information on the urban village master planning process.
- The Project Lead come for a presentation on the Samish Way Urban Village before it is presented to the Planning Commission.
- Updated on the Urban Infill Toolkit.
- Museum updates.
 - o Wendy mentioned that the construction completion date has been pushed out from February to April.
- Periodic updates on the PFD and the new Public Development Authority.
 - o Nicole announced that the Public Development Authority will be receiving 6 city-owned properties and a budget. She explained that this group is expected to be a stand-alone entity and must be self sufficient.
- Tourism activities happening in both the Port and the City.
 - o Carolyn announced that another 20-year contract is being entered into between the Port and the Alaskan Ferry.
- Mayor Pike share his thoughts on tourism.
- Tour of the Theater and the new Museum Building.

The group also felt strongly about the need to decide what they would like to see from the surveys that they request the applicants to do at their events each year, and try to streamline how the information is both obtained and communicated back to the Commission, thereby making the numbers more meaningful.

- Nicole will bring the survey that is attached to every contract for the group to review.

6. Legislative Issues:

Nicole announced that the 2008 final reports are still being submitted to her and she will compile that information for CTED by the May deadline. She stated that a copy of the final report and the summary will be available for each Commissioner.

It was decided that one meeting this year should be devoted to covering that material.

7. Old / New Business:

Wendy Eickmeyer offered to have the June 23rd meeting at the Museum, with a possible tour of the new building.

The group would also like to consider other meeting locations that would not have the rental cost associated with it. The Whatcom Council of Governments Board Room and the Comfort Inn were suggested.

Wendy announced that the Pickford will not be opening until the Fall.

8. Adjourn – 4:15 P.M.

Next meeting date:

Next Tourism Commission meeting is Tuesday, February 24, 2009 at 3:00 p.m., Encore Room, MBT