

TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

February 24, 2009

3:00 P.M.

Mt. Baker Theater – Encore Room

Members Present: Ed Bennett, Carolyn Casey, Dena Eastman, Brad Burdick, and Gene Knutson

Members Absent: Drew Schmidt, Steve Brenk, Brant Baron, and Loni Rahm

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

1. Comments from the Chair

Ed Bennett called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of Minutes from January 27, 2009

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM January 27, 2009 AS CORRECTED.
SECONDED. VOTE: 4-0-1 (BURDICK ABSTAINED)**

3. Financial Reports

Nicole reviewed the December and January figures and announced that the Commission is 79% above budget. She reminded the Commission that the January revenue reflects what was collected in November, which was only \$60,000.00. She reported that this is down from year-to-date, prior year, and budget projections. She noted that this puts the entire budget 25% down.

There was some discussion about the \$200,000.00 in reserve, and how this reduction in budget will affect that money. Carolyn suggested, at some point, the group consider reviewing the contracts awarded and decide if any changes should be made. It was decided that next month the budget would be reviewed again and a determination would be made as to which contracts should be reviewed when and if necessary.

CTED Report – Nicole provided a draft summary to the Commission and explained what the figures meant on the report. She stated that the CTED report is requesting the same information as the applicants provided on the summary. She mentioned that City Council will be presented with this information in April, and CTED must receive it prior to May1, 2009.

There was some discussion about how the applicants arrived at the numbers they do, and there was consensus that something should be set up so that all applicants would extrapolate their information in the same manner.

4. Review of applications for Board Appointment:

Nicole reviewed the three applications turned into the Mayor's office. She pointed out that Steve, with Fairhaven Runners declined. The group approved all 3 applications, and wanted to have Susan Tive, which they tabled a decision on during the last meeting, appointed to the Commission as well.

MOTION: TO RECOMMEND ALL FOUR APPLICATIONS, PENDING VERIFICATION OF ADDRESSES. SECONDED. VOTE: ALL AYES.

5. Old / New Business:

Carolyn announced that there are now direct flights between Bellingham, WA and Los Angeles, CA with Allegiant Air. She mentioned that the terminal expansion is moving forward as the airport could be awarded 3 million dollars in stimulus money for structural repairs and upgrades.

Brad announced that the theater is currently booking shows for 2010 and wanted the group's feedback on how the Olympics might affect ticket sales.

Dena stated that she has only received a few requests for rooms; however they are not solid to date.

Carolyn stated that Loni thought most of the hotel stays would be those people who are working with the Olympics and not necessarily those going to the games, since the hotels in Canada have been frozen to reservations until just recently.

Wendy pointed out that sometimes the residents of an Olympic Game city leave that area due to increased traffic and the opportunity to rent their home for extra money; therefore, there may be an influx of Canadians coming this way.

6. Discussion for Next Month's Agenda:

1. Discuss what budget information the Commission would like presented to City Council.
2. Discuss which contracts would be reviewed if that proved to be necessary.
3. Tour of Mt. Baker Theater

7. Adjourn – 3:50 P.M.

Next meeting date:

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