

Wilsonville Tourism Promotion Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 16, 2020 • 1 – 3 pm

Zoom Virtual Meeting

1. Welcome

a. Voting members attending: Jeff Brown, Chair Darren Harmon, Al Levit, and Vice Chair Beth Price, Brandon Roben, and Rohit Sharma.

Ex-officio members, staff, consultants and guests attending: Councilor Charlotte Lehan, Zoe Monahan, Mark Ottenad, Kevin O'Malley, Sylke Neal-Finnegan, Brian Stevenson, Bridget Baeth, Ryan Millard, and Genny Boots

2. Committee Business and Updates

b. Approve Prior Meeting Minutes of February 18, 2020. Committee members reviewed the meeting minutes. Al Levit moved and Beth Price seconded approval of the minutes as presented; motion passed unanimously.

c. Open Positions for Appointment: Zoe Monahan reviewed open position for appointment, including Position #6, formerly held by David Stead, term expires 6/30/2021.

The Committee welcomed Rohit Sharma to the Committee. He is the newest Committee member appointed to Position 1. Mr. Sharma is the CEO of RR Hotels Portland LLC; Pacific Northwest Petroleum, Inc: Wilsonville Hilton Garden Inn.

Staff intends to continue recruitment after the COVID-19 pandemic passes. Possible committee members are focused on their businesses at this time.

d. Committee Member Update: Due to the unprecedented times, members provided updates regarding their businesses and impacts of COVID-19. Many committee members are applying for SBA loans and laying off employees. Sylke Neal-Finnegan reported that WCVA gave \$10,000 to each hotel in Washington County, including all three in Wilsonville.

e. Tourism Grant Updates: Mark Ottenad outlined the proposed Wilsonville Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grants Program being developed by the City in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce. The proposed \$400,000 emergency business assistance program would be funded by \$200,000 from both the Urban Renewal Agency program income and Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) revenue. He noted that draft criteria include not having received other relief funding; and that the City proposed "to make whole" hotels in the Clackamas County portion of Wilsonville with \$10,000 payments that match those that Wilsonville hotels in Washington County received. Kevin O'Malley, who serves on the committee with Jordan Vance and Councilor Joanne Linville, recommended additional criteria for grants for tourism and hospitality businesses and increasing the number of FTE of eligible businesses for tourism grants. Some committee members suggested that all Wilsonville hotels should receive the same funds from the City.

f. Program Updates: Zoe Monahan provided a brief updated regarding the market feasibility study for Year-Road Sports/ Event Facility. Staff reviewed the responses to the RFP and selected a finalist in March, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the project was put on hold. The \$100,000 budgeted for the RFP is being redirected to the Wilsonville Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grants Program, along with an additional \$100,000 of TLT revenues. The approximate \$250,000 of prior unspent TLT funds for tourism promotion from the period of 2014-2016 has

now all been spent, with \$200,000 used for the Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grants Program and \$60,000 for the Visitor Profile Study.

The Community Tourism Program grants were not reviewed or awarded due to COVID-19 pandemic. The grants have been put on hold.

Staff is working with JayRay to prepare an updated, reduced scope of work and budget based on the direction of the City Manager. The intent is to have less activity for a while, a ramp up period and new normal. Work will continue on the website as well as a few social media posts since there are not currently visitors and the Governor's Orders encourage people to stay home. Once tourism starts up again we will be ready to increase social media and proceed with the marketing plan.

Bridget Baeth walked the committee through the Quarterly Report. There have been significant increases in new website users (up over 200%) and social media followers are up 85%. The planned spring campaign was postponed due to COVID-19. From January to February the occupancy in Troutdale was 6.5% higher than Wilsonville. Genny Boots provided information about the impact of COVID-19 on hotels. Similar to the experience of committee members, the STR shows hotels at the lowest ever across the world, not just locally.

3. 2021-Business Plan Discussion

The Business Plan was presented by Zoe Monahan. Before the end of this fiscal year the committee will have met five times. The committee also recruited a new member to fill Position #1 (Rohit Sharma). Staff was moving forward on the Sports Facility hybrid plan, community tourism grants and the Arts, Culture and Heritage plan before COVID-19. As a result of the pandemic, only the Arts, Culture and Heritage plan will continue to move forward at this time. The other projects are on hold.

There was also a lot of change as a result of our tourism consultant Vertigo Marketing dissolving. The City hired one of the partners, now Velocity Marketing to finish out the calendar year while staff developed a RFP. The City received eight responses and interviewing four marketing firms before selected JayRay. The contract was finalized at the end of December 2019 and JayRay immediately started the transition and social media efforts.

The outlook for the coming fiscal year somewhat uncertain due to COVID-19. There are not additional projects planned. JayRay will continue to work on the website and provide some social media posts until it is time to increase tourism efforts when visitors are traveling again. At that time, a marketing plan will be developed and presented to the committee.

i. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:27 pm. Next meeting is scheduled for May 19, 1-3 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Zoe Monahan on May 5, 2020.