

TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes – March 14, 2017 at 4:00 pm
Courtyard Conference Room

Committee Members:

Barbara Hochberg (Chair)
Wynniss Grow (Vice Chair)
Terry Hopkins - Absent
Colene Martin
Robert Hamlyn
Tamara Bushnell
Doug Bradley - Absent
Tina Gotchall - Absent
Sara Bristol

City/Staff/Council Liaisons:

Darin Fowler (Mayor)
Valerie Lovelace (City Council)
Jon Bowen (Experience Grants Pass)
Susan Seereiter (City Business Advocate)

Guests:

Damion Trovato
Germaine Cartmell
Dan McBerty

1. **INTRODUCTIONS –**
2. **REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES** (February 14, 2016).

MOTION/VOTE

Member Bushnell moved and member Grow seconded the motion to approve the minutes from February 14, 2017 as presented. The vote resulted as follows: “AYES”: Committee Members Grow, Hochberg, Martin, Hamlyn, Bushnell, and Bristol. “NAYS”: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Members Bradley, Gotchall, and Hopkins. The motion passed.

3. **Recap of Travel Southern Oregon symposium**
 - Barbara talked about the symposium. There were many speakers there. Susan shared some statistics. There are 121 wineries and 6,000 acres of vineyards in Southern Oregon. Wine industry creates \$3.35 billion to the economy. There are 935 active marijuana licenses and 800 pending licenses and 9,000 grow sites in Oregon. Alcohol is the 3rd largest contributor to taxes. She noted the importance of cross-marketing and that we are in competition with the world, not each other.
 - Jon talked about the director of the OLCC that resigned. The Chamber president for Walla Walla gave a great motivational speech. There was also a conversation about film production, which we are open to for Grants Pass.
4. **TOURISM REPORT**
 - Jon gave the Tourism report for February. He mentioned they are already preparing for Art Along the Rogue and seeking new artists. They have been working more with CoPA and extended the opportunity for them to be at the event.
 - He would like it known that there are a few vacant storefronts but not that many.
 - He approached the museum about leasing open storefront space at a reduced rate. There would be rules but it would be a win-win. He has one property owner that showed interest and will continue discussion with both parties.
 - The Gateway project has been granted an exploratory nod from the City. It won't be a welcome sign but more of an artistic welcome feature.
 - He has updated the 30-page trifold booklet and it is at the printers now.

- Rally of the Rogue planning continues and is gaining momentum. They launched the webpage for it last week. They are anticipating 60 trailer participants. They will have craft brew vendors and a few wineries and activities.
- Travel Southern Oregon is rebranding. There will be a whole new structure and a new director.
- Jon and Mayor Fowler met with the new marijuana dispensary downtown. The Mayor mentioned his concern about having a green leaf or cross on the front of the building. He mentioned the owners are young and enthusiastic. They have a classy business model and want to be good partners and are very professional.
- Jon and Dan McBerty from the Historic Building and Sites Commission have been working on a map for the historic district. It has gone to the printers as well.
- They are working on the seasonal items as well.
- They published and distributed a new downtown newsletter.
- They had the downtown merchant meeting back on February 23. Chief Landis gave an update about the mobile food truck. They discussed the Urban Renewal District has been approved by the City to address blight in the community. The plan is to encourage new projects and removing some of the impediments of the past in getting these projects done. He stated it was nice to get feedback from the merchants regarding this plan. Mayor Fowler noted the benefits of this district as a financing mechanism and pointed out what the Redevelopment Agency (from 1980 to 2005) was able to do for this community in the past.
- Barbara asked about the lighting projects. Jon shared information about the downtown alley lighting with commercial LED lights. Merchants seem very happy about that. When they were doing the survey for the alley lights they noticed some of the storefronts were lacking light. The program hasn't been adopted yet but the City will help with matching funds to light up the storefronts.
- Wayfinding signs. There are three types. The ODOT ones are for the entry points. The second is the internal City signs with our logo. The City streets department will do the lettering. The third type is the vertical parking lot signs. They will start popping up in the next 2-3 weeks.
- Jon was asked to do a parking survey on H Street between 8th and 9th. Majority of those surveyed were willing to have 3 hour parking and to remove the "No employee parking".
- Jon gave his 4th quarter report for 2016 to the City Council. Hotel revenue was up 8.2% for a tax payment to the City of \$279,278. Occupancy was at 54.8% for that quarter. He mentioned the next project of sports hosting to strengthen the shoulder seasons.
- Web traffic was up 2 times over the same period last year.
- Susan mentioned the trolley funding. It will be a capital project for \$10k.
- The theme for AATR will be about faces. Barbara suggested "Let's Face It" as the name of the theme.
- The Corvette Club has a big show every year and they are open to ideas for a venue. July 14 might be a good time for them to do their show downtown.

5. **COMMENTS / UPDATES FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- Mayor Fowler talked about the Parks Board meeting from last week. They spoke about the new Riverside Park pavilion plan with sun sails. The Board really liked it and it looks like it is moving forward.
- There was a presentation for the Balloon Festival that was embraced by one of the Rotary Clubs. A decision will be made by the City Council at the meeting on

the 15th. He would like to see the Drone Olympics brought up as an event out there and there are other ideas.

- Councilor Lovelace said the Vintage Trailer Rally will be on July 7 – 9.
- Susan asked about the Oregon Road Rally from 9 countries on the April 4th and 5th. Jon explained this it is bringing tourism industry folks from 9 countries on a trip through Oregon. They go back to their respective countries and sell what Oregon has to offer. They will be coming quickly through Grants Pass. Jon is having gift items made for them from Climate City and the Glass Forge.
- Colleen talked about the Caveman Bridge work that is being planned and how they want to encourage businesses to get behind the work in a positive way. When it is done they want to do a dedication.
- The Redwood Empire sign is on hold. The City wanted to get the new City Hall sign done first. Designs are being submitted. The question that arose is should it be coordinated to finish along with the Bridge work. This group thought that was a good idea.

6. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

- Damion mentioned that Rogue Barber's would be interested in holding the sign while the other is being done or for just a temporary home.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:58 pm

NEXT MEETING: April 11, 2017 at 4:00 pm in the Courtyard Conference Room

Minutes prepared by Donna Anderson, City Administration