

TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes – February 2, 2021 at 4:00 pm
City Council Chambers

Committee Members:

Doug Bradley (Chair)
Terry Hopkins (Vice Chair)
Barb Hochberg
Tamara Bushnell
Wynnis Grow
Rebecca Anderson
Lany Sullivan
Mandi DeIVaglio

City/Staff/Chamber/Council Liaisons:

Susan Seereiter (City Business Advocate)
Rob Pell (City Councilor)
Josie Molloy (Chamber Liaison)
Darin Fowler (County Liaison)- Absent
Adam Shults

Guests:

Brad Niva
Kate Bortells
Lauren Bishop
Keturah Alger
Jill Dini
Germaine Cartmell

1. Roll Call

- a. Chair Bradley called meeting to order at 4 PM

2. Introductions:

- a. Welcome Councilor Rob Pell

3. Public Comment:

- Keturah Alger representing the Laughing Clam Restaurant spoke of the challenges the restaurants are facing with only take out and outdoor dining and how bringing back parklets would help her business.
- Jill Dini representing the Bohemian said the only reason they were still in business was because of the success they had with parklets this past summer/fall. Even though parking spaces are taken up for the parklets, the amount of business that restaurants receive for outdoor dining is helping all of the businesses get more foot traffic.
- Kate Bortells representing the Downtown Welcome Center shared how important the Welcome Center is to tourism and that just today there were visitors from out of state seeking information.

4. Approval of Minutes:

- a. Approval of minutes from January 5, 2021.

Motion

Member Sullivan moved, and Member Grow seconded the motion to approve the January 5, 2021 minutes, as submitted. The vote resulted as follows: “AYES”: Chair Bradley, Vice Chair Hopkins, Members Hochberg, Anderson, Sullivan, Grow, Bushnell and DeIVaglio. “NAYS”: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

The motion passed.

5. Work Session Items:

a. Review Goal setting presentation and feedback

- Chair Bradley reviewed the three new tourism items that were approved for the 2021 workplan; parklets, Dollar Mountain as a tourist destination, and feasibility study for demand generators.

b. Councilor Pell’s thought on tourism in Grants Pass

- Councilor Rob Pell thanked the committee for all that they do.
- Rob acknowledged that there are shoulder seasons in Grants Pass that do not attract winter visitors like some of the other cities such as Bend.
- He mentioned concerns for public safety needs.

- There were other thoughts shared, however, the audio was not loud enough for translation.

c. Parklets

- Chair Bradley started to conversation asking why the parklets taken down in the first place.
- Concerns about storm drains and heavy rainwater clogging up the streets.
- There was a merchant discussion/survey held where the topic of closing G Street may have confused the use of parklets.
- Parking is another concern that needs to be addressed with all the merchants who will be affected.
- Discussion followed about the amount of business restaurants bring to downtown that other merchants benefit from.
- Member DelVaglio spoke of the difference between covid time and regular time.
- Supporting outdoor dining was agreed amongst the committee, even in winter.

d. Lodging tax discussion

- A handout from the previous Council workshop was shared with the committee showing the allocations for lodging tax distribution.
- Discussion followed about the whether the committee would recommend 2% or 3% increase in Transient Lodging Tax.
- If Council chose 3%, that would take away and further discussion of an incremental increase. It was noted that the most current increase from another city was Medford who now is at 11%. Ashland is collecting 10.5% and Klamath collects 8%.
- It's important for the city to be competitive, however, not in the best interest to be the highest taxing City in the region and top 10 in nation.
- Member Bushnell expressed that the hotels she represents would be negatively impacted by the high tax rate.
- The committee unanimously recommends a 2% tax increase and hold back on the additional 1%.

e. DMO starter board update

- Chair Bradley shared that the starter board has met several times and that it was basically in the hands of the attorney.
- Plans are to complete formation of the board by March.

Motion

Member DelVaglio moved, and Member Sullivan seconded the motion to recommend reopening parklets for those who are interested as soon as possible. The vote resulted as follows: "AYES": Chair Bradley, Vice Chair Hopkins, Members Hochberg, Anderson, Sullivan, Grow, Bushnell and DelVaglio. "NAYS": None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

The motion passed.

6. Information Sharing

- a. none

7. Future Agenda Building for Next Meeting:

- a. Josephine County Fairgrounds

8. Adjournment:

- a. Meeting adjourned at 4:48 pm

Next scheduled meeting: March 2, 2021

Minutes prepared by Susan Seereiter, City Staff Liaison