

Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting
Wednesday, August 28, 2019 – 1:00 p.m.
Stuhr Museum – Grand Island, Ne

Commission Chair Roger Kuhn called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Commissioners present: Darrin Barner, Heritage Homes of Nebraska; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Starr Lehl, Scottsbluff Economic Development; Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County CVB; Ashley Olson, Willa Cather Foundation; Sarah Sortum, Calamus Outfitters; Jeanna Stavas, Whispering Pines Bed and Breakfast; Barry McFarland, Mac's Creek Vineyards and Winery, Robert Sabin, Hilton Omaha.

Commission staff present: John Ricks, Callie Austad, Jenn Gjerde, Heather Hogue, Karen Kollars, Erin Lenz, Shirley Wichman

1. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Loseke motioned to approve the agenda. McFarland seconded the motion.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Barner, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sortum, Sabin, Stavas. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed. Chapo and Jasnoch absent.

2. Community Engagement Presentation – Grand Island Area Representative

Brad Mellama - Welcome to Grand Island

Joe Black – gave a presentation on Stuhr Museum

3. Opened Comment Period for Items on the Agenda

Kuhn opened up the public comment period at 1:21pm

With no members of the public coming forward, Kuhn closed the Public Comment Period at 1:22 p.m.

4. Approval of May 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Barner motioned to approve the meeting minutes from May 14, 2019. Lehl seconded the motion.

Roll call vote - Commissioners in favor: Barner, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sabin, Sortum, Stavas. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed. Chapo and Jasnoch absent.

5. Commission Chair report – Commissioner Kuhn

a. Locations/Dates for 2020 meetings and the new executive board will be voted on at the October 22 meeting

Send in choices of locations and dates to Roger Kuhn by October 15th

6. Director's report and NTC Project Updates – John Ricks and NTC staff

a. ESTO educational seminars for travel organizations – John gave report

Mercury Award – Nebraska Tourism – Branding & Integrated Marketing

Destiny award – CVB – Omaha won

Presented marketing campaign in a personal development network breakout session.

Roger Kuhn comment- congratulated John and staff for success at ESTO conference and getting award. Shows work and effort put in to get exposure for Nebraska.

b. Grant Cycle Timeline FY2019-2020 Applications - Heather

October 18, 2019 - Guidelines available

December 13, 2019 - Deadline for applications

February 3, 2020 – Award announcement

Motion to approve the Grant cycle timeline as presented by Stavas. Loseke seconded the motion.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Barner, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sabin, Sortum, Stavas. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed. Chapo and Jasnoch absent.

c. Nebraska Tourism Conference Updates - Callie

Sponsorships due August 30th.

Nights commissioners need rooms due to Callie ASAP

Award nomination deadline Sept 6th

Commissioners breakfast Oct 23 Wednesday morning.

d. Mentorship program with UNL – Callie

Pilot program. 5 students and 6 mentors involved.

Purpose is to connect students to industry here in Nebraska.

If successful, go to UNK, Wayne State, etc.

Question raised on how much money raised for travel conference - Sponsorships is at \$50,000 dollars.

7. Financial Update and Finance Committee Report – Commissioner Stavas

a. Budget status review:

Stavas went through spreadsheets that were previously distributed. Director Ricks spoke about the budget spreadsheet, budget narratives, the record lodging-tax money and the status of the tourism promotional cash fund. Commissioners discussed various elements.

Press release coming out at 3pm today about record setting collection of lodging tax.

Motion to accept status review as presented by McFarland. Loseke seconded the motion.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Barner, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sabin, Sortum, Stavas. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed. Chapo and Jasnoch absent.

b. This fiscal year – overall fiscal 19-20 budget:

Ricks went through details of last fiscal's scope of work.

Airbnb Discussion. Letters have been sent to all Nebraska properties on their platform. They will begin lodging tax collection in September of 2019.

c. Discussion of Budget Reserve

Proposed Budget 19-20 with existing \$500,000 reserve and another one with \$250,000 reserve.

Finance Committee recommends to move \$500,000 reserve down to \$250,000. To get to 2.2 million dollar level.

Motion to accept and tie together Overall Fiscal 19-20 Budget and Discussion of Budget Reserve by Lehl.

Loseke seconded the motion.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Barner, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sabin, Sortum, Stavas. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Chapo and Jasnoch not present. Motion passed to adjust budget reserve to \$250,000 and to re-evaluate every year.

d. Lodging Tax Performance

Discussed in Finance Report

8. Legislative Committee Report – Commissioner Jasnoch

Jasnoch not present – no report

9. Marketing Committee Report – Commissioner Chapo

With Chapo being absent, Director Ricks presented the report

- a. Marketing Report – Ricks gave an overview of marketing campaign. Gjerde provided stats for PR and media tours. Ricks gave update on Passport program. Showed Preview of 2020 Travel Guide cover.
- b. Strategic plan update - Presentation on strategic planning at conference. 8 meetings to put in place and work with industry. Result will be actionable strategic plan. Monitor and track. Phase two benchmarking.
- c. Promotional merchandise: Ricks gave update on sales to date.

10. New business

Meeting in North Platte October 22

11. Adjourn

At 3:07 Sortum motioned to adjourn. Barner seconded the motion.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Barner, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sabin, Sortum, Stavas. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed. Chapo and Jasnoch absent.

Respectfully submitted by Shirley Wichman