

Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting
Monday, January 27, 2020, 1:00 pm CST
Video Conference, Various Locations

Nebraska Tourism Commission
Nebraska State Office Building
301 Centennial Mall South, 1st Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509

ESU10
76 Plaza Blvd, Room G
Kearney, NE 68845

Norfolk Visitors Bureau
609 W Norfolk Ave
Norfolk, NE 68701

Willa Cather Historical Center
413 N Webster
Red Cloud, NE 68970

City of Scottsbluff (Noon MST)
2525 Circle Drive
Scottsbluff, NE 69361

Commission Chair Roger Kuhn called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

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; Jeanna Stavas, Whispering Pines Bed and Breakfast; Barry McFarland, Mac's Creek Vineyards and Winery, Roger Jasnoch, Kearney Visitors Bureau, John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Zoo, Robert Sabin, Hilton Omaha.

Commissioner absent: Sarah Sortum, Calamus Outfitters

Commission staff present: John Ricks, Heather Hogue, Jenn Gjerde, Michael Collins, Erin Lenz, Madison Johnson, Callie Austad, Shirley Wichman

1. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Commission Chair Kuhn welcomed commissioners and asked for motion to approve agenda.

Loeseke motioned to approve the agenda. Lehl seconded the motion.

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

2. Opened Comment Period for Items on the Agenda

Kuhn opened up the public comment period at 1:04 pm.

With no members of the public coming forward, Kuhn closed the Public Comment Period at 1:05 pm.

3. Approval of October 22, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Jasnoch motioned to approve the meeting minutes from October 22, 2019. Lehl seconded the motion.

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

4. 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 adjustment of the reserve fund. Commissioners discussed various elements including AirBNBs and OTAs.

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

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

5. Commission Chair Report – Commissioner Kuhn

- a. Congratulated Nebraska Tourism Commission staff on a job well done regarding several marketing awards that were received in January; for having a presence at the Denver Stock Show; and for hosting a prestigious event like ABA in Omaha.
- b. Kuhn gave remarks on Lake McConaughy and Commissioners discussed some of various concerns.
- c. Kuhn mentioned there are 26 active legislative bills that may have potential impact on the Game and Parks Commission.

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

- a. Lodging Tax Performance – Ricks gave update
- b. Strategic Plan – Ricks will be sending out a template/guide to help with SWOT approach. Discussion of involvement/process starting in May
- c. Tourism Conference – Ricks discussed revenue/expense and report a gain of \$19,000 in 2019
- d. 2019 Annual Report – Jenn Gjerde reported was at the printer. The report will be included in the next industry newsletter. Each of the legislators will receive a copy.
- e. 2020 Agritourism & Adventure Travel Workshop – Ricks presented material and gave update. Reminder to email lodging and registration as soon as possible.
- f. 2020 Travel Counselor Program – Michael Collins gave update and presented locations.

Motion to approve the list of 13 centers with possibility of adding Lewis/Clark Center in Nebraska City being contingent on budget and therefore gives authority to add the 14th center if staff sees fit by Sabin. Chapo seconded the motion.

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

- g. FY2019/2020 Grant Program Awards – Heather Hogue gave updates. There were 66 grant applications for a total of \$1.6 million. 53 were funded or partially funded for a total of \$812,410. John Ricks added comment on rights fee issue needs to be defined. Sabin asked about definition – On the filling out of application is it doing what you want? Starr commented not all money is allocated. After reading comments and talking with Heather, feels like the staff is keeping an eye on the money.

Motion made to approve the grant awards as recommended by Lehl. McFarland seconded the motion.

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

7. Commission Committee Reports

- a. Legislative Committee Report – Commissioner Jasnoch

Jasnoch presented update on NETA Legislative Luncheon. Date will be February 12, 2020 in Nebraska State Education Association Building. NETA has legislative conference call every Monday at 4pm CST. 482 bills were introduced in the session this year. Watching a couple bills: LB187 and LB974.

- b. Marketing Committee Report – Commissioner Chapo

Chapo deferred to John Ricks for Marketing updates. John Ricks gave presentation on marketing campaign. Gave updates on passport program progress and economic impact after 10 years. From 2017 to 2019 has grown from \$5.7 million to \$23.7 million in travel spending. Commissioners discussed various elements of the program and marketing campaign.

8. New business

Upcoming meetings:

February 25 – Agri Tourism Workshop – Nebraska City

May 12 – Grand Island Brochure Swap

August – Western Nebraska – Scottsbluff possible week of August 10-16. Will send a survey to get best available date

Oct 20 – Travel Conference – Grand Island

9. Adjourn

At 2:32 pm Stavas motioned to adjourn. Olson seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted by Shirley Wichman