

Chairman of the Meeting: Commissioner Roger Kuhn, Chair

Commission Chair Roger Kuhn called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

Commissioners present: Darrin Barner, Heritage Homes of Nebraska; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; 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; Robert Sabin, Hilton Omaha; Sarah Sortum, Calamus Outfitters, Starr Lehl, Scottsbluff Economic Development; John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Zoo.

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

1. Approval of Meeting Agenda

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

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

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

2. Opened Comment Period for Items on the Agenda

Kuhn opened up the public comment period at 1:05pm.

With no members of the public coming forward, Kuhn closed the Public Comment Period at 1:06pm.

3. Approval of February 25, 2020 Meeting Minutes

McFarland motioned to approve the meeting minutes from January 27, 2020. Stavas seconded the motion.

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

4. Financial Update and Finance Committee Report – Commissioner Stavas

Stavas went through spreadsheets that were previously distributed. Director Ricks spoke about the budget spreadsheet, budget narratives, and the biennium. With the Covid 19 Virus devastating the entire industry, Ricks discussed various elements including marketing dollars spent. Commissioners discussed possibilities of outstanding dollars and budget approval for next year.

Motion to accept status review as presented and the budget approval to take place at the August meeting by Loseke. Olson seconded the motion.

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

5. Director’s Report and NTC Project Updates – John Ricks and NTC staff

- a. Strategic Plan – Next Steps
 - i. Director Ricks gave update on process. Commissioners discussed elements of the process and requested to send plan to look at as it moves along.
- b. Grant Timeline – Hogue gave update on number of paid outs from last year and those just awarded.
- c. 2020 Tourism Conference* - Austad gave update on current situation and options with holding Tourism Conference this year. Commissioners discussed options of all in person, all virtual, or a hybrid conference. The health and well-being of all was most important.

Motion to move forward with plans for the conference and go on a more hybrid path was made by Jasnoch. Seconded by Barner.

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

- d. Agritourism and Adventure Travel Workshop – Kollars gave update. Commission requested RFP for regional workshops be sent to commissioners for comment
- e. State of Emergency Restrictions on Staff – Hogue went over Executive Order from Governor regarding out of state travel during pandemic.
- f. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant Opportunities; Travel America Act; USTTA – Ricks gave update on opportunities. After discussion commission will be sent copy for comment.

6. Commission Committee Reports

- a. Legislative Committee/NETA Legislative Update – Commissioner Jasnoch
 - i. Legislature not in session until July 20 because of pandemic.
 - ii. Looking at other options for the Legislative Luncheon to get other organizations involved
- b. Marketing Committee Report – Commissioner Chapo – deferred to Director Ricks
 - i. Marketing Partner Contract renewals*
 - a. Tabled and will defer the vote to the August meeting
 - ii. Went through presentation on Dean Runyan Travel Tracker
 - iii. RFP process will start next fall – get contracts in line to all start on July 1st

7. Commission Chair Report – Commissioner Kuhn

- a. Executive Director Performance Review and Related Salary*

Motion made to go into closed Executive Session for Performance Review by John Chapo. Seconded by Roger Jasnoch.

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

At 3:33 Motion made to come out of Executive Session by John Chapo. Seconded by Barry McFarland.

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

Commissioner Kuhn brought to the table to have annual evaluation in May or June. Kuhn will go over the review with Director Ricks. Also have Director Ricks salary raised by 2.3% effective July 1, 2020.

Motion made with respect to annual evaluation and the salary raise this year by 2.3% effective July 1, 2020 by Roger Jasnoch. Seconded by Barry McFarland.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Barner, Chapo, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sortum, Stavas. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Not present: Sabin. Motion passed.

8. New Business

a. Upcoming meetings:

August 6-8 – Scottsbluff

October 20 – Grand Island Tourism Conference – time TBA

Kuhn has a conflict with the date October 20. He will send an email with other possible dates for the commissioners to weigh in.

9. Adjourn

At 3:45 Chapo motioned to adjourn. Jasnoch seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted by Shirley Wichman