

**Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 2021, 1:00pm CST**  
**Video Conference, Various locations**

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

Economic Development Center  
City of Scottsbluff  
2525 Circle Drive  
Scottsbluff, NE 69361

Commissioner Chair Roger Jasnoch called the meeting to order at 1:00pm

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, Roger Jasnoch, Kearney Visitors Bureau, John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Zoo, Robert Sabin, Hilton Omaha.

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

**1. Approval of Meeting Agenda**

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

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

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

**2. Opened Comment Period for Items on the Agenda**

Jasnoch opened the public comment period at 1:06pm.

With no members of the public coming forward, Jasnoch closed the Public Comment Period at 1:07.

**3. Approval of January 27, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Loseke made motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 27, 2021. Barner seconded the motion.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Barner, Chapo, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sabin, Sortum, Stavas. Opposed: none. Absent: none. 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 spreadsheets, budget narratives through a PowerPoint presentation pointing out various elements of dollars spent and money saved in the working budget 20-21 as it stands now. Commission is closely watching and monitoring

spending authority and cash on hand. Commissioners discussed outstanding dollars, marketing dollars, and areas money is being saved.

b. Lodging Tax Performance

Director Ricks gave update through many months of pandemic.

Motion to accept status review as presented was made by Lehl. McFarland seconded the motion.

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

## **5. Commission Chair Report - Commissioner Jasnoch**

Thanked the committees for staying in their positions. Let Commissioner Jasnoch know it there are areas to spend more or less time. Reported on discussion being made by Game and Parks and Transportation regarding public access to waterways. Will provide more details at future meeting.

Discussion on officer elections, committees, and the re-appointment process of commissioners.

Discussed taking a look at process in place and visit again at future meeting.

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

- a. EDA Grant update – Ricks gave update; waiting on final piece from DAS
- b. Sentiment Study Update – Ricks gave update on timing of the study
- c. Passport Program Update – Madison Johnson reported on progress of program
- d. Travel Counselor Update – Brochure Swap – Micheal Collins provided information on brochure swap, dates and times.
- e. 2021 Nebraska Tourism Conference – Callie Austad provided update on conference being held in person and asked for commissioners input. Discussion followed. Suggested seeing if hotel is following the American Hotel Lodging Association guidelines.

Motion to approve the location/venue in person as presented with option to revisit if need arises made by Sabin. Lehl seconded the motion.

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

- f. Update on Visit Widget App – Jenn Gjerde - Jenn presented an overview of the Visit Widget App. Is going to send app/demo video and comments to commissioners in separate email after meeting. Discussion followed if this is something for the tourism commission or more for regional. Lehl suggested going to their website and pull up other states.

## **7. Commission Committee Reports**

- a. Legislative Committee/NETA Legislative Update – Commissioner Lehl

Lehl presented update from NETA, with reminder they have legislative conference call every Monday at 4pm via zoom. NETA is monitoring several bills for the good of the industry.

b. Marketing Committee - Commissioner Chapo

Chapo deferred to John Ricks for Marketing updates. John gave presentation on marketing campaign. Went over media selection for the spring/summer/fall timeframe. Looking into starting with some markets in mid-April and progressing through to end of September. Will be doing TV, print and digital, as well as social media.

**8. New Business**

a. Upcoming Meetings:

May 18 – Grand Island, Brochure Swap – meeting will be in the afternoon

August 13 – Scottsbluff – will have Staff send schedule

October 19-21 – Grand Island, Date TBA – now looks like Oct 20. Dates were given for 2022 in South Sioux City, Oct 25-27 and 2023 in Gering, Oct 17-19

b. Marketing Partner Contract renewals – John Ricks gave updates on contracts. Discussion for 5<sup>th</sup> year renewal 2021-2022 for Vladimer Johnes, Miles and Turner PR. RFPs will go out this fall to be effective for new contracts July 2022.

Chapo made motion to approve the 5<sup>th</sup> year of contract renewal for the marketing partners. Loseke seconded the motion.

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

**9. Adjourn**

At 2:44pm Stavas motioned to adjourn. Sabin seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted by Shirley Wichman

**\*Denotes Action Item**

Open Meetings Law of the State of Nebraska will be available in the meeting room. Proposed agenda, posted March 22, 2021 kept current and available for inspection on the Commission's website, [visitnebraska.com](http://visitnebraska.com). Items of an emergency nature may be added to the agenda by the Commission at the meeting. The Commission reserves the right to enter into closed session, should a closed session be necessary.