

## Meeting Minutes

Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting

May 18, 2021 at 2:00pm CST

Quality Inn  
7838 Hwy 281  
Grand Island, NE  
Niobrara Room

### **Chairman of the Meeting: Commissioner Roger Jasnoch, Chair**

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Commission Chair Roger Jasnoch called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.

Commissioners present: Darrin Barner, Heritage Homes of Nebraska; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County CVB (arrived late); 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; Starr Lehl, Scottsbluff Economic Development.

Commissioners absent: Sarah Sortum, Calamus Outfitters; John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Zoo.

Commission staff present: John Ricks, Jenn Gjerde, Madison Johnson, Karen Kollars, Shirley Wichman

#### **1. Approval of Meeting Agenda**

Commission Chair Jasnoch welcomed the commissioners; introductions were made; and Jasnoch asked for motion to approve agenda.

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

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

#### **2. Community Engagement Presentation – Grand Island representative**

Brad Mellema welcomed the group to Grand Island. Gave a report on how Grand Island came to it's name.

#### **3. Public Comment Period for items listed on the Agenda**

Jasnoch opened the public comment period at 2:13pm.

With no members of the public coming forward, Jasnoch closed the public comment period at 2:14pm.

#### **4. Approval of March 24, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Jasnoch requested motion to approve the March 24, 2021 meeting minutes.

Kuhn motioned to approve the meeting minutes from March 24, 2021. Stavas seconded the motion.

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

## **5. Financial Update and Finance Committee Report – Commissioner Stavas**

Stavas went through spreadsheets that were previously distributed. Discussion on lodging tax performance and financials. Director Ricks spoke about the narratives, and various elements including marketing dollars spent. Commissioners discussed possibilities of outstanding dollars.

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

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

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

- a. EDA Grant update – Director Ricks led discussion on a contract employee to track budget and be the overseer.
- b. Sentiment Study Update – Over 1,000 filled out the survey. Will be a presentation of the study in August.
- c. American Rescues Act update – EDA will have grant program. USTA set aside 100 million dollars for hospitality/outdoor recreation. Discussion on who is eligible. Webinars will be held to help with applications.
- d. National Stock Show – able to carry contract over from 2021 to 2022.

## **7. Commission Committee Reports**

- a. Legislative Committee/NETA Legislative Update – Commissioner Lehl gave updates on bills NETA is following. Plan to adjourn May 27<sup>th</sup>.
- b. Marketing Committee – Director Ricks gave update with marketing presentation. Passport program was on front page of Wall Street Journal. Discussion on web traffic and still running 30% higher than last year.

## **8. Commission Chair Report**

Commissioner Jasnoch thanked the staff for all they do. Thanked attendees for participating and attending the meeting. Requested a motion to go into closed Executive Session.

Motion made to go into closed Executive Session at 3:05pm for Performance Review by Kuhn. Seconded by Loseke.

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

At 3:50 Motion made to come out of Executive Session by Stavas. Seconded by Olson.

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

Commissioner Loseke said commissioners had long discussion on the year that was something unforeseen by anybody. They felt Director Ricks led the industry through the pandemic in a positive way and made sure there was ongoing communication of everchanging guidelines. Jasnoch will go over the review with Director Ricks. After discussion, agreement to have salary raised by 5.25% will be effective immediately May 18, 2021.

Motion made with respect to annual evaluation and the salary raise this year by 5.25% effective May 18, 2021 by Loseke. Seconded by McFarland.

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

## **9. New Business**

### **a. Upcoming Meetings:**

August 13 – Scottsbluff, meeting at 9am with balloon rides Friday am at sunrise. Come into Scottsbluff on Thursday evening.

October 19-21 – Grand Island, Date TBA

## **10. Adjourn**

Jasnoch requested motion to adjourn.

At 4:00pm Lehl motioned to adjourn. Sabin seconded the motion.

Roll call vote – Commissioners in favor: Barner, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sabin, Stavas. Absent: Chapo, Sortum. Opposed: 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 **May 14, 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.