

Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting
Agenda
October 19, 2021, 4-6pm CST
Ramada by Wyndham Midtown Grand Island
2503 South Locust, Grand Island NE 68801

Chairman of the Meeting: Commissioner Roger Jasnoch, Chair

Commission Chair Roger Jasnoch called the meeting to order at 4:03pm.

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

Commissioners absent: John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Zoo

Commission Staff present: John Ricks, Shirley Wichman, Madison Johnson, Erin Lenz, Jenna Bartja, Karen Kollars

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. Loseke seconded the motion.

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

2. **Community Engagement Presentation** – Grand Island representative – Brad Mellema
Brad Mellema welcomed the group to Grand Island. He hoped that everyone enjoyed the bus tours of the area and had a chance to experience the culture the Grand Island has to offer.

3. Public Comment Period for items listed on the Agenda

Jasnoch opened the public comment period at 4:06pm.

With no members of the public coming forward, Jasnoch closed the public comment period at 4:07pm.

4. Approval of August 12, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Jasnoch requested motion to approve the August 12, 2021 meeting minutes.

Olson motioned to approve the meeting minutes from August 12, 2021. Stavas seconded the motion.

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

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

- a. Passport Update – Nice increase from last year....1,304 completed passport stops. Program continues to grow.
- b. Travel Conference RFPs* – With not having in person conference in 2020, we are going to wait until early next year to put out the RFPs. Commission will revisit this action item at that time.
- c. Marketing & Community Impact Grant Programs – Grant program opened October 15, 2021.
- d. ARPA – State & EDA
Letter was filed for ARPA funds with DED for non-competitive funds of \$3 million. There was discussion on use of funds. The legislative session in January will determine the allocation of the larger amount of funds. There was discussion on STAWARS committee and what product development they are looking at. LB406 awarded them \$2 million dollars to do a study with consulting firm HDR.

6. Financial Update and Finance Committee Report – Commissioner Stavas

- a. Budget Status Review*

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.

- b. Lodging Tax Performance – Director Ricks went over lodging tax numbers and the higher lodging tax growth over the past 6 months, much of which is led by leisure travel. Projection to reach 2019 numbers is now end of 2022 and being flat in 2023, which means opportunity to reach higher levels. Travel stats are on our site county by county.

Motion to approve the budget status review made by Lehl. Seconded by Loseke.

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

7. Legislative Committee Report – Commissioner Lehl

Legislature is not in session so Commissioner Lehl had nothing to report at this time.

8. Marketing Committee Report – Commissioner Chapo – Director Ricks gave report in Commissioner Chapos’ absence.

- a. Marketing Report – director Ricks gave update with marketing presentation. DED is doing a Recruitment Strategy Campaign. There is a study John wants to find that talks

about go first as tourists. Lehl mentioned when you go to their site and click on some sports, it goes to the VisitNebraska website. Their site is www.goodlifeiscalling.com

- b. Sentiment Study Update – Jennifer Simmons will be giving a presentation in a session on Thursday. An updated report will be done and sent out. Will go in more detail at January meeting to decide how to rework some parts and tie into industry.
- c. America 250 – Hospitality & Tourism Council
John serves on the America 250 Council.
- d. Semi quincentennial Commission – NTC Representative
Each state hopes to form a semi quincentennial commission. Trevor Jones heads this commission and is looking for someone from the Nebraska Tourism Commission Board. Director Ricks asked for names be sent to him if interested.

9. **Commission Chair Report** – Commissioner Jasnoch

- a. The following items will be voted on at the October 19 meeting:
 - i. Locations and dates of 2022 Commission Meetings*
Discussion on when and where to have commission meetings in 2022. Decided on January meeting to be January 27th, via Zoom at 10:00am CST. the May meeting will be during brochure swap, May 17th, in North Platte, time to be determined. Shirley will send out a poll with dates for March and August. The October meeting will be in conjunction with the tourism conference in South Sioux City, Oct 25-27.

Motion to approve the January date and the tentative dates for 2022 made by McFarland.
Seconded by Sabin.

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

10. **New Business** – Commission Jasnoch reminded the commissioners of the Commission breakfast on Wednesday, at 7:30am.

11. **Adjourn***

Commissioner Jasnoch thanked the staff for all they do. Also thanked John for obtaining the grant funds for the state. Thanked the attendees for participating and attending the meeting. Jasnoch requested motion to adjourn.

At 5:10pm Loseke motioned to adjourn. Stavas seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted by Shirley Wichman