

Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting
August 28th, 2013 – 9:00 am
Midtown Holiday Inn, Grand Island

Commission Chair Mike Kesselring called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Commissioners and staff present at the meeting: John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Zoo; Mike Kesselring, High Plains Homestead of Crawford; Mitch Glidden, Sandhills Motel & Glidden Canoe Rental of Mullen; Jeff Boeka, Holiday Inn Express North Platte; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission; Roger Dixon, MECA of Omaha; Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County CVB; Kathy McKillip, Nebraska Tourism Commission; Heather Hogue, Nebraska Tourism Commission. Dana Markel, Greater Omaha CVB joined the meeting at 10:00am.

Audience members present: Rich Claussen, Bailey Lauerman; Brad Melama, Grand Island CVB; Mike Swanson, Grand Island CVB Board.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Jeff Boeka motioned for approval of the meeting agenda. Mitch Glidden seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Welcome from Host City

Brad Melama welcomed all Commissioners to Grand Island for the meeting. After the meeting, Commissioners will tour the State Fairgrounds and eat lunch on site.

Approval of April 24, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Deb Loseke motioned to approve the minutes from the April 24, 2013 Nebraska Tourism Commission meeting. Roger Dixon seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Financial Update

John Chapo reviewed the current agency budget status report.

Chairman's Report

Mike Kesselring addressed the scheduling for upcoming Commission Meetings. The upcoming schedule was decided as follows:

October 22, 2013 from 1-4pm in Norfolk prior to Nebraska Travel Conference

January 16, 2014 from 11:30-3pm in Lincoln at the Capitol

February 5, 2014 at the Agri/Eco-Conference in Kearney

May 7, 2014 location TBA, likely a western region locale

2013 Commission Officers Elections

Mike Kesselring noted that nominations for Tourism Commission Executive Committee will be taken from the floor. John Chapo noted that constituents have approached him and appreciate the progress and new energy of the Commission, and the constituents encourage annual change in the Executive Committee members. Roger Dixon suggested the option to annually place Past Chair on the Executive Committee (as a non-voting member), then cycle Vice-Chair to Chair, Treasurer to Vice Chair, and elect a new Treasurer. John Chapo motioned to accept Roger Dixon's suggestion, adding that a by-law amendment will be made at the next Commission meeting. Motion seconded by Roger Dixon. All in favor – motion passed. Dana Markel nominated Roger Dixon as Treasurer of the Commission. Present Commissioners voted

yes, with one no vote from Roger Dixon. Motion passed, Roger Dixon is Commission Treasurer. 2013 Tourism Commission Executive Committee is now:

Chair: Jeff Boeka

Past Chair: Mike Kesselring

Vice Chair: John Chapo

Treasurer: Roger Dixon

Commission Committee Reports

Deb Loseke noted that the Best Practices of Lodging Tax Dollars Committee plans to present an educational guideline to the Commission prior to the Nebraska Travel Conference in October. If approved by the Commission, the best practices would then be presented at the conference, followed by educational sessions at the NACO winter and spring workshops.

Mike Kesselring noted he would like to serve on a sub-committee regarding the development of a new model for evaluating the value and performance of Nebraska Tourism. Roger Kuhn also volunteered to be on the sub-committee. Some research will be done by this sub-committee, to define tourism and the measurements of tourism's economic impact. The sub-committee hopes to research over the winter months, and present findings to the group at the May 2014 meeting.

Director's Report

Kathy McKillip discussed current projects including:

- Increased interest from counties regarding the 4% lodging tax collection
- National Western Stock Show sponsorship coming up January 11-26, 2014
- 2013 Rest Area/Travel Counselor Certification Program
- Partnerships with NET, Game & Parks Commission, UNL created SKYWORKS video
- Husker Sports Network – pregame shows and interviews
- RFD TV radio and TV spots
- Crane Trust partnership to produce a crane migration documentary
- Upcoming media tours, Holiday Metro in 2013, Birding/Western trips in 2014
- Upcoming Branding Initiative through Bailey Lauerman/Believable Brands
- Tourism Commission Strategic Plan recommended strategies update
- 2014 Nebraska Travel Guide: will print 200,000 copies of the 2014 guide, then review/assess layout for 2015
- 2013 Passport Program wraps up September 30
- New staff announcements/responsibilities

Mike Kesselring welcomed Rich Claussen of Bailey Lauerman to the meeting. Rich Claussen noted that Bailey Lauerman will be seeking input from industry members and hold focus groups as well as quantitative studies to produce the new Nebraska tourism brand. A new marketing campaign won't be unveiled on this fall's Travel Conference, they will instead be focusing on brand creation to be unveiled in January.

Executive Session

The Commissioners entered into an Executive Session at 11:45am, which ended at 11:57am. During the session the Commissioners approved a 2.5% salary increase for Kathy McKillip, which is corresponding with the annual salary increase already given to non-exempt State of Nebraska employees July 1, 2013. Roger Dixon, Commission Treasurer will prepare a letter of approval and send to State Personnel for Kathy's salary increase to take effect as of July 1.

New Business

Heather Hogue proposed increasing the monetary cap on each Tourism Marketing Grant application be raised to \$15,000. (Previously \$10,000) Deb Loseke motioned to leave the minimum dollar amount of the grants at \$2,000 and increase the maximum to \$15,000 and to include a hardship financial clause in the grant guidelines for communities to describe their financial situation and still qualify for grant funds. Also, the annual allocation for the next grant cycle will increase from \$125,000 to \$160,000. Jeff Boeka seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Jeff Boeka motioned to adjourn at 12:24pm. Roger Dixon seconded the motion. Motion passed. Respectfully submitted by Heather Hogue.