

Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting

Tuesday, January 16, 2018 – 1:00 p.m.

Lincoln Community Foundation – Lincoln, Neb.

Commission Chair Deb Loseke called the meeting to order at 1:38 p.m.

Commissioners present: Darrin Barner, Heritage Homes of Nebraska; Roger Dixon, MECA of Omaha; Roger Jasnoch, Kearney Visitors Bureau; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Starr Lehl, Scottsbluff Economic Development; Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County CVB; John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Zoo; Ashley Olson, Willa Cather Foundation; Sarah Sortum, Calamus Outfitters; Jeanna Stavas, Whispering Pines Bed and Breakfast

Commission staff present: John Ricks, Heather Hogue, Jenn Gjerde, Alex Duryea, Micheal Collins, Erin Wirth, Bryce Arens and Shelley Reed

1. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Stavas motioned to approve the agenda. Barner seconded the motion.

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

2. Open Comment Period for Items on the Agenda

Loseke opened the public comment period at 1:40 p.m.

Comments presented: Brad Mellema from Grand Island shared a great review of the Nebraska Tourism booth at the stock show and that he would like to see similar efforts at the Nebraska State Fair, with help from his staff when possible.

With no other members of the public coming forward, Loseke closed the Public Comment Period at 1:43 p.m.

3. Approval of October 19, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Kuhn motioned to approve the meeting minutes from October 19, 2017. Jasnoch seconded.

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

4. Financial Update and Finance Committee Report

Jasnoch shared that the finance committee met the morning of January 16. He provided an overview of the FY 16-17 carryover, FY17-18 overall budget and the remaining balance, which at calendar year end was \$5,364,459.10.

Lehl motioned that the commission approve the finance report and update. Dixon seconded the motion.

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

5. Commission Chair Report

A. Tentative Schedule

Loseke went over the upcoming schedule for 2018 commission meetings.

March 8- Columbus

May 8- Scottsbluff

August 29- Grand Island

October 16- Nebraska City

B. Committee Reviews

Loseke announced that there will no longer be a tourism conference committee or a best practices and guiding principles committee and provided commissioners with a list of new committee appointees.

C. Executive Director performance review

At 1:57 Kuhn motioned to go in to closed session to perform a performance review of Executive Director, John Ricks. John Chapo seconded the motion.

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

At 2:55 Kuhn motioned to go back in to open session. Barner seconded.

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

Kuhn motioned to approve a 2.4% pay increase for John Ricks based on his performance evaluation. The raise would be effective January 1, subject to approval by DAS. Lehl seconded.

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

6. Director's Report

A. Commission Budget

Ricks explained that he previously submitted the mid-biennial budget request of \$500,000 for FY17/18 and \$500,000 for FY18/19 to be used from the reserve.

Ricks announced that LB802 will have a hearing on February 1 at 1:30 p.m. Ricks explained the details of the bill which has been presented by Senator Stinner.

B. Staffing

Ricks shared that two jobs are currently posted, Marketing Manager and Tourism Industry Relations and Education Coordinator. Both positions are currently vacant after the former employees took new positions. Over 40 applications have been received.

C. Travel Counselor Program

Ricks explained that the program has a \$138,000 price tag and would like to discuss if the commission should continue with the funding travel counselors in the future. After a small discussion on revamp and data collection, Lehl suggested that Ricks bring recommendations for the travel counselor program to the May 2018 commission meeting. The program will be kept the same for 2018.

D. Grant Programs

Ricks explained that the Grant Review Committee will meet in January to pick the most recent grant recipients. There are 66 applications for the Marketing Grant totaling over \$840,000. There are 10 applications for the Community Impact Grant totaling more than \$900,000. \$835,548 total is available.

E. Denver Stock Show

Alex Duryea reported that the Stock Show was seeing good attendance and that the booth now includes a digital kiosk that those working the booth are trying to use to collect data from attendees.

F. Tourism Promotional Cash Fund creation status

Ricks covered under report item A, this is the fund that would be created with LB802.

7. Commission Committee Reports

A. Policy & Procedures

I. Rules & Regulations

Kuhn shared that recent regulations were passed. These regulations were adopted at a hearing prior to today's meeting. The regulations were for Nebraska Tourism Commission, Title 266, Chapter 1, Grants.

B. Tourism Marker

Jasnoch shared that the marker committee has received one application but the application did not qualify. The committee will be reaching out to the applicant to propose other options to them.

C. Marketing

Dixon announced the new marketing committee and that they will be meeting on January 24 at the Lincoln Children's Zoo and that the annual report and 2018 travel guides are now available.

Ricks gave an overview to commissioners of a marketing campaign promoting the cranes that will launch in early February. This campaign will utilize a Through My Eyes story. Target markets are Kansas City, Topeka, Wichita and Sioux Falls.

Gjerde gave an overview of the upcoming media tours. There will be four in 2018, starting with a March Crane tour.

8. 2018 State Fair Results

Duryea gave commissioners the sponsorship packets for the 2018 State Fair. After discussion Commissioners decided that a physical presence is needed at the State Fair and that Nebraska Tourism should continue to host a booth in the Pinnacle Expo building in 2018.

9. 2018 Plains Safari

Duryea and Katie Nieland from the Center for Great Plains Studies gave a quick update on registration, budget, speakers and activities that will take place at the Plains Safari Symposium. The Symposium is April 18-20 in Kearney.

10. NETA Legislative Update

Jasnoch shared that NETA is watching some carryover bills from 2017 (craft brewers), a short term rentals bill, LB 802 and the tourism improvement district bill being introduced by Senator Quick in the near future.

12. New Business

- A. Next Meeting**
March 8, 2018 in Columbus

Adjourn

At 4 p.m. Sortum motioned to adjourn. Stavas seconded. Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Barner, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, Sortum, Stavas. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Gjerde.