

Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting
Nebraska October 18, 2016 – 1:00 p.m. (MST)
Gering Civic Center - Gering, Neb.

Commission Chair Deb Loseke called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Commissioners present: Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County Convention and Visitors Bureau; Roger Jasnoch, Kearney Visitors Bureau; Lisa Burke, North Platte Convention and Visitors Bureau; Carol Schlegel, Red Willow County Tourism; Jeff Boeka, Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites of North Platte; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Commission staff present: Heather Hogue, Angela Sears, Jenn Gjerde, Alex Duryea, Erin Wirth, Lisa Karnatz, Bryce Arens, Karen Kollars and Micheal Collins

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Carol Schlegel motioned to approve the meeting agenda. Roger Kuhn seconded the motion.

All commissioners in favor. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Public Comment Period for Items Listed on the Agenda

Deb Loseke, Commission chair, opened the public comment period. Comments presented:

None.

With no members of the public coming forward, Deb Loseke closed the public comment period.

Approval of August 30, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Jeff Boeka motioned to approve meeting minutes from August 30, 2016. Roger Jasnoch seconded.

All commissioners in favor. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Financial Update and Finance Committee Report

Lisa Burke, Commission treasurer, gave an update on the FY2016-2017 Commission budget.

To date the Commission has paid out \$36,460 from the General Fund for grant allotments for the Marketing and/or Community Impact Grants. The total general funds budget for FY2016-17 is \$558,726.41.

To date the commission has spent \$433,082.16 from the cash funds. The total cash funds budget for FY2016-17 is \$6,567,218.63.

Handouts distributed in commissioner's meeting packets include the current budget status report.

Burke also made commissioners aware that all state agencies are undergoing a routine IRS audit and that the finance committee does not plan to request deficient funding this year.

Carol Schlegel motioned to approve financials as presented. Jeff Boeka seconded.

All commissioners in favor. Opposed: none. Abstained: none. Motion passed.

A. RFP for Evaluation Criteria for Tourism Projects

Heather Hogue gave an update on the RFP for evaluation criteria for tourism projects, informing commissioners that Tourism Economics, out of Wayne, Pa., was awarded the contract and must provide a report by December 15, to have in time for the upcoming legislative session.

Commission Chair Report

Deb Loseke gave an update on new Commission committees and members, which are as follows.

Executive Committee:

Deb Loseke (chair), Roger Kuhn (vice), Lisa Burke (treasurer), and John Chapo (past Commission chair)

Finance Committee:

Lisa Burke (chair), Roger Kuhn, Deb Loseke, and Carol Schlegel

Marketing Committee:

Roger Dixon (chair), John Chapo, Roger Kuhn and Jeff Boeka

Best Practices and Guiding Principal Committee:

Deb Loseke (chair), Tony Moody, and industry members Jeff Maul and Karla Niedan-Streeks

2016 Tourism Conference Committee;

Lisa Burke (chair), Deb Loseke (past host), Karla Niedan-Streeks (host), Lisa Karnatz (staff) and Karen Kollars (staff)

Tourism Marker Committee (result of LB449):

Roger Jasnoch (chair), Carol Schlegel, Matt Neeman (NDOR), Leroy Loudon (state senator) and Bob Puschendorf (Nebraska Historical Society)

Executive Director Search Committee:

Deb Loseke (chair), Lisa Burke, Roger Dixon, Roger Kuhn, and industry members Jeff Maul, Keith Backsen and former commissioner, Mike Kesselring

Policy and Procedures Committee:

Roger Kuhn (chair), Carol Schlegel, Tony Moody and Roger Jasnoch

Commission Committee Reports

- A. Executive Director Search Committee-** Deb Loseke shared that the search committee received 54 applications for the job and reviewed the top 12 candidates in an open meeting on October 14. In that meeting the committee narrowed their search down to five to be interviewed.

1. Kurt Burkhart
2. Kim Kwapnioski
3. Joe McCorvey
4. Mattie Scheeter

5. John Ricks

Loseke shared that after notifying the five finalists, one, Kurt Burkhart, withdrew his application. Commissioners discussed how to do the interview process and resolved to draft questions and hold the public meeting interviews all in one day (date at time undecided). Commissioner Kuhn brought up that the ideal timing for this search would be to have someone hired by the end of November and beginning before the 2017 legislative session. He added that it was good to see so many applications and that it wasn't easy to narrow down the finalists.

- B. Policy and Procedures Committee-** Roger Kuhn informed commissioners that the committee is currently working on developing rules and regulations for what the Commission needs and that they are reviewing all the statutes tied to tourism markers, grants and cash funds. He went on to say that when the Commission adopts Rules and Regulations manual there will be a public hearings. Currently the Commission has adopted the Department of Administrative Services policies manual as part of the shared services agreement.
- C. 2016 Conference Committee-** Lisa Burke thanked Lisa Karnatz, Karen Kollars and Karla Niedan-Streeks for planning the 2016 Nebraska Tourism Conference and said that 166 people had pre-registered. She noted that next year's conference will be in Sarpy County. Roger Kuhn thanked the people of Gering for hosting this year's event.
- D. Tourism Marker Committee-** Roger Jasnoch shared that the committee is making headway and handed out examples of what the marker applications could look like, along with a mockup of the markers. Jasnoch said that the committee is working with the Department of Administrative Services state purchasing to do a request for proposal. Carol Schlegel clarified how the tourism markers will differ from the historical markers and said that the tourism marker will be made of etched aluminum and include text, pictures and maps. Roger Kuhn brought up that this is a partnership with Nebraska Depart of Roads and Jasnoch said that smaller communities (over larger communities) will be able to take advantage of the of road laws, because the signs must be placed along two-lane roadways as opposed to four lane roads.
- E. Marketing Committee-**
In place of Roger Dixon, Angela Sears gave a quick update on some internal efforts being done by the Commission staff. A handout was included in Commissioner packets that highlight the efforts being made to increase tourism in Nebraska with social media usage, the media tours and earned and paid media.

I. 2.0 Marketing Phase Update

Abbey Johnson, with Bailey Lauerman, gave an update on the Through My Eyes campaign giving some insight into the objective of the campaign, the pre-production and the statewide video/photo shoot that took place the week of October 10. She said the stops included on the shoot were the Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium, Prairie Plate (Farm to Fork), Miletta Vista Winery (Nebraska Wine County), Bootleg Brewery (Nebraska's Craft Beer Scene), Calamus River, Toadstool and Scotts Bluff National Monument. Johnson explained that there will also be a shoot in central Nebraska in the spring to highlight the sandhill crane migration and that UNL's Jacht Club will be creating some additional pieces. The campaign is expected to launch spring of 2017.

II. Nebraska Travel Guide Updates

Angela Sears shared that samples of the Spring/Summer 2017 Travel Guide are still in production and will be sent to commissioners via email when they become available.

III. Media Tours

Sears went over the recent ROI numbers for the media tours and reminded commissioners that three more tours are scheduled for FY2016-17 which are central Nebraska in March, North Platte to Valentine in May and western Nebraska/Panhandle in June.

NETA Legislative Update

Roger Jasnoch reminded folks that the next legislative session kicks off in January and at that point NETA will host weekly conference calls to discuss bills that touch the tourism industry. Anyone who wants to be involved in those calls should contact Carol Schlegel. Jasnoch introduced lobbyist, Andy Pollock and thanked him for his work and asked the commissioners to consider the possibility of a joint tourism reception at the capitol in 2018 with NETA.

Commission Director Report and Grant Report

Heather Hogue thanked commissioners and staff for their hard work over the last couple of months and added that the implementation of the Department of Administrative Services contract has been great to assist with payroll, human resources, pre-auditing and contract guidance. She also discussed the adoption of the Department of Administrative Services Work Place Policies and told commissioners that the annual budget was submitted by the September 15 deadline.

Heather shared that \$562,000 in grant money was awarded through Nebraska Tourism's two grant programs on October 7. A handout was included in the commissioner's packet explaining how the money was divided up. After this grant cycle there is \$165,000 left in the cash funds. Heather suggested reopening the grant program this winter. Commissioners discussed a timeline for grants and asked Heather to write up her recommendation to be considered at the next commission meeting.

New Business

Deb Loseke shared that the locations for the January and February Commission meetings. January's will take place January 12 after the Senator's Luncheon at the Nebraska Tourism Commission office and the February meeting will be sometime between February 21-23 at the Agri/Eco-Tourism Workshop in Broken Bow.

Adjourn

Roger Jasnoch motioned to adjourn the meeting. Lisa Burke seconded.

All commissioners in favor. Opposed: none. Abstained: none. Motion passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Gjerde.