

Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting
September 1, 2015 – 1:00 pm
Nebraska State Fair Board Room – Grand Island, NE

Commission Chair John Chapo called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

Commissioners and staff present at the meeting: John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Zoo; Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County CVB; Roger Jasnoch, Kearney Visitors Bureau; Lisa Burke, North Platte CVB; Carol Schlegel, Red Willow County Tourism; Tony Moody, John Q. Hammons Hotels & Resorts; Roger Dixon, MECA of Omaha; Jeff Boeka, Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites of North Platte; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Kathy McKillip, Nebraska Tourism Commission; Angela White, Nebraska Tourism Commission; Heather Hogue, Nebraska Tourism Commission.

Audience members:

Rich Claussen, Dave Wegener, Dan Cooper, Matt Emodi, Matt Neemann, David Hendee, Senator Leroy Loudon, Brad Mellema

Public Comment signed-in:

Senator Leroy Loudon

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Tony Moody motioned to approve the meeting agenda. Roger Jasnoch seconded. Motion passed.

Open Comment Period for Items on the Agenda

John Chapo, Commission Chair opened the public comment period at 1:04 pm. Senator Leroy Loudon commented regarding tourism signage in the recently passed legislative bill 449. Commission Chair John Chapo closed the public comment period at 1:10pm.

Approval of May 6, 2015 and July 23-24, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Roger Dixon motioned to approve the minutes from May 6, 2015 and July 23-24, 2015. Deb Loseke seconded. Motion passed.

Financial Update and Finance Committee Report

Deb Loseke, Commission Treasurer, presented the current budget report and noted the Commission has spent approximately 30% of the allotted budget so far this fiscal year. No general funds were awarded to the Commission for the Tourism Marketing Grant Program this fiscal year budget cycle. The recommendation of the Finance Committee is to not open the Tourism Marketing Grant cycle this fall due to lack of general funds to finance the program. Community Impact Grant funds earmark \$250,000 of cash funds as noted in LB 449 which passed this previous legislative session. Commissioners discussed future options and means of requesting general funds be re-appropriated to the Commission in future legislative sessions to fund the Tourism Marketing Grant Program. The Finance Committee will meet soon to further review the budget and make a final recommendation regarding this fall's cycle of the Tourism Marketing Grant Program at the October 20 Commission Meeting. Tony Moody motioned to accept financials as presented. Roger Dixon seconded. Motion passed.

Chairman's Report

John Chapo, Commission Chair opened discussion of electing the Executive Committee. There were no nominations from the floor. Roger Dixon motioned to re-elect the existing Executive Committee for another one-year term, the committee consisting of John Chapo as Chair, Roger Dixon as Vice-

Chair, Deb Loseke as Treasurer and Jeff Boeka as Past Chair. Tony Moody seconded the motion. Motion passed. Discussion amongst the group regarding a need to modify wording in the Commission Governing Principles, Commission Chair John Chapo will appoint a Governing Principles Committee, which will make recommendations in the wording of the Commission Governing Principles, if needed, at the October 20 meeting. Commission staff and audience members exited the meeting on request of an Executive Session from John Chapo, Commission Chair at 1:40pm. Carol Schlegel motioned to adjourn Executive Session at 2:15pm. Tony Moody seconded. Motion passed.

Strategic Planning Session Report

Roger Dixon, Commission Vice-Chair, reported that the Commissioners met July 23-24 for a two-day strategic planning session in La Vista, with Bill Krueger of CSL International. A rough draft of the plan and proposed layout was distributed to Commissioners today. A final version is scheduled to be presented at the January 14, 2016 Commission Meeting in Lincoln.

Commission Committee Reports

Lisa Burke, 2015 Tourism Conference Committee, reported the theme for this year's conference will be the Power of Nice, speakers are confirmed, and speaker highlights are being marketed through public relations efforts. Deb Loseke reported no updates from the Best Practices and Guiding Principles Committee. Roger Jasnoch presented updates from NETA Legislative issues including legislative bills 285, 449, 329 and future efforts of NETA to seek general funds for the Nebraska Tourism Commission budget/grant programs. John Chapo, Commission Chair appointed a Tourism Signage Committee consisting of Roger Jasnoch, Matt Neeman (Nebraska Department of Roads), Roger Kuhn, Senator Leroy Loudon, and a representative from the Nebraska Historical Society (TBA). The committee will review signage requirements of LB 449 and recommend a process to the Commission of how to implement the directions of the statute.

Marketing Update/Public Relations Review

Rich Claussen of Bailey Lauerman distributed photography and layout options for the upcoming 2016 Nebraska Travel Guides and 2016 Calendar, including the Marketing Committee's recommendations for the cover photography, calendar photography and listing formats. Deb Loseke motioned to accept the recommendations of the Marketing Committee. Tony Moody seconded. Motion passed.

Rich Claussen also shared recent marketing update information with the group including videography and photography images, out of home marketing strategies, digital ads, sports marketing, and upcoming FanFest event. Rich Claussen also reviewed recent take-aways from national conferences of DMAI and ESTO. Dan Cooper of Bailey Lauerman presented VisitNebraska.com web stats, noting the site has had 1,000,000 page views since launch in October of 2014 and that 75% of those views are new users. Percentage of male vs. female viewing our site: 45% male, 55% female. Dan Cooper also reviewed improvements that have occurred since site launch, and plans to present a 2.0 version of the site at Tourism Conference. (Same site overall, just cleaner look with user-friendly modifications.)

Dave Wegener of Swanson Russell reviewed the Commission's public relations strategies including a recent KETV coverage story, partnership with Nebraska Historical Society in a photography competition, corporate partners, and 2015 Passport Program. The group discussed possible dates for upcoming media tours in 2016, as well as how the media tour program can evolve and improve in the future. Roger Jasnoch motioned to have 2016 media tour dates and general location announced at 2015 Tourism Conference in October. Jeff Boeka seconded. Commissioners in favor: Jeff Boeka, Lisa Burke, John Chapo, Roger Kuhn, Carole Schlegel. Commissioners opposed: Roger Dixon, Deb Loseke. Commissioners abstaining: Tony Moody. Motion passed with majority vote.

Director's Report

Kathy McKillip announced new staff member Jennifer Gjerde recently hired as the Commission's Public Information Officer. Kathy McKillip also distributed recent lodging tax reports, staffed visitor center counts, and discussed the implementation of the Commission's Tourism Cares program. Angela White distributed a social media highlight with updates from 2015.

Grant Updates

Heather Hogue noted that the Community Impact Grant applications are available now, with a deadline of September 25th. Per earlier discussions at today's meeting, the Finance Committee will make recommendations at the October 20 Commission Meeting as to the Tourism Marketing Grant program status.

New Business

Upcoming dates for Commission meetings:

October 20, 2015 (Tourism Conference in Columbus)

January 14, 2016 (Senator Luncheon at State Capitol in Lincoln)

February 24, 2016 (Agri-Eco Tourism Conference in Grand Island)

Lisa Burke motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:18pm. Carol Schlegel seconded. Meeting adjourned. Respectfully submitted by Heather Hogue.