

TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING VIA ZOOM
WEDNESDAY, January 13, 2021
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOURISM ADVISORY
COMMITTEE HELD ON JANUARY 13, 2021, 201 S. CORTEZ STREET, PRESCOTT,
ARIZONA. Via Zoom Meeting.

A. Call to Order: Chair Margo Christensen called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m.

B. Roll Call:

TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Present:

Margo Christensen, Chair

Matt Brassard, Vice Chair

Steve Bracety

Peter Gebauer

Robert Coombs

Jim Dawson

Cindy Gresser arrived 11:07

Charlie Mormino

Linda Nichols

Debra Rocha

Absent/Excused:

STAFF

John Heiney, Community Outreach Manager

Joe Baynes, Recreation Services

Ann Steward, Tourism Sales and Marketing Coordinator

C. Approval of October 14, 2020 Minutes - **MOTION TO APPROVE October 14, 2020 MINUTES BY JIM DAWSON, SECOND BY CINDY GRESSER. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

D. **Appoint Secretary. MOTION BY STEVE BRACETY FOR LINDA NICHOLS SECOND BY CHARLIE MORMINO. MOTION PASSES.** John Heiney gave background that recent chair had to resign due to recent position taken. Also, explained and informed what the duties of the secretary are.

E. **Tourism Office Update/Looking Ahead**

(Combined with item I. 3.) Ann Steward read Heather Hermen's report. Report was also turned into Clerk and sent to committee. Ann Steward shared an overview of what the Tourism Office has been and will be trying to plan and prepare for as we move ahead. The office continues to watch insights and align with the state as for as marketing goes while being responsible. Ann Steward gave examples of projects that will be moving forward such as the website. Corragio Recovery Planning workshop completed recently. Mid co-op currently for FY 21, this information is mentioned in Heather's report. State still adjusting as we move through this with certain schedules and deliverables. Next fiscal year co-op work

will begin soon. *Appreciate AZ* has launched. Marketing still regionally based, and they are even predicting that for second and third quarters. Other small projects in the work are: Visit Parks blogger visit coming up, Meeting Planner tab, hoping to get back to our Tourism Team Ups, and lastly Public Relations and Communication Plans are being discussed in regards to recent negative media. Also, data collection, studies, and research were supposed to be in this year's budget, but of course were taken out. Next year still may not be the best time to add these studies back in, as travel behavior still won't be back to normal. However, some of the methods we are participating in will give us some information such as the Sparklight and Uber Geofencing campaigns.

Steve Bracety asked if he could get the Geo Fencing locations, if he could get copies of last year's co-op and this year's. Also, wondering if anyone is working on a plan for pent-up demand for travelers wanting to get out, people will be vaccinated and have disposable income.

Jim Dawson asked if we could explain Geo Fencing. Ann Steward explained.

John Heiney explained that is someone may not be in the Geo Fenced area, but if they were to go on social media and post photos then they would be targeted by Visit Prescott ads.

Linda Nichols also commented that in recent campaign work she has seen Geo Fencing becoming part of campaign targeting and marketing.

F. Committee Member Announcements/COVID-19 Comments

Peter Gebauer (Watson Lake Inn) – Reported that December was pretty quiet at the Inn. Closed for January. Does have cooking classes scheduled.

Cindy Gresser (Museum of Indigenous People) – Museum closed until numbers decrease. Plans remain fluid. Board approved Guest Artist Series until hopefully through March. Eye on Storm Exhibit still up. Auctions in jeopardy, the family/company they use to coordinate the auctions lost a critical member and they are deciding if and/how they will move forward with auctions currently. Trying their best to keep public engaged with social media, etc.

Debra Rocha (GMIHC) – Center closed. Also, a fluid situation. Online sales have been successful. They have been working on projects at the center. There has been mall traffic, so they continue to try and engage them. December was a strong month.

Robert Coombs (Visitor Information Center) – Center closed. Chamber open by appointment only. Assisting Visitors curbside. All of the Christmas City mugs did sell. Numbers are about half. Open on Saturdays from 10am to 2pm. All protocol is followed. Signature events are in the works. They continue to be successful with outside brochure rack, they are keeping it stocked and people are taking lots of information. The Curry's retired and Shannon will be the new events manager and she is doing a great job.

Jim Dawson (Committee Member) – Shared that they are doing their part by staying home to mitigate risk. Asked if there was any movement to encourage leaders that there is a strong influence to implement a different inoculation assembly. Stated that he wanted to make to an

official sign of recognition and appreciation to Recreation Services. The city map is tremendous and the fact that it is connected to an APP for free is even better. What we have here in Prescott is truly exceptional compared to other destinations such as Sedona. Would like committee to figure out what they might do to recognize the fine work of Recreation Services is doing especially in a time when being outdoors and hiking is one of the only things you can get out and do, and it's also safe. Asking the committee to think about doing something for Recreation Services.

John Heiney commented that today at 4pm on City Manager's Facebook live, Leslie Horton would be the guest discussing vaccines.

Joe Baynes commented that they are taking their role very seriously because many people are being affected mentally. Called out fine work Chris Hosking does with trails and suggested that if people don't have the APP to check it out.

Linda Nichols, (Visitor Information Center Volunteer) – Had a couple comments. Misses being at Chamber. She is one of the Mall walkers. Dog Park still busy, they have slowed down on promoting bricks because they don't feel it's appropriate to sell them right now. Has had many friends who have had COVID. Hoping things get better for all of us.

Matt Brassard, (Matt's Saloon – Bar) has slowed on business to be expected. Enchanted Christmas did well, only down by about 10% in visitation. Noticed how many new young people have moved to the area. Saw lots of families.

Charlie Mormino (Yavapai College - Hotel and Restaurant Management Professor) – Hotel and Restaurant Management program has been sunseted, in middle of a teach-out now for the students in the current program. College has been making changes and is shifting to more certification programs that can be completed in less time than a traditional program, they feel this model is better suited for our area. Sunset was still done after vigorous arguments from Charlie and the Director, that especially during these times this program is crucial for the industry. If there are any new developments moving forward he will let us know.

Jim Dawson commented that he was sorry to hear that and he believes not only for tourism industry, but for hospitality industry a program like this is very important. Asked if there was anything that could be organized that might be an advocacy program from the Tourism partners to support the reinstatement of the program like this, not for our workforce, but because it's vital for our businesses.

Charlie Mormino answered back that he doesn't think the college's objection is to the program itself as a whole, but more the traditional method in which it's been applied. This program like many are just not sought after like they used to be, people are not committing themselves to the long term for programs like this. He understands from their perspective (the college's) the reasoning behind the decision, shift, but thinks the timing was ill given condition of industry and knowing what's ahead. Industry was already hurting for not only hourly, but salaried position as well. He does have optimism about what they may implement after they do their research of

what other colleges are doing. Margo Christensen commented that she was also sorry about the program. They have an intern that has been with them for many, many months through the program and she is doing a fantastic job.

Steve Bracety (Prescott Resort) – Commented that last December, of course, was not a typical season at the Resort, but there was some positives, they saw an uptick in entries for Ginger Bread Village in comparison to past years. Also, because many things were shut down this year the village got a lot of great exposure. They were on AZ TV in valley and saw a lot of visitors coming from that story. He agreed with Matt, they also saw a lot of young families at the Resort this season. Regarding the vaccine, he does hope they start to roll out quickly. They are seeing an uptick in calls, especially in small meetings. Hoping the vaccine distribution is successful so business can start to resume. Also, expressed his sympathy to Cindy Gresser.

Chair, Margo Christensen (Ponderosa Hotel Management) – shared summary from the Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association legislative summit held recently via Zoom. Comprised of two panels, a business and a legislative panel.

Business Panel: 300,000 jobs have been lost and half of them were in tourism industry, a billion dollars in tax revenue lost. In AZ the tourism industry is a \$25 billion dollar industry. Start to the 55th Legislative session was two days ago. Legislative priorities are how do we get the tourism industry going again and the Tourism Marketing Authority is back on the table. Major brands (franchises) are still small businesses. AZ is seen as an economic engine in the country. Tourism is still lagging compared to other industries. The state needs to operate government like a business and invest in tourism, it is not an expense, it is a revenue generator and an investment. Tourism and Economic Development efforts need to be combined and an emphasis on hospitality jobs needs to be a focus.

Legislative Panel: Vaccines need to be distributed ASAP. Also, mention of liability reform and how important it is to protect business, employees and employers from COVID lawsuits.

Discussed how there can be help to for businesses regarding funding for the short-term.

Discussion of inviting legislators to our businesses to see what they are doing. And, start discussions to encourage businesses and stakeholders in regards to the Tourism Marketing Authority support.

John Heiney reminded everyone that the city retains a Lobbying Firm. Council every year adopts legislative priorities and the TMA (Bill SB 1101) was one of them. If TMA passes it would provide additional dollars and these funds may be more flexible than bed tax dollars for what they can be used for. There is work that needs to be done ahead of time, it needs 51% of the hotels to approve it, it is “self-tax.”

G. TAC/PAAHC Grants Spring 2021

- 1. General Planning/Looking Ahead**
- 2. TAC Grant Guidebook**

John Heiney began this item reminding everyone that a year ago the sub-committee had their last meeting in January. They did so much work that helped and improved the grant application processes. He shared the upcoming grant schedule. (this will be sent to the

committee). The other idea that came out of this was providing a Grant Guidebook to help the applicants not only with their applications, but also with their events, and event wrap up as far as reporting, etc.

Jim Dawson went on to explain to the group that he volunteered to make the first draft of the guidebook and it is in process. Not only will it further help applicants with the application and reporting process, but with the delivery process when events are over, much more in line with what TAC committee's objectives are, as well as the grantees objectives, in terms of improving their own processes and as a result and improving the reporting processes for what these tax payer dollars are allocated for.

John Heiney thanked the committee for all of their work. There is no committee action, but grant process will start to move forward.

H. Recovery Planning Discussion. Ann Steward started the discussion by reminding everyone that Strategic Planning was on the calendar for this fiscal year, which was pre-Covid. TAC did the last strategic plan in 2018. There was also discussion about a Recovery Plan, but this may still not be the most productive thing to do either. The committee went on to discuss options such as a Strategic Direction Plan, a Pre-Strategic Discussion, etc. Staff summarized that their proposal is to not necessarily do a strategic plan, but to start discussing priorities/goals as we move forward.

Jim Dawson suggested the term or process for a Strategic Direction and explained what that would look like.

Linda Nichols commented that another group she is in is also struggling with the same decision. They had decided to have, what they are calling an "Action Planning Session," Another name she had heard for something like this is an "Exploratory Discussion."

Chair Margo Christensen commented that yes we want to keep discussions going, because things are going to get busy very quickly. Groups, tournaments, and international travel are booking. Once general public also feels safe it's going to get busy fast and we want to be ready for it.

Heather Hermen suggested that it is important to schedule some time to start discussing and for Heather and staff to share the work they have completed on the Corragio Group Strategic Recovery Plan. This could be the plan we use for this process. It should be shown to TAC beforehand and it should be a stand-alone meeting.

Chair Margo Christensen agreed that we should schedule a stand-alone preliminary session for this.

Comments from staff and rest of committee members regarding scheduling and how we should we forward with steps for these sessions.

It was the decision to have The Corragio work presentation scheduled for a separate session soon, as a stand-alone meeting.

I. Staff Reports

1. STR (Smith Travel Research) and Bed Tax – Handouts turned into clerk and emailed to the committee. Ann Steward commented that November's numbers did decrease, but it is still low compared to what's happening in other destinations.

2. Community Outreach Manager Report. John Heiney commented on Billie Orr's resignation and there was time set aside to present her with something from the TAC committee, unfortunately she was unable to be on the call. He shared that he appreciated that she always provided a positive forward-thinking, action oriented influence. She was a great support to TAC. She will be missed. Staff will get with her to present her with our token of appreciation.

Linda Nichols commented that she also supports Billie's decision, but she will miss her tremendously.

Chair Margo Christensen commented that TAC was so lucky to have her as its liaison. Her positivity and leadership skills will always be remembered and missed in our city.

John Heiney reminded everyone that the Mayor is the one to decide who the liaison replacement will be.

John Heiney shared that staff has been able to tour the Hilton Garden Inn. Sam Hill Warehouse will open at a later date.

He also shared that the city is in the processing of merging and working towards combing more of the Tourism and Economic Development efforts. We will have more information about this soon.

3. Moved up on Agenda.

4. Recreation Services. Commented on Billie Orr and how much she did for the city. "She made us all rise higher," Joe Baynes said. Reported trails visits have doubled. Very proud of recent partnership with school system to turn the Community Nature Center off Williamson Valley Road into an outdoor Learning Center. Teachers can now take students there. Greenways project is coming along, firms have been narrowed down for design of work. Tournaments and Special events calendar hasn't really decreased, demand has been strong for scheduling and slots, but scheduling and re-scheduling will be fluid as we move through COVID. Splash Pad construction started up again and they are hoping to be done in April. Has monthly round-table with Recreation Services directors across the state, it has been nice to be able to discuss how everyone is doing things.

5. Airport Update. Report turned into Clerk and emailed to Committee.

6. 2020 Upcoming Meetings

- a. TAC Regular Meeting- February 10, 2021 – 11am
Staff will send out survey to figure out Recovery Planning Presentation as a separate meeting. Committee members suggested two separate meetings on separate days.
- b. TAC Recovery & Moving Ahead Session – March 10, 202 – 11:30 – 1:45pm
- c. TAC Regular Meeting & TAC Grant Scoring – April 14, 2021 11am – 1:30pm
- d. TAC Regular Meeting – May 12, 2021 -11am
- e. TAC Regular Meeting – June

I. Future Agenda Items. Steve Bracety asked about marketing in general and what the plan is For once people get vaccinated.

J. Adjournment. There being no further business to discuss, the Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting adjourned at 12:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Ann Steward

Ann Steward

2.22.2021

Date

Margo Christensen

Margo Christensen, Chair

2/22/2021

Date