

CITY of CASCADE LOCKS — Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING, Monday, May 2, 2022, 6:00 PM, Council Chambers

1. Call Meeting to Order & Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chair Matt Kelly at 6:00 PM. Attending: Vice Chair Debbie Fine, TM Harry Troeger, TM Norm Bourque and TM Val Stepanchuk. Also present, City Administrator, Gordon Zimmerman, Tourism Support Staff, Annie Van Domelen, and producer of PCT Days, Jason Waicunas of Outdoor Viewfinder.

2. Amendments to the Agenda

New business, 11C: Advertising opportunity

3. Comments from General Public

Jason thanks the committee for their support and welcomes everyone to the 15th Annual PCT Days. Jason shares some history of PCT Days. The first year was a cookout inspired by Nick Cramer, Port Staff, who had the idea of gathering hikers together with food and beer. At that time, it was not conceived as a festival. Jason was invited to be a part of the event the second year, when they were situated by the Pavillion with a keg of beer and a gas grill. Year three, the location was switched to Thunder Island where they had about five booths with no monetary exchange, and that continued for a couple years before it became more official. These days, Jason has a wait list of vendors and predicts attendance will much like 2019, which was a peak year, with right around 5,000 attendees throughout the weekend. This year's event will be held on Saturday, August 19th and Sunday, August 20th. TM Bourque asks how they're doing for advertising. Jason has expanded with Outdoors NW, assisting the new owner several hours a week for the time being. He reports two other outdoor events similar to PCT Days, but vendors have communicated that PCT Days is by far the best, as vendors receive their biggest return for investment. As usual, there will be an area to contribute to the FISH foodbank at the entrance, and the Tourism Committee's booth will be moved to the entrance alongside FISH and the Port. Jason then hands out cool stainless steel PCT Days mugs to committee members. He reminds members that Thursday night prior to PCT Days, there will be a Pre-Funk Party at Thunder Island with live music. Friday morning, HOKA ONE shoes and Granite Gear will be doing the Cascade Locks clean up like last year. Plus, a pre-PCT Days event will be held at Gorges Beer Co. in Portland a couple weeks prior to promote the event. Jason now hires staff to help with cleaning and set up. He says any expansion of the event will be around parking. He's already been renting the school field for parking, which has really helped.

4. Discussion/Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interest

TM Bourque mentions he's done PCT Days postcards at no charge for years, so there shouldn't be a conflict of interest.

5. Approval of Minutes Presented: April 4, 2022

At 6:18 PM, TM Bourque motions to approve April 4, 2022 minutes and TM Stepanchuk seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion approved at 6:19 PM.

6. Approval of Financials

CA Zimmerman has no news to report.

7. Approval of Bills

8. Staff Report

Staff reports about TM Bourque's communication with Marlee Boxler, from the City of Troutdale, who will be working at the new Gateway to the Gorge Visitor Center. Marlee has expressed an interest in visiting the Tourism meeting in June. Staff will contact and add her to the June agenda once she confirms attendance. Staff will also provide brochures to the Troutdale visitor center.

Staff asks the committee about the location of Heather Soderberg-Greene's bronze sculpture that was in town prior to being moved. CA Zimmerman thinks Heather is referencing a sail sculpture. Staff shares that Heather would like to contribute to Cascade Locks and has been pondering placement of a loaned sculpture or wood carving somewhere in town. She has a sculpture of an eagle sitting on a branch that she was considering finishing or a wood carving. Chair Kelly says it sounds like a wonderful idea and wonders if there's anything the committee can do to help move that along. The only thing Vice Chair Fine worries about is the artwork being vandalized or broken. CA Zimmerman says the City would need to insure it. And if the piece becomes iconic, maybe the Tourism committee can buy it so it remains in town, since its presence would help encourage people to visit Cascade Locks from more than 50 miles away. Staff will continue the conversation with Heather. CA Zimmerman says to find out the value, then contact Marianne at the City so she can check with the insurance agency for cost. Consensus is, ideally it is placed in a location where there can be some interaction — where people can pose with the art. The committee is excited and asks Staff to see if there's anything they can do to help make it happen because they love the idea. In fact, some members think it might even drive more people to Heather's other statues.

Staff reports Ashley Huckabee May has contacted her. Ashley is the PR person for Visit Hood River and she's gathering three to four travel and lifestyle journalists for a three day spring media familiarization tour May 10-13. It's entitled Hood River: Farms, Foraging and Fish, and she'd like to spend a half day in Cascade Locks. She's already spoken with Sternwheeler in hopes of organizing a cruise. She'd like to connect with the Brigham sisters for an educational interview and then have lunch at Brigham Fish Market. She's asking Staff for help in making the connection. Committee members are all in for Terrie and/or Kim doing the interview and provide support and tips to connect with them.

Staff reports both Certified Folder and Multnomah Falls have each picked up two boxes of the new brochures. Staff asks CA Zimmerman about David Cunningham's hours on the Tourism budget. The committee is just curious exactly what the charges are for and wants to make sure Tourism is only paying for what's related to the tourism website. CA Zimmerman reports Dave charges the City separately. TM Troeger shares his realization that Dave has access to the server and the server is actually onsite, which means when there's a power outage, the server shuts down, causing problems. TM Bourque asks TM Troeger about access to the website. TM Troeger says, when there was a Wordfence attack recently, Dave reconfigured Wordfence so that it kicks TM Troeger out if he tries to log in, which means his IP address is on the blacklist on Wordfence now. TM Troeger has tried to communicate but Dave hasn't figured it out yet. CA Zimmerman suggests TM Troeger contact Marianne about it. The committee decides to get some bids for hourly maintenance for the tourism Wordpress site.

9. Port Report

10. Old Business

A. Update on Distribution RFP

Chair Kelly will complete the RFP and send it to Marianne and CA Zimmerman tomorrow.

B. Create Strategic House/Mission Statement — **Review current statement*

TM Bourque asks if the committee can go over the existing mission statement that's been supplied and then work on it next meeting. Chair Kelly thinks CA Zimmerman's statement should be seriously considered as the tourism mission statement. Learning more about the history of Cascade Locks is mentioned and CA Zimmerman shares a Cascade Locks history book will be available at the museum as a fundraiser in August.

C. Brainstorm Photography Ideas

TM Troeger shares his ideas: PCT Days hikers (fun, smiling faces), PCT Days, Dry Creek hiker walking towards the falls, the flight of a drone of downtown from the bridge to the fire station and back that could be placed on the tourism website. Photos of Herman Creek kayak area, wildlife and birds, people at Thirsty coffeehouse, people holding a beer at breweries, fishermen out at the canal, wedding events

(maybe from the Port), museum. Visualize a way to show people and visitors how attractive Cascade Locks is to move to, especially if they have a business or service. Staff envisions photos that are warm, friendly, of people enjoying themselves in businesses. Chair Kelly likes the idea of weddings on Thunder Island photos. TM Bourque mentions the cove, ospreys and eagles. Staff shares spring or seasonal images, disc golf, different angles of the bridge, historic highway bike trail, Mitchell Point, seeing the beauty from the water, activities on the beach, farmers market.

TM Troeger asks about putting events on the tourism website. Staff has been collecting events and agrees, especially since the Port is no longer placing events on their site. Staff will share events with TM Troeger and reports that CGRA is very encouraged with lots of events this year. TM Bourque asks if Sailing in the Gorge magazine will be printed this year but no one knows. Staff will request bids for hourly photography fees. CA Zimmerman says the committee should accept the most responsible bid. A photo contest is also revisited. A contest can be posted on Facebook and Instagram. Staff asks topics to narrow down for the photo contest. Agreed topics for contest are river, outdoor activity, and town. Staff will get bids on photo session for multiple shots in town.

11. New Business

A. Review 22-23 Tourism Budget

A new budget is presented by CA Zimmerman to the committee; one that Marianne and he thinks is a good starting place. Vice Chair Fine asks for an update on the museum purchasing the property they want. It's still in process but very close, says CA Zimmerman. TM Bourque inquires about putting a table out at the museum to place brochures. Staff will invite Janice Crane to come to a tourism meeting to give the presentation about economic development that she's been giving. Once the museum is on main street, the front part of the museum will be the visitor center. CA Zimmerman shares that the museum's new exhibits are amazing.

B. Media Tour Suggestions

Already covered in Staff Report.

C. Advertising Opportunity: Freeway Signage

Meadow Outdoor Advertising has a sign available 1.3 miles east of West the Dalles Exit 83. The size of the illuminated signage is 14' x 48' with a daily traffic count of 25,300, daily impressions at 16,596. Open read displays to westbound traffic prior to The Dalles exit 84 for traffic traveling toward Hood River and Cascade Locks in the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area. Price per month on a 12 month agreement is \$1250 with initial production and install included. Staff will contact Brad Parsons at Meadow Outdoor Advertising to get more information about prices for shorter term agreements and inquire about designing from a supplied draft. CA Zimmerman reminds the committee, social media is most affordable with the most eyes. TM Troeger suggests a nice Facebook ad; posting a Facebook photo collage with brewery, ice cream, happy hiker, fisherman along with a little blurb and boost it.

TM Stepanchuk says it's all about sharing. Join multiple groups/pages such as Out in Oregon and NW Photographers. It doesn't need to be an ad, just a beautiful photo. Staff asks if there's any way to unify the Port and Tourism committee again. CA Zimmerman reports the Port is having staffing issues, just like the City.

12. Upcoming events:

- A. Mother's Day Brunch / Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler, 9:30–11:30am & 2:30–4:30pm, Sunday, May 8, 2022

13. Tourism Committee Member Reports

A. Matt Kelly

Suggests the tourism committee considers having a presence at other community events.

B. Debbie Fine

Vice Chair Fine updates the committee that she's unable to commit to a lot right now. TM Stepanchuk asks what the next steps are to getting the clean up going. TM Fine suggests getting permission from ODOT and then organize.

C. Cindilee Baseman

D. Harry Troeger

E. Val Stepanchuk

TM Stepanchuk shares how the canoe racing team Matt and he are on are the newest club in the Pacific NW — and their canoe racing team won both races!

F. Norm Bourque

14. Next Meeting Date & Time: Monday, June 6, 2022, 6pm, Old Library

15. Adjournment: Chair Kelly adjourns the meeting at 7:48 PM

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired, or for other accommodations for person with disabilities, should be made at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting by contacting the City of Cascade Locks office at 541-374-8484.