

CITY of CASCADE LOCKS — Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING, Monday, September 12, 2022, 6:00 PM, Old Library

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 Cindilee Baseman, TM Val Stepanchuk and TM Pamela Thweatt. Also present, CA Gordon Zimmerman, Tourism Support Staff, Annie Van Domelen and guest Jason Waicunas, owner of Outdoor Viewfinder.

2. Amendments to the Agenda

Staff requests moving Certified Folder distribution agreement from 7.A. (Approval of Bills) to 11.H. (New Business) since it's not a bill, but a choice between two renewal agreements. Staff also requests adding a new bill received by Skamania County Chamber for membership renewal as item 7.A. (Approval of Bills).

3. Comments from General Public

A. Guest Jason Waicunas of Outdoor Viewfinder for PCT Days Wrap Up / Grant Request

Attendance for the 15th year of PCT Days was approximately 4,200 throughout the weekend — a little less than 5,000 prior to the pandemic. Jason reasons attendance was less than expected due to post-Covid. There was a record number of thru-hikers and people who showed up early in town. Next year, Jason is thinking of having a Friday night party at Thunder Island instead of the Thursday night Pre-PCT Days party. He'd also like to arrange an event at Gorges Beer for Saturday night. One of the companies at PCT Days had sales of \$16,000 over the weekend by setting up a local hotspot to their online store. The PCT Days Raffle raised \$10,200 in one day, which was split equally between PCTA and ALDHA-West. Main street business were booming! At certain times of day, there were lines of people going out the grocery store. Jason is already mapping out an expansion plan to add 20-25 more sponsors at next year's event since there's a waitlist of 35 sponsors who want to attend. 2023 PCT Days will be on August 18 and 19.

4. Discussion/Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interest

CA Zimmerman reminds the committee that a conflict of interest is always related to money. If the committee is voting on something that affirmatively or negatively concerns money, if it financially affects a committee member's pocket book or a direct family member, then a conflict of interest must be declared. If the committee is just discussing the project or receiving updates on contract work and there is no monetary impact, then there is no conflict of interest. However, the ethics commission suggests, when a committee member gives an update on their contract services, that they preface the update by stating, "the following information is being provided as a contractor."

5. Approval of Minutes Presented:: August 15, 2022

At 6:38 PM, TM Stepanchuk motions to approve August 15, 2022 minutes and TM Thweatt seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion approved.

6. Approval of Financials

7. Approval of Bills

A. Vote :: Skamania County Chamber Membership

At 6:40 PM, Vice Chair Fine motions to approve renewal of the annual membership for Skamania County Chamber for \$275. TM Stepanchuk seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion passed at 6:41 PM.

8. Staff Report

Staff reports Shelley at Cascade Locks Ale House was disappointed about being the only restaurant not listed in the Willamette Week article on Cascade Locks. She asked if the committee was involved and I assured her they were not, that we had no idea they were writing the article until after it hit the streets. Staff has

communicated with Jody at the Gorge magazine. She will provide ad proofs at the next meeting since the ad is due by October 28. Staff encourages tourism committee members to sign up for the Tourism Events Scholarship being offered for conferences and trainings by Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Region RDMO. The scholarship pays for admission to events (not food or lodging) and all committee members and staff are eligible to apply. Certified Folder has delivered brochures to City Hall. Staff will check in with organizations/businesses and will work on distributing them in the next few weeks. Staff shares the drone photo provided by Chris Schabow and how he's given the tourism committee approval to use his short videos and images to promote Cascade Locks.

9. Port Report

10. Old Business

A. Contractor Updates

As a contractor, TM Stepanchuk provides an update on images he's taken and plans to update the committee further at our next meeting.

11. New Business

A. Vote :: Skamania County Visitors Guide Ad

Staff provides each member with last year's publication and an info/pricing sheet to see if they'd like to renew last year's ad. After much consideration, the committee decides to pass.

B. Refresher Course on Procedures :: Vice Chair Fine

Vice Chair Fine suggests that a committee member attend city council meetings once in a while so that they know what we're doing and Tourism knows what they're doing. TM Stepanchuk thinks it might be good to do the same with the Port. Vice Chair Fine shares that each tourism committee works on different things, and asks, "What do we want to spend money on?" Chair Kelly recommends the committee have a conversation with the new administrator about what we can do as a committee. Staff suggests, once a new CA is in place, we invite them to a tourism meeting. Chair Kelly recommends providing a list of topics to the new CA before the scheduled meeting. Staff suggests members think about items they'd like to discuss and come to the next meeting with ideas.

C. Vote :: Budget / Contingency Funds

The committee converses about not knowing actual budget numbers. To Staff's knowledge, only one quarter of transient room taxes have been received this year, now that the State is in charge of collecting and disbursing TRT. So far, the committee hasn't received any updates this fiscal year as to actual numbers. Chair Kelly suggests we ask the new CA to help us be more informed with regular updates.

D. Vote :: Distribution Services by Staff Support

Staff offers to provide brochure distribution since there was no response to the posted Distribution RFP. Vice Chair Fine says previous staff used to make calls and mail brochures to some places. The current budget has only \$25 for postage, so when it's time for a new budget the committee will need to consider that. CA Zimmerman suggests leaving funds in the distribution account and that Staff bill hours to that account, if the committee votes to approve Staff distribution. At 7:26 PM, Vice Chair Fine motions to have Staff deliver brochures and be paid out of the Brochure Distribution account with a \$4000 cap. TM Baseman seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion approved.

E. Vote :: Raffle Fund Donation to Cascade Locks Elementary School

TM Baseman reports she's told the school about the \$194 donation collected at PCT Days through the committee's raffle. At 7:29 PM, TM Baseman motions to deliver the \$194 raffle money collected at PCT Days to Cascade Locks Elementary School in exchange for a receipt. TM Thweatt seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

F. Vote :: Boosting Social Media Budget

Staff inquires how much the committee wants to spend on boosting Facebook posts and provides some general information on cost. The committee discusses the best times to boost, such as slower seasons. TM Stepanchuk has social media experience and doesn't think it's worth boosting since content isn't constantly being placed on social media. Boosting, in his opinion, is when you have lots of content on a page and you want a particular post to stand out from other content. The committee decides to shelve the idea of boosting for now. Staff will look at the analytics of past/current posts and report next meeting. TM Stepanchuk suggests posts be done day-of an event or even a live post. He believes they receive more engagement.

G. Discuss General Sheridan Sign :: TM Thweatt

TM Thweatt asks if the committee is interested in inquiring about the General Sheridan sign. If not, she wants to know if it's okay for her to look into it as a resident of Cascade Locks, rather than a committee member. There's a state park in Cascade Locks named after General Sheridan, and there's an informational sign about him that was placed in 2007. The sign mentions his accomplishments but he's also known for "Indian wars." TM Thweatt is questioning how appropriate it is to have a sign about Sheridan within the city limits, especially considering Native American residents. TM Thweatt hasn't reached out to a contact that she's been given yet to find out who placed the sign. The committee thinks it's fine for TM Thweatt to find out more facts and bring the information to the next meeting.

H. Vote :: Certified Folder :: Distribution Renewal - Choose From Two Agreement Options

Staff asks members to review two Certified Folder distribution agreements so they can choose one. At 8:12 PM, Vice Chair Fine motions to approve renewing the previous agreement with Certified Folder for the kiosk panel at Multnomah Falls and brochure delivery at Mt. Hood Visitor Area for \$1407.60 (which includes a prepayment discount). TM Thweatt seconds the motion at 8:14 PM. All in favor. Motion approved.

12. Upcoming events:

- A. Bridge of the Goddess Run, Saturday, September 17, 2022, Cascade Locks Marine Park

13. Tourism Committee Member Reports

- A. Matt Kelly
- B. Debbie Fine
- C. Cindilee Baseman

TM Baseman will be resigning next month but will be at our next meeting.

- D. Harry Troeger
- E. Val Stepanchuk

September 18 is the Gorge Canoe Clubs monthly community BBQ.

- F. Norm Bourque
- G. Pamela Thweatt

14. Next Meeting Date & Time: Marketing Meeting, October 3, 2022, 6 PM, Council Chambers

15. Adjournment: Chair Kelly adjourns the meeting at 8:23 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.