

CITY of CASCADE LOCKS — Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING, Friday, March 27, 2023, 6 PM, Old Library City Hall

1. Call Meeting to Order & Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Debbie Fine at 6:15 PM. Attending: TM Val Stepanchuk, TM Harry Troeger and TM Pam Thweatt. Also present, Tourism Support Staff, Annie Van Domelen. Public guests, Norm Bourque, Janice Crane from Cascade Locks Historical Museum and Jeanetta Blue from Port of Cascade Locks.

2. Amendments to the Agenda

None

3. Comments from General Public

Janice Crane :: Cascade Locks Historical Museum

Janice presents an impact report showing museum attendance at 22% normal in 2020 (due to Covid), up to 79% in 2021, and 99% back to normal in 2022. Museum operating season has expanded to March through October. They will offer free passes for the Multnomah Falls parking lot during the busy season this year (no waterfall passes required). Parking passes will be required beginning Monday before Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. The museum had one seasonal rotating exhibit last year called, *Now Entering the Uncanny Valley*, about why the manicans are so creepy; and Janice's book, *Images of America: Cascade Locks*, was also published. In 2022, the museum hosted the 160th birthday of the Oregon Pony on April 24. This year, the museum opened on March 3; they are open Thursday–Monday from 10am–5pm, and are seeing a higher percentage of local visitors. Local admission price is currently \$1; local students are free. Upstairs has been opened so visitors can walk through rooms. The Columbia Gorge Museum Pass is back this year, providing a punchcard allowing up to four people to attend ten museums in the Gorge for \$99. The museum receives quarterly donations from the City through the Tourism budget for offering visitor center services. They have converted two full time staff jobs into one, and are recruiting to replace the entry level position, which will be seasonal rather than year-round. The collection managed by the museum is mainly owned by the City, and so far about 25% is catalogued for online viewing. They're in the process of complying with The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, where any items potentially removed from gravesites need to be repatriated to tribes. The museum is exploring options for a new facility; and have doubled their impact since the city's investment in 2019. Chair Fine asks if a sandwich board, or other signage could be placed on WaNaPa so visitors know the museum offers visitor information services. Janice has inquired about signage but there's a lot of compliance involved, and suggests someone talk to the City about it or the possibility of an ordinance being updated. Chair Fine reports people in town don't even know the museum is an information/visitor center. Public guest, Norm Bourque, suggests the museum add Visitor Center to their new logo to indicate they are one. Chair Fine thinks the idea might be beneficial too, since it would attract even more people to the museum as they seek information.

4. Discussion/Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interest

5. Approval of Minutes Presented: March 3, 2023

At 7:15 PM, TM Thweatt motions to approve March 3, 2023 minutes. TM Troeger seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

6. Approval of Financials

None

7. Approval of Bills

None

8. Staff Report

The kiosk panel has been sent to IGN for print. There were inconsistencies with QR codes working during the printing process. Staff hopes the panel will be ready to pick up this week. Staff spoke with Lizzie Keenan regarding tourism scholarships to the Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism. She wants to be sure all Cascade Locks Tourism attendees meet or exceed scholarship requirements and asked Lizzie for advice on which sessions to attend to fit our tourism needs and learning experience. Staff references the RFP for Staff Support that will come up for bid this spring, and points out how the committee's title repeatedly includes "and Beautification," and suggests making a request to remove it from the committee's title. TM Stepanchuk suggests it's more about clearly defining "beautification." Tourism might be able to pay for something such as murals or a statue, and that could be allowed and considered beautification. Public guest Bourque would like to invite the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association to the next tourism meeting to answer questions regarding what is allowed. Staff suggests the committee start brainstorming about special event ideas for the 2026 100 year anniversary of the Bridge of the Gods and the 2027 100 year anniversary of Charles Lindburg flying under the bridge.

9. Port Report

Jeanetta Blue :: Port of Cascade Locks

Jeanetta provides March and April community events with the committee. Their entire event season is now March–November, which is longer than when Jeanetta started working at the Port. Jeanetta shares that she was contacted by the producers of Blues, Brews & BBQs, an annual event that takes place in Stevenson, about the possibility of overflow camping at Marine Park, and in an attempt to connect Cascade Locks to the yearly event. Jeanetta points out how there's a gap with travelers finding transportation from the Portland Airport to Cascade Locks outside the hours of 7am–6pm. This leaves people trying to find an Uber, Lyft, or shuttle service, or having to rent a car, know someone or be willing to pay top dollar to get to Cascade Locks. She wonders if there's a shuttle service with Hood River hotels and the airport that we might be able to tap into. Cascade Locks is a great place, but getting here outside regular work hours can be challenging. Jeanetta will share CGRA's impact report with Staff when she receives it.

10. Old Business

A. Budget Committee

Vice Chair Fine asks how the committee wants to work on the budget; as an entire committee or a separate committee. TM Thweatt offers to do a spreadsheet so everyone can reference it on google drive and suggests viewing past expenses to create next year's budget. TM Thweatt will build a shell and bring it next meeting.

B. Review RFP for Staff Support

Review is pushed to next meeting.

C. Vote :: Cascade Locks Historical Museum Grant

At 7:57 PM, TM Troeger motions to approve the Cascade Locks Historical Museum grant for rack card distribution for \$1221. Vice Chair Fine seconds the motions. All in favor. Motion passed.

11. New Business

A. Vote :: Order Tourism Brochures

At 8:03 PM, Vice Chair Fine motions to approve reordering tourism brochures from Precision Graphics with text edits only for \$2499.79. TM Thweatt seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

B. Vote :: Add PDX Visitor Center to Certified Folder Brochure Distribution

At 8:06 PM, TM Troeger motions to approve brochures being placed at the new PDX Visitor Center via Certified Folder distribution for \$414. TM Thweatt seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

C. Vote :: Photo Contest :: Duration + Budget

Discussion on the photo contest is pushed to next meeting.

D. Vote :: Business Cards for Conference

At 8:17 PM, Vice Chair Fine motions to approve business cards being printed for tourism committee members and staff who are attending the Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism, to be printed at Staples for 17.99 for 250 business cards per person, for a total of \$71.96. TM Thweatt seconds the motion. Motion passed.

E. Vote :: Elk Ridge Golf Course Ad

The committee declines the opportunity. No vote.

F. Review Columbia River Gorge Co-op Spread

The committee likes the proof, no edits are suggested.

12. Upcoming events:

A. Rainier Cup (Collegiate), Saturday–Sunday, April 15–16, 2023, Marine Park

B. Kickball Tourney, Saturday, April 22, Gorges Beer Co.

13. Tourism Committee Member Reports

A. Matt Kelly

B. Debbie Fine

C. Harry Troeger

TM Troeger did a couple updates on the website but that's all he wants to do until the theme gets updated but it appears the theme is on Bernadette's Elementor theme business account. He suggests purchasing the theme and switching the tourism website to a non-city web host. The conversation will continue next meeting.

D. Val Stepanchuk

E. Pamela Thweatt

14. Next Meeting Date & Time: April 17, 2023 at 6 PM

15. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 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.