

CITY of CASCADE LOCKS — Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING, Monday, June 26, 2023, 6 PM, Old Library

1. Call Meeting to Order & Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Debbie Fine at 6:02 PM. Attending: TM Harry Troeger, TM Val Stepanchuk and TM Emily Seely. Also present, CA Jordon Bennett and Support Staff, Annie Van Domelen.

2. Amendments to the Agenda

3. Comments from General Public

4. Discussion/Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interest

5. Approval of Minutes Presented: June 5, 2023

At 6:04 PM, TM Troeger motions to approve the June 5, 2023 minutes. TM Stepanchuk seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

6. Approval of Financials

2023–24 Tourism Budget :: CA Bennett

CA Bennett goes over the new budget with Tourism members. The committee has a healthy beginning fund balance, and CA Bennett is expecting an increase in room assessment income to around \$75,000. The committee is carrying over a balance of around \$57,000 (minus anything Tourism has spent the past month), making the estimated budget for 2023-2024 at around \$125,000. Contract Services for Support Staff has increased by \$6,000 to allow for the increase in Support Staff hourly rate from \$20 to \$25 per hour.

Tourism Support account has increased to \$40,000 since the budget is healthy; and around \$5,000 out of the account will be used for this year's fireworks and around \$2,000 will be used to pay for utilities at the museum during the 8 months they are open. CA Bennett says next year the committee can be more involved in making recommendations, but this year timing was too tight with budget deadlines. Other areas of budgetary info include \$20,000 for Visitor Center Staffing (as done the past several years) and \$9,000 in Capital Reserve in hopes for a new visitor center multi-use building in the future. On a side note, CA Bennett informs the committee that City Council approved RadCom as the City's IT service provider.

7. Approval of Bills

8. Staff Report

CGTA and Lizzie Keenan with the Mt. Hood Region are working together on accessibility listings for businesses. Staff will be sending out a pre-written intro letter to local businesses to advise them that they will be contacted by CGTA. The project isn't aimed at making anyone wrong or trying to get businesses to do anything, it's just to find out what kind of accessibility businesses currently have in place. The information will be written up by a professional writer who will provide it to businesses so they can display their accessible travel information on their website, marketing materials, etc. At the Governor's Conference, we learned the importance of placing disability information online in order to help people with travel planning. They've asked we limit the first round letters to 5–10 businesses within the following categories: lodging, food, shopping and attractions. Staff shares her intended list of first round contacts. Lodging: Best Western and Cascade Motel (with Columbia Gorge Inn, Bridge of the Gods Motel and KOA next round). Food: Bridgeside Restaurant, Brigham's and Gorges Beer (with Cascade Locks Ale House and Thirsty next round). *Thunder Island has already been completed. Shopping: We'll focus on the gift shop at Bridgeside and contact Cascade Market next round. Attractions: Buddy's Arcade and the Port (thinking mainly for Marine Park, camping and venue rentals). TM Seely asks about the gift shop at Bonneville Dam. Staff will contact them to see if they'd like to be included in the next map update if the committee decides they should also be included on the Cascade Locks map. Staff will also contact Heather Soderberg-Greene to see if she'd like to attend next meeting.

9. Port Report

10. Old Business

A. New Ordinance :: Chair Kelly + TM Thweatt

Chair Kelly and TM Thweatt had volunteered to review the New Ordinance and provide edits, so the committee decides to table the discussion for next meeting. CA Bennett confirms it's fine to wait.

B. PCT Days Swag :: Review Order 1

Jason with Rusted Ratchet Creations was unable to be present. Staff suggests inviting him to the July 10 meeting. Vice Chair Fine will see if she can get some of his items to bring to our next meeting. Staff expresses concern regarding lack of communication with Columbia Graphics and may reach out elsewhere. TM Stepanchuk recommends placing a hiker on the T-shirts this year, along with the text: "Cascade Locks, Oregon" and keeping it simple. If we place a logo on the T-shirt at all, TM Seely suggests having a small logo placed on the back of the shirt up near the collar. In the event Staff wants to order PCT swag through a business other than Columbia Graphics, an amendment to the prior vote is recommended by TM Troeger. At 6:59 PM, TM Troeger motions to amend last month's vote of PCT Days swag to spending up to \$2500 on swag through a vendor of our choosing. At 7:00 PM, TM Seely seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

C. Tourism Finance Officer

Staff suggests no need for a Tourism Finance Officer at this time since the 2023–24 budget has already been completed. It's agreed that Staff and committee members should begin working with CA Bennett earlier on next year's budget so they may offer input.

The conversation moves to better Information Center signage both on WaNaPa and down in Marine Park. Staff will take a look at what exists and report back. It's suggested to contact ODOT in regards to placing one of their blue signs on WaNaPa. If ODOT can place signage, TM Seely requests signs also be placed at freeway entrances into town.

11. New Business

A. Vote :: PCT Days Swag, Order 2

The committee chooses to wait until next meeting to vote on the swag order.

B. Stickers and Postcards for PCT Days

Staff will work on postcards and TM Troeger happens to already have a graphic of the Bridge of the Gods, so he'll send some oval sticker designs. One that includes the Bridge of the Gods and the other with a large CL with a hiker graphic (same hiker as the T-shirt). Sticker size is 3x4. Some of the sticker designs could also be used for postcards, but Staff will create some postcard proofs with images.

C. Explore Ideas to Support Businesses

TM Troeger suggests inviting businesses to attend our meetings to let us know how business is going and if they see a particular need that tourism might help to fulfill. Vice Chair Fine suggests approaching businesses in the fall since they're so busy in the summer, then those ideas or suggestions could be applied during the slow season. TM Seely wonders if we could do a Christmas light expedition on Thunder Island in conjunction with the Port. Her idea would enhance the bridge lighting that the Port already provides and bring more people to Cascade Locks during the winter. Staff brings up a Sky Watch event occurring this year and wonders if a skyviewing event might be something to consider, along with music and possibly Indigenous dance. TM Stepanchuk recommends highlighting businesses on social media as a support tool. He offers to do a few reels on businesses and asks the committee for recommendations. Vice Chair Fine suggests Cascade Motel, and TM Troeger suggests highlighting Bridgeside. Staff recommends highlighting one of the new businesses in town (Buddy's Arcade, Bike the Gorge or Otter and Osprey).

12. Upcoming events:

- A. Annual Fourth of July Celebration, Tuesday, July 4, Marine Park

13. Tourism Committee Member Reports

- A. Matt Kelly
- B. Debbie Fine
- C. Harry Troeger

TM Troeger will be in touch with CA Bennett next week since the city has a new IT service. He hopes to be contacting them soon regarding the tourism website. TM Troeger spoke with Sean Herman at Fish and Wildlife regarding a broken floating dock at Herman Creek Hatchery. He told TM Troeger a wildlife biologist needs to check out the situation before they can do any repairs.

- D. Val Stepanchuk

TM Stepanchuk talks about finding a date for Indigenous cultural dance and wonders if the Community Potluck in August might work. Gorge Canoe Club put on their second event and after the race, about 60–70 people drove from Drano (where the event was held) to Gorges Beer in Cascade Locks to eat. Their next big event, on July 8, is a six-man race from Stevenson to Drano to Bingen. Some teams will come from afar including Australia and Hawaii. Then the Downwind Champs is on July 10, which will be based at Stevenson Fairgrounds. So far, over 850 people have registered from around the world. He also reports that Stevenson's old bridge was replaced in one day.

- E. Pamela Thweatt
- F. Sophie Harbaugh
- G. Emily Seely

Emily has lived in Cascade Locks for two years. She works in the craft beverage industry as a sales manager for a cider company. She travels a lot for work to promote their cider brand and set up events. She wants to be more active in the community and thinks Cascade Locks Tourism will be a good fit. We welcome you to the committee, Emily!

14. Next Meeting Date & Time: Monday, July 10, 2023, 6 PM, Old Library

15. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired, or for other accommodations for persons 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.

Public access to the meeting is available via Zoom. Remember *6 to mute/unmute your phone, *9 to raise your hand if you have a question or comment. By smart device on zoom.us, meeting code: **872 129 1324**, password: "citymeet" / By phone: **1-253-215-8782**, meeting # is **872-129-1324**, passcode: **17722174**