



Tourism Walla Walla Board Meeting

Walla Walla Chamber of Commerce

May 17, 2013

Present: Jay Brodt, Zachary Fraser, Leahna Laboca, Kyle Mussman, Mindy Nelson, Jennifer Northam, Ron Peck, Scott Peters, Michele Rennie, Key Wessel, Duane Wollmuth, David Woolson, Justin Wylie

Absent: Andrae Bopp, Chris Garrett, Shane Laib, Tim McCarty

Meeting called to order at 10:00am.

Chair Scott called the meeting to order at 10:00am. He reminded board members of the need to be expeditious with respect to the "regular" agenda items so that ample time is available review and discuss the relocation issue on the agenda.

April 17, 2013 Minutes

Jennifer moved to approve the April 17, 2013 minutes as presented, Kay seconded. The April 17 minutes were accepted unanimously.

Financial Information

Ron reviewed the April financial information. Board discussion ensued. Michele identified that the budgeted revenue for the Hotel Motel Commission was understated and requested clarity with respect to no longer reflecting contributions from Downtown Foundation. Cindy requested that the term "TPA" be changed to Hotel Motel Commission. Ron acknowledged all three and noted they would be corrected. A motion to accept the financial report with the notated changes was made by Duane and seconded by Jay. The Financial report with noted changes was accepted unanimously.

Marketing Report

Ron reviewed marketing actions accomplished from April 12 through May 10. He mentioned specifically the media trip visit with DVA to Seattle and felt that it would pay off in the future. He also referenced and recognized the work by DVA with respect to the agri-tour itineraries attached in the DVA report. Ron stated that he is hopeful that the State of Washington Department of Agriculture may copy the itineraries and post on the section of their website which is focusing on regions and the unique food and culinary experiences in those areas of the state.

Ron also mentioned the upcoming Marketing Committee meeting scheduled for next Tuesday, May 21 at 9:30am at Baker Boyer Bank fifth floor conference room. He welcomed any board members interested in participating to attend. The subjects to be addressed at the meeting include the Walla Walla County Tourism grant, reviewing and approving the Research survey scheduled to be launched on June 15, a review of the social media strategy, and discussion regarding peak season midweek promotion concepts.

Executive Director's Report

(A) Tourism Indicators

-STR Report: The March STR report was included in the board packet. Ron noted that it appears as if the first quarter is up slightly in terms of overall occupancy, ADR and RevPar.

-City Tourism Indicators: Ron referenced the city lodging tax and walked through how he arrived at the actual revenue (for the reporting period of January through April) and the estimated revenue picture for the full year. Ron recognized and thanked Tim McCarty for his assistance in aiding Ron in developing the full numbers. Discussion ensued regarding truing up at the end of the fiscal year (December 31). Ron noted that the Hotel Motel commission numbers were also attached.

(B) Signage Committee Update

Ron reported that the signage committee comprised of Ron, Duane Wollmuth, Elio Agostino and Jennie Dickenson had met. The committee agreed that a communication needs to be developed soon to give interested stakeholders and organizations that have already invested in the initial work of the regional way finding / signage an update and status on where the project is. Dave acknowledged the importance of this communication as he has received inquiries from the Walla Walla Chamber board inquiring as to the status of the project. Both Duane and Ron acknowledged the importance of an update communication to interested parties on the status of the signage way finding efforts. Ron also mentioned that Jon Bosio would be in Walla Walla on the 29th and 30th of May. One of the objectives would be to hold meetings with the wineries in the various regions and review the proposed signage plans with the wineries as it relates to the winery areas in and around Walla Walla.

(C) Communications Marketing Position

Ron mentioned that the position had been posted and he had received 30 resumes. The posting of the position closes this week. He has already begun interviewing and is working to have a selection made fairly quickly.

Other Business

(A) June Board meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding the efficacy of holding the June Board meeting due to scheduling issues. It was agreed that the June TWW Board meeting would not be held.

(B) VRBO (Vacation Rental by Owner) Request For Participation

Ron mentioned that over the past couple of weeks TWW has received a number of inquiries for participation in the TWW website and to participate in the Tuesday release of available rooms. Discussion ensued by the board regarding how to properly address and work with VRBO's. It was agreed to continue the policy of stating that if a VRBO is paying the City/County lodging sales tax, then we will work with them in terms of their marketing and promotional sales efforts.

Relocation Discussion

Ron distributed an updated relocation report to the board members and reviewed the various components of the report that included Visitor center totals, the visitor survey, a review of other visitor centers (Anchorage, Bend, Napa Valley, and Seattle), and a recap of costs associated with the 210 2nd Avenue and Pantoruim buildings. After the presentation, substantial discussion ensued by the board. Cindy made a motion to direct Ron to identify office space for the administration work of TWW with as short a lease as possible. Motion was seconded by Zachary. Further discussion ensued regarding the possibility of a joint cooperative visitor center in conjunction with a business venture that is being developed by Justin and VaPiano wineries. Chair Scott called the question. The motion passed without dissent.

Motion was made by Leahanna to adjourn, seconded by Jennifer. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20am.