



**TRANSIENT LODGING TAX AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 7, 2018, 4:00 PM
Permit Center Conference Room, Newberg City Hall
414 E First Street**

Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:	Dennis Lewis, Chair	Shelia Nicholas, Vice Chair
	Rob Felton	Matthew Murray
	Megan Carda	Jessica Bagley
	Brian Love	Robert Griffin
	Loni Parrish	Kyle Lattimer
	Ashley Lippard	Lori Louis
	Joe Hannan, Ex Officio	

Members Absent: Ex Officio Mayor Andrews

Staff Present: Doug Rux, Community Development Director

Guests: Carr Biggerstaff, Mike Ragsdale, Christian DeBenedetti, Ethan Saunders

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None.

MINUTES OF THE MARKETING SUBCOMMITTEE – JANUARY 29, 2018

No action required information only.

REVISIT OF DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT-MARKETING GRANT PROPOSAL – WOLVES & PEOPLE

Chair Lewis introduced the topic of discussion. The original ask was sent to the City Council in the amount of \$30,000 and Council asked that the TLT Ad Hoc Committee reconsider the request.

Member Griffin inquired if the trail was a private trail and if the pavilion is an asset that could be sold in the future. Are the funds only for public entities?

Chair Lewis indicated it was for the trail only and not the pavilion.



Member Parrish asked for clarification if \$30,000 is what is being discussed for the trail. She noted that the TLT Committee had discussions about grants to private entities and Council agreed that it was acceptable.

Member Murray explained the City Council consideration of the recommendation and request. He noted that Wolves and People make a good product but are only open Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The trail is about 1.5 miles long.

Christian DeBenedetti of Wolves & People clarified that they could be open more days in the week, currently they are using winter and spring hours of operation which are Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The goal is to be open six days a week in the spring. He noted that for the Oregon Department of Transportation blue tourist signs they have to be open six days a week (available of by appointment) and that for the trail the hours would match the hours at A to Z WineWorks.

Chair Lewis inquired about a guarantee on access to the trail.

Christian DeBenedetti indicated that intent is to increase hours they are open. The trail would be open when the brewery is open and restated they intend to align with the hours at A to Z WineWorks. The trail is not by appointment, would be open when the brewery is open.

Member Murray inquired about if the brewery is closed how does access work, insurance liability issues. Would there be a sign or gate when the trail is closed?

Christian DeBenedetti noted they would have agreed upon hours with A to Z WineWorks.

Vice Chair Nicholas noted that A to Z WineWorks is open seven days a week.

Vice Chair Nicholas inquired about the hours of operation noted in the agri-tourism permit from the County.

Christian DeBenedetti recapped that they have a conditional use permit from the County and have federal and state permits. The agri-tourism approval was issued by the County and that he has re-applied for the Agri-tourism permit renewal. Allows 18 events a year. Allows food and chefs 18 times a year. He indicated that if A to Z WineWorks is in harvest they would coordinate on open or closed status of the trail. There was a general discussion on hours of the trail, brewery, A to Z WineWorks, and events.

Member Louis inquired why the trail has to be open at the same time. The trail is to incent people to come to Newberg. She noted it is tourism dollars and not public tax dollars and that residents do not pay the transient lodging tax. Have lost focus that trying to attract tourists.

Member Love indicated that he does not know why hours of operation is an issue. The trail is a tourist attraction and hours is a non-issue. The Cultural Center and Hoover House at not open all the time.

Louis indicated there would be a contract in place.

Member Murray noted that we are all learning about tourism and tourism possibilities.

Member Lattimer asked if there're were other City Council issues with the proposal.



Member Murray shared that a question is do you have to pay to use the trail. He had concerns initially and noted that he missed that the grant opportunity applies to the 97132 zip code. Think about dollars and where they come from – hotels.

Member Louis shared that the Allison Inn & Spa collects the transient lodging tax from guests. It is competitive to bring people to Newberg. Newberg needs something that is unique or different. The trail would be unique to bring people to Newberg. Nationally and internally it would be unique opportunity It would be sad not to see it happen.

Member Carda noted the Chehalem Cultural Center and Minthorn House charges for events. Why is the trail issue different. The Oregon Truffle Festival charged for admission.

Member Felton indicated he is concerned because beaches are free and trails are free in Oregon.

Member Felton noted it feels strange because in Oregon trails are free.

Member Lippard noted that at Champoeg State Park you have to pay to get into the park to use the trails.

Chair Lewis asked if there were any other strong concerns. He asked for a motion.

MOTION: Bagley/Louis to accept the original TLT Committee recommendation to fund \$30,000 for the trail. Motion carried (10 Yes/2 No – Felton/Griffin).

Christian DeBenedetti inquired if he could apply next year for the pavilion.

Chair Lewis indicated it was unknown at this time.

MARKETING SUBCOMMITTEE – MARKETING PROPOSAL

Chair Lewis directed the Committee members to page 123 of their packet. The TLT Committee was established to operate for 2 – 5 years to make recommendations to City Council. There are a variety of opportunities. The Subcommittee has visited other communities and that Visit McMinnville is alive and well with a strong wine industry. Visit McMinnville is willing to work with Newberg.

Member Parrish shared that McMinnville started with grants and changed their model.

Chair Lewis noted that information has been gathered on the Grants Pass model of marketing. He also noted that the Newberg Downtown Coalition represented by Mike Ragsdale is present today.

Mike Ragsdale shared that his Board has not looked at the marketing issue. His personal views is that the grant program is not the highest and best use of the funds. The Committee would be well suited to look at other options. He shared looking at a Board structure similar to the Chehalem Cultural Center, create a 501c3. Would need to get a charter by City ordinance. Focus should be on getting heads in beds.

Chair Lewis referenced the Chamber contract with the City. He asked the Committee if we should break the contract or modify it. He asked what the Chamber vision of tourism operation is.



Carr Biggerstaff shared that he echo's what Mike Ragsdale said. What Visit McMinnville has done is great. Some Chambers hold on to the visitor center. Not sure he wants to shut down brick and mortar at this time. Chamber location is not as desirable as used to be. He does not believe grants will get you where you want to be. Chamber is willing to have the Visitor Center, willing to have a tourism director or agency at the Chamber. He recommends constituting some type of Board of Directors to focus on tourism and destination marketing. Option 1 is the Chamber proposal that keeps the Visitor Center in place for some period of time. He noted the Eugene model which has a separate tourism group. The challenge is how do you staff someone to get tourism work done. The Visit McMinnville model has a lot of cost to lease space, etc. and reduces dollars for tourism marketing.

Option 1 - Chamber house a person, additional TLT dollars to fund.

Option 2 - Chamber keeps Visitor Center and someone else does marketing. The Chamber looking at space downtown.

Member Lippard inquired if there is an option where the Chamber does not have the Visitor Center.

Carr Biggerstaff noted yes.

Member Lippard noted that operating a visitor center is expensive.

Car Biggerstaff shared numbers of \$70,000 for Visitor Center, \$30,000 for tourism marketing and \$30,000 for staff for tourism. If the Chamber does not have the Visitor Center then don't need as large a space and reduced staffing. The Chamber is working on hiring a new Chamber Executive Director.

Char Lewis inquired where is tourism in Chamber priority.

Carr Biggerstaff indicated the Chamber needs to be a Chamber first.

Member Louis expressed that the Visitor Center costs seem out of proportion. She has not heard about FAM tours, coordination with Travel Oregon or Willamette Valley Visitors Association, etc. If a person is a contractor or at the Chamber are her choices. Do we need a tourism director? Yes we do but what Board do they report to.

Carr Biggerstaff shared that the Chamber gets \$139,000 of which \$39,000 was for tourism marketing. If funds had not been capped by the City the Chamber would have hired a tourism person.

Member Louis noted that a tourism person could be applying for grants that are available such as through Travel Oregon.

Member Griffin inquired if an RFP has gone out for a tourism person.

Chair Lewis indicated no that these discussions are assisting in which direction to go.

Member Griffin asked if someone had talked with Visit McMinnville.

Chair Lewis noted that members of the Marketing Subcommittee had met with Visit McMinnville.

Member Griffin stated that a Board of Directors would be good.



Chair Lewis shared that he was part of the Chamber group that that received first tourism dollars from the City. The way people access information has changed greatly over the last 12 years.

Member Parrish stated she is a proponent of to hire somebody and to have a Board of Directors made up of stakeholders. We should look at a transition to not have a Visitor Center. The last round of grants is not getting us where we want to go. Want to work with Chamber and not leave them in a lurch.

Joe Hannan, Ex Officio stated the group needs to go back to the Tourism Strategy noting facilities, events and marketing. If you want to change the percentage distribution need to go back to the City Council to convince them.

Vice Chair Nicholas state that with a person all of what Joe Hannan outlined could be done. She is not used to this committee structure. Hiring an individual is the correct path.

Member Murray inquired on the Small and Large grants and if we should keep the Small grant program and not have a Large grant program. The person should not be a City staff person, it could be a contractor. He is looking for consensus. He inquired if we need a Visitor Center and do people direct tourists to a Visitor Center.

Member Griffin asked if George Fox University has a marketing degree program. Is there the possibility for interns?

Member Carda suggested possibly working with a professor and interns at George Fox University.

Member Lippard noted that then you have to pay the professor.

Member Parrish suggested bringing in Visit McMinnville people to the next meeting. If don't get moving then getting farther behind.

Chair Lewis noted not looking for a decision today. Want to take the conversation back to the Marketing Subcommittee.

Member Carda asked if we are getting ahead of ourselves in hiring a person.

Chair Lewis noted that we looking to develop a recommendation to City Council on a program.

Member Lippard stated the last year and a half have not been a waste and have learned a lot.

Member Bagely inquired if there is an issue in developing next year's budget.

CDD Rux noted that it is not an issue as TLT funds are there and dedicated to tourism.

Chair Lewis inquired about leveraging Dundee, Yamhill County and Newberg transient lodging tax dollars.

Member Carda asked about when the next round of grants would occur.

CDD Rux noted that they would be in the fall of 2018.



Carr Biggerstaff shared that Morgan McLaughlin is the new director at Willamette Valley Wineries Association. In conversations with her she does not believe small grants move the needle.

Member Bagley inquired on when the next Marketing Subcommittee is meeting.

CDD Rux stated March 19, 2018 at 8:30 AM at City Hall.

Member Louis shared again that a person could be going after grants to advance tourism in Newberg.

Member Love shared that it feels like wasting time. Only three groups in town that qualify for grants.

Member Louis referenced the Tourism Strategy that said to create a Destination Marketing Organization or a Board.

Chair Lewis shared that the group had to go through the process to learn.

Mike Ragsdale shared that the skate park, golf course and aquatic center are tourism facilities and CPRD has not done a good job of marketing them as tourist facilities.

Member Parrish noted that LTL dollars are being used to support what the City used to fund.

Joe Hannan, Ex Officio, indicated no.

Member Felton stated we need to move quickly for someone to do tourism. He is talking to Dundee and they are willing to share their website.

UPDATE ON SMALL GRANT SOLICITATION (FY 2016-2017)

CDD Rux provided an update on the 2017-2018 programs. Awards went to Chehalem Cultural Center Camellia Festival Run/Walk, Oregon Truffle Festival, Hoover-Minthorn House and Anvil Academy Kart Rally.

Member Carda inquired if the awardees have enough dollars to do their programs and events.

CDD Rux indicated he is working on contracts now.

Chair Lewis shared that he visited Anvil Academy and the cars they are building.

Member Parrish shared that Brett Baker is aware of the Anvil Academy Karts and that they will be in the Rose Festival Parade.

TLT MEMBER UPDATES

None.

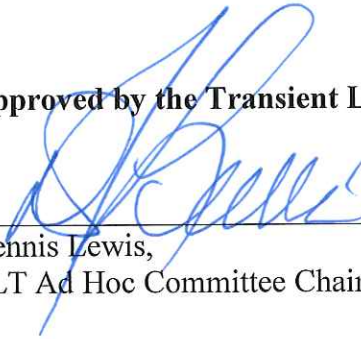
NEXT MEETING APRIL 4, 2018

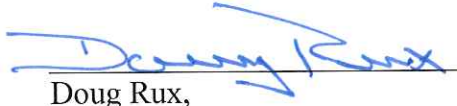


ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

Approved by the Transient Lodging Tax Ad Hoc Committee this 4th day of April, 2018.



Dennis Lewis,
TLT Ad Hoc Committee Chair

Doug Rux,
Community Development Director