



ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 19, 2023
3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Location – Hybrid:

Link posted on TPA website for public access

Snohomish County Executive Office:

Willis D. Tucker conference Room
3000 Rockefeller Ave., M/S 407
Everett, WA 98201-4046

Meeting called by: Advisory Board Chair

Please review: September 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes

3:00 p.m.

Welcome

- Mike West: Hi everyone! Welcome to the Tourism Promotion Area Advisory Board October 2023 meeting. We have two grant applications on the docket along with a couple of presentations from staff including updates from the TPA Analysis and the Sports Commission 2024 budget. Before we call roll, I want to give an important update. Kiel and Sarah are no longer on the TPA Advisory Board due to changes in roles. Quynh is joining us today as a prospective new board member. We are looking for a replacement for Sarah so if you know anyone that would be interested, please forward their information to Simreet.

Roll Call

- Board Members Present:
 - Teresa Bitner – present
 - Nikki Brame - absent
 - Jennifer Caveny – present
 - Tyler Chism – present
 - Doug Hobbs – present
 - Janet Pope – present
 - Mike West – present
 - Jeff Bae – present
 - Danielle Cavoto - absent
- Staff Present:
 - Simreet Dhaliwal – Snohomish County Executive's Office
 - Trudy Soriano – Snohomish County Executive's Office
 - Tammy Dunn - Snohomish County Sports Commission (SCSC) - DMO Agency of Record
 - Rachel Lane - Snohomish County Sports Commission (SCSC) - DMO Agency of Record - absent
 - Nathan Caferro - Snohomish County Sports Commission (SCSC) - DMO Agency of Record
 - Amy Coelsch – DVA – DMO Agency of Record
- Presenters Present:
 - Jeremy Sage - RRC Associates

- Linda Neunzig – Snohomish County DCNR
- Amy Mikulsky – Snohomish Youth Soccer

3:10 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Grant Applications:

- Snohomish Youth Soccer - Bigfoot Tournament
 - Amy Mikulsky: Snohomish United Bigfoot Tournament expansion will occur in 2024. This tournament has been in the Pacific Northwest for over 30 years. The plan is to expand the tournament in 2024. The total ask is for \$40k which includes social media, printed material, event signage, and décor. Partnerships with hotels will be focusing on beyond the 50-mile radius. Community impact will not only benefit the tournament but also the general county. Tangible benefits include anticipated generation of approximately 8,000 room nights in the county over two weekends. The economic impact has been calculated by the SCSC.
 - Jennifer Caveny: Which weekends in July? How do you break up the weekend?
 - Amy: It will be July 19-22, July 26-9. The dates are broken up age groups.
 - Janet Pope: How many room nights did you have over one weekend?
 - Amy: Based on the survey last time, there were somewhere over 3,000 room nights. This survey was of hotels and attendees.
 - Mike West: Which regions are you reaching out to?
 - Amy: We are trying to reach out of WA and reaching into Canada. There has been increased eastern WA participation including Yakima.
 - Mike: There was an approved grant in 2021. What was the catalyst for that request?
 - Amy: That was for a tournament that we no longer have. The national organization cancelled that event.
 - Jennifer: Do you see any challenge in losing teams of doing it around the same time as Crossfire Challenge?
 - Amy: Cross fire is a partner. We never have a problem in having less teams. It's an exchange not a competition.
 - Linda Neunzig: The goal of this conference is the agriculture viability and economic prosperity. It is a priority for Snohomish County in terms of being a leader in agriculture. Attendance is around 200-350 people. It is put together by a team of volunteers. One track is Agritourism including pumpkin patches. Try to provide information that they would need in order to keep growing as an agritourism spot. Making sure everyone knows how the business runs. Cut flowers is another one that brings in a lot of tourism. We do draw attendees from eastern WA and Canada. Speakers stay two nights. The funding would be for graphic design and to get the word out by using the radio.
 - Jennifer: How many attendees can the conference hold?
 - Linda: We could go up to 500.
 - Mike: This is the first time you're coming to the TPA. Why now?

- Linda: A lot of local farmers don't even know about this conference. Getting posters designed and marketing will help get the word out.
- Mike: What stations are you targeting?
 - Linda: Local KRK would be the station we would target.
- Janet: Would you have a plan to downsize if you didn't get this money?
 - Linda: We would not downsize. We would make sure that we still have our speakers. Maybe there would be less spent on food and swag bags. The conference is too important to agriculture to not do it.

Board Business:

- Grant Applications
 - Snohomish Youth Soccer
 - Jennifer: I don't think the hotel numbers are accurate. I would be happy to support with the expectation that we would need to have real numbers at the end. We should verify how many out-of-town teams that we have. It usually seems like they are local. I would want to make sure that we are getting outside business.
 - Janet: That economic impact sounded too much. I would like to see more data from these applicants.
 - Tyler Chism: I want to support the soccer. Room nights seem inflated.
 - Tammy Dunn: We used the DI impactor. It is just shy of 530 room nights in 2023. There is a chance that people are staying in Airbnb. We have some data from Play Easy that shows where people are staying.
 - Jennifer: I talked to Tammy that the numbers are a little inflated based on how many kids you can fit in a room.
 - Tyler: What is a realistic number for the grant? They got a grant in 2021.
 - Tammy: That was for a different tournament that no longer exists.
 - Mike: There will be economic impact from restaurants.
 - Tyler: Are we potentially not funding something else by funding this during our busiest season? It might be something to consider for this meeting.
 - Janet: Maybe we should include a calendar of when there is events scheduled and a breakdown by the sector.
 - Jennifer Caveny moved to approve, Janet Pope seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
 - Focus on Farming.
 - Jennifer: Cannot approve. \$10,000 for 10 rooms is a lot.
 - Mike: Most of the marketing funds will be for local radio buys and swag buys.
 - Janet: Not sure if it is a good fit for TPA. It sounded like speakers were the only ones that would be staying. It would not be a big bang for the buck.
 - Tyler: It would help hire a consultant to help grow the conference. Conference that is focused helping on local agritourism. Since it is a local industry conference.
 - Tyler Chism moved to deny, Jennifer Caveny seconded. Application denied.
- Analysis Update by RRC

- Mike: Moving right along, Jeremy is here with RRC to continue our discussion on the Analysis that they are conducting on behalf of the TPA. A steering committee met a couple weeks ago to talk more in depth about the process and timing. Today, Jeremy will provide preliminary summary of info learned so far from discussion in Snohomish County as well as lead a discussion of other TPAs and use of funds and allocation decisions. Jeremy, over to you.
- Jeremy Sage: We started yesterday with on-the-ground conversations. So far, we have met with Jennifer, Tammy, and the city of Lynnwood. We are starting to highlight opportunities for discussion. Currently, we are pulling in information from other TPAs. A lot of the focus has been on lodging tax and efforts vs TPA definitions. The state RCW for LTAC includes marketing, operations of special events, operations, and capital expenditures of tourism-related facilities. RCW for TPA, on the other hand, is specific to marketing and does not call out operations or capital expenditures only. As we start to look into other municipalities, there is a lot of interaction between LTAC and TPA. Most municipalities are defining marketing and promotion between TPA and Lodging Tax. TPA business plans across the state take the definition directly from the RCWs. LTAC tries hard to call out infrastructure.
- Mike: How are other DMOs organizing themselves around these definitions?
 - Jeremy: So far, we have looked at Walla Walla and Chehalis. Their code is very similar to Snohomish County. Prosser includes a more specific cost of expenditures. The grant application for Wenatchee includes LTAC and TPA in one. They have joint meetings between TPA and LTAC. This is the first pass of looking at these and will now talk to these groups.
- Janet Pope: I loved that Wenatchee model. It would be nice to know who applies to both groups. It seems it would be easier on the staff administratively.
 - Jeremy: Not sure how that process fully works and see how that allocation is occurring. Boards could still be operating in their own way, but this model would increase collaboration and ensure there is efficiency.
- Mike: The definitions of TPA vs LTAC are interesting. Operations are included in LTAC. It seems like there is more flexibility due to that one word.
 - Jeremy: Marketing seems to be defined as distributing information for the purpose of marketing. It seems like it's about bringing the various pots of money into one. As we have more conversations, we'll understand more.
- Janet: Are you finding that including but not limited to, is an important caveat?
 - Jeremy: So far, yes. Swag is a question that could be raised due to that. Its hard to take it to one blip but have to put it in the whole difference.
- Tammy: It seems like over the years, that's what's coming to the TPA have been special events that is actually in the LTAC definition.
 - Jeremy: It seems like there is opportunity that could be useful for example bid fees.
- Mike: I get that sense that broadening the definition of the marketing is a desire though there may legal restraints.
 - Tyler: From my perspective as an economic development professional, marketing means taking actions to promote good

behavior. There is a lot of precedent of defining promoting to mean marketing. One possible fix is what Wenatchee which is combining TPA and LTAC. There could be one contract that calls out both LTAC and TPA. We should not define the literal definition of promotion.

- Mike: The TPA has more funds than LTAC. We're limited by definition; they're limited by budget. Whatever brings business into our county is promotion. Seems short sided to define promotion so narrowly.
- Jeremy: That will be the next steps to figure out definition. The challenge is that the TPA does not prohibit capital expenditure specifically.
- Snohomish County Sports Commission Budget
 - Mike: Alright, now I'll turn it over to Tammy to go over her budget for 2024. An updated budget is in your packets so please review now.
 - Tammy: I'd like to increase Kynlyn Jackson, Teresa Bitner, Jennifer Caveny are the SCSC board members. The projected economic impact is from January to August. The economic impact is projected \$3.86 million. Sports events booked in 2023 include new events. In 2024, we will continue to recruit, retain, and facilitate events. We will also do promotion across the country. The budget total is \$619,690. We are requesting an increase from 3 FTEs to 4 FTEs to normal pre-pandemic levels. We will be able to promote and market the destination. We will be strategic in marketing to events and media. The position would be a sports event coordinator. Overall, the marketing budget has increased a little due to additional trade shows, commitment to LGBTQ and BIPOC event organizers. New laptops are also included. Other revenues, SCSC has started a hotel commission and rebate. Amount generated is \$740 in 2023. \$3,000 is expected for 2024. Not a stay to play method. Don't own any events to sell tickets. Do have a sports hall of fame committee and banquet but that is separate from what SCSC does operationally.
 - Mike West: Can we take the vote today?
 - Simreet Dhaliwal: If the board feels comfortable today, then yes.
 - Tyler: What are the changes in budget from 2023 to 2024? With your staffing, do you plan for a cost-of-living adjustment?
 - Tammy: The marketing category includes advertising development, subscriptions, trade shows. The increase is \$650. There is an increase in the wages and benefits category of \$99,000 for the additional staff. There is a slight increase for new computers. Meals and milage would go up because of the new FTE. Moved accounting to bookkeeping under operations.
 - Yes, cost of living is adjusted in wages and benefits.
 - Mike: For the board, do you want to vote on it now or next months? I want to make sure that everyone has time to read and digest.
 - Janet: Don't have any concerns voting today.
 - Janet Pope moves to approve, Teresa Bitner seconds. Motion passes unanimously.
- September Board Meeting Minutes
 - Jennifer Caveny moves to approve, Doug Hobbs seconded. Motion passes unanimously.