



SNOHOMISH COUNTY
Tourism Promotion Area

Minutes of TPA Advisory Board Meeting, dated July 21, 2020

- Members Present :** Shawn Walker, Chairperson – Lodging, At-Large
(By ZOOM conf) Georgia Borg-Leon, Secretary – Lodging, Dist. 3
Matthew Rosenthal, Vice Chairperson – Lodging, Dist. 1
Julio Cortes – Member, Non-Lodging, Dist. 2
Dale Gellner – Member, Non-Lodging, Dist. 3
Maia Kalehua – Member, Lodging, At-Large
Doug Hobbs – Member, Non-Lodging, Dist. 5
Veronica Verge – Member, Lodging, At-Large
Adrienne Hall – Member, Non-Lodging, Dist. 1
- Members Absent :** Sheldon Johnson – Member, Lodging, Dist 2
Reshma Singh-Chand – Member, Lodging, Dist. 4
Virginia Olsen – Member, Non-Lodging, Dist. 4 – proxy assigned to Julio Cortes
Jay Ohm – Member, Lodging, At-Large – proxy assigned to Shawn Walker
- Staff :** Tom Teigen – Department Director, Parks, Recreation & Tourism
Bridgid Smith – Administration and Tourism Division Manager, Parks, Recreation & Tourism
Carol Peterson – Interim Tourism Promotion Coordinator
Tammy Dunn – Executive Director, Snohomish County Sports Commission (SCSC)
Annique Bennett – Tourism Development Specialist, Parks, Recreation & Tourism
- Applicants :** Sara Blayne – Lynnwood Convention Center – Shuttle Service
Annique Bennett & Mary Angelo (DVA) - Seattle NorthCountry DMO bridge funding for 2020

Documents:

- Meeting agenda
- Draft Minutes from TPA Advisory Board Meeting on May 19, 2020
- Lynnwood Convention Center Shuttle Service Application & Support Letter
- Seattle NorthCountry DMO 2020 Bridge Funding Application
- Voting Tally for Zoom conferencing board members
- Power Point – DMO Presentation

1. Opening:

Meeting called to order at 3:03 p.m.

2. Welcome and Introductions:

Carol Peterson welcomed Board members and staff to the July 21, 2020 virtual ZOOM TPA board meeting, provided instructions on how to participate using the ZOOM raise hand, mute features, and also notified the participants that the meeting was being recorded.

3. Grant Applications Reviewed:

Sara Blayne, General Manager at the Lynnwood Convention Center, presented her application for shuttle service funding for 2021 through 2023 for \$12,000/yr. This would be a shuttle service between the Convention Center and the numerous Lynnwood hotels to entice larger groups to book with the Lynnwood Convention Center. They previously were funded by the TPA Board for shuttle service for 2018-2020, and had offered this service to a vendor for the 2020 fiscal year. However, due to COVID-19 the event was rescheduled to 2021 and their current contract runs out December 31, 2020. So they are requesting two items: one to be approved to carry the \$12,000 over from 2020 to 2021 for this specific vendor, and then to be approved for funding for a continuing three year contract (2021-2023) for \$12,000 each year to fund motor coaching to shuttle customers to/from the Convention Center and their hotels. There was also a letter of support from the Lynnwood hotels showing favor for this application.

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Annique Bennett & Mary Angelo (DVA) presented their application for Seattle NorthCountry DMO bridge funding for 2020. Prior to starting the presentation a board member asked for clarification as to why they were presenting to the TPA Board. He explained how the LTAC had funded this program in 2019, and was wondering why they are now coming to the TPA Board for funding for the remainder of 2020. Bridgid explained how it was the administrations recommendation for the tourism group to apply to the TPA Board. She explained how we have been trying to meet with the new LTAC Chair, Stephanie Wright, since May, but due to her involvement with the health committee & COVID-19 response, we have not been able to connect. Bridgid also explained that as fund managers there are fund reserves set aside by approved policy (not code) from the LTAC, and these reserves will be considerably eaten into with the completion of this contract for the remainder of the year. The TPA is the best representation of the industry right now with a current \$2M appropriation level for this year, with only the Sports Commission contract still remaining for funding, and a \$4M balance at the end of last year. They are looking to the TPA Board for decisions going forward. The goal for this application is to open up a dialogue, get feedback, and see where the TPA/hoteliers stand and whether they support the direction DMO is going. If LTAC is still willing to fund the contract and dip into their reserves, then it should not go to TPA Board, but if LTAC only funds a portion then yes, at that time come back to TPA Board to apply for remainder. Discussion of the bonding issue and relationship with LTAC and funding of the DMO was also brought up again, and the concern to fund this prior to the bond going out.

Annique continued with presentation and explained about the funds they need for recovery, in order to stay competitive and resilient. Mary Angelo spoke about the visual and what is ready to go when the correct Phase opens up. She explained the \$1.2M budget that was originally approved for DVA, but with COVID-19 that budget has been cut by 35% and the original contract amount (approx.. \$336,000) that was supposed to end in March has been stretched throughout the last seven months. So the remaining \$460,000 is what they are here to discuss today with the majority of it set aside for media buy hard costs, website development, and creative assets hard costs. They still need to get out and film, take pictures, etc, but with COVID they have been restricted. The current advertising was created from existing material, and they need to get out there and get more. The current advertising is ready to execute, just waiting on the County to open up. Mary's team also presented data analysis, mobility reports, STR Reports etc. Snohomish County is recovering faster (approximately 20% ahead) than other counties as a whole. Skagit County is the only one outpacing Snohomish County. Saturday night occupancy is also increasing, showing that the leisure travelers are willing to start spending the night. Stats also show that over half of our hotel occupancy is still ahead of us in the August through December months, so plenty of opportunities to attract the leisure traveler. The Seattle NorthCountry's "stories" campaign was presented to the Board, along with the marketing plans which are guided by the appropriate tiers & phases. They are asking for these funds so they will be ready at the time needed for the opening up of the County, and for quick immediate action with media buys, etc., but also stressed that those funds would not be used if not in correct phase. Board member asked about seasonality and how we only have until the end of September with nice weather and what will be done after that, when the outdoor recreation push can't be used. Mary explained that there are still several other areas (shopping, hiking, snow sports, etc) that are still outdoor experiences that aren't as weather dependent, so there's still a lot that they can do, along with upcoming holidays, etc.

4. Board Business:

a. Grant Applications – Recommendations and Votes:

- Lynnwood Convention Center (no partial funding):
Shuttle Service 2021-2023 – **full funding of \$36,000** 10 yes, 0 no Approved
- Lynnwood Convention Center:
Carryover of 2020 Shuttle service of \$12,000 to 2021 - 10 yes, 0 no Approved
- Seattle NorthCountry DMO:
Bridge Funding for remainder of 2020 - **full funding \$460,529 (no partial)** no vote taken
Voted only for support of the content & direction, and to go to LTAC first 10 yes, 0 no

b. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

- Shawn Walker made motion to approve, Matthew Rosenthal seconded, to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2020 meeting; motion carried unanimously.

5. Staff Reports:

Tammy gave a quick update on her group, explaining that her staff have been furloughed for the last nine weeks, and Tammy has been doing all work, trying to look for new events moving forward into 2021 and beyond. She also explained that most conferences are going virtual, so there will be no travel spend on those. She also submitted a 2021 budget draft proposal to the Sports Commission Board with several scenarios (budget with a staff of four, staff of three, and a staff of two). She wants the TPA Boards perspective on this since nationally and countywide the occupancy rates are way down, and the revenues are down 40-50%, but at the same time the hotels, starting July 1st, are collecting an additional \$1.00/night. She wants to be mindful of the additional \$1.00 and the reserves, and would like the TPA Board's perspective on the way she should go. Times are different, she is willing to move things around, etc. Board is stating that she needs to be the one to inform the board when

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there is new work out there and more staff is required to secure it. Return on investment for her position is a 1 to 1 ratio, so when more events are out there, that's the time to come to the board and say more staff support is needed. The Sports Commission Board has agreed to extend the furloughs for Justin and Tyler until August 15th, which would be the full 12 weeks allowed. At that time a difficult decision would need to be made, either hire them back, or lay them off. She has also been asked by her board to look into the PPE loan, but there are strict guidelines to retain the funding on returning hiring, etc. Terry has been working 1 day a week and Tammy is looking at what possibilities Terry could help out with if brought back full-time – website maintenance and social media. Tammy feels that with some support on the social media/website area, she could focus more of her time on the sales aspects. TPA Board has asked that Tammy keep open communications between her board and the TPA Board in order for both boards to run in the same direction. Tammy also suggested that local clubs/organizations will be the key to hosting tournaments so that her staff can start promoting the event nationally, etc. It's going to be a drive market only over the next several months.

Training – Thanks to Maia & Adrienne for completing their online Boards & Commissions Training. We encourage the remaining board members to take a look at the PowerPoint presentation and let Carol know when you have completed your training. Carol will look into a list of which members are still required to take the training course, and then reach out individually.

6. Meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

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