



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

MINUTES

TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING

HELD WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020

VIA ZOOM

PRESENT: VOTING:

Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider, Chair
Richard Rolke, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Kevin O'Brien, Attractions
Dauna Kennedy, Arts & Culture, Vice-Chair
Brett Woods, Biking
Councillor Dalvir Nahal (Appointed Member)
Michael Van Horne, Golf
Susan Lehman, Downtown Vernon Association
Gale Woodhouse, Arts & Culture
David Gibbs, Accommodation Provider
Matt Scheibenpflug, Accommodation Provider
Mike Fotheringham, Okanagan Indian Band
Ricardo Smith, Sports and Events
Clinton Bialas, Restaurant
Troy Hudson, Ski

ABSENT: Janna Maderyc, Accommodation Provider

NON VOTING: Ian Jenkins, Silver Star Mountain Resort
Mayor Victor Cumming
Councillor Kari Gares

STAFF: Kevin Poole, Staff Liaison, Manager, Economic Development & Tourism
Torrie Silverthorn, Tourism Coordinator
Karen Savill, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development and Tourism
Natasha Kositsin, Secretary 1, Corporate Services

ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:08 a.m.

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ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by Councillor Nahal, seconded by Richard Rolke:

THAT the agenda for Wednesday, December 16, 2020 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

CARRIED.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Nahal, seconded by Clint Bialas:

THAT the minutes of the Tourism Commission meeting held Wednesday, November 18, 2020 be adopted.

CARRIED.

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Councillor Gares to the Tourism Commission as the new appointed Council member and thanked Councillor Nahal for her time and knowledge on the Commission.

UNFINISHED BUISNESS

TACTICAL MARKETING PLAN 2021 UPDATE

The Tourism Coordinator gave an update on the Tactical Marketing Plan for 2021. The following points were provided:

- The Manager Economic Development and Tourism thanked the Tourism Marketing Sub-Committee for their feedback which assisted in forming the Tactical Marketing Plan
- Provided an update to key operators on how things will be shifting in early 2021
- The Draft Tactical Marketing Plan will be sent to the Marketing Sub-Committee by the end of this week for review over the holidays
- The draft plan will be presented to the Commission at the January 20th meeting, and if approved, the plan will be presented to Council at their January 25, 2021 Regular Council meeting
- As per Tourism Commission Bylaw #5683, the Tourism Commission Chair will also provide Council with the annual review of Tourism in 2020 and plans for 2021 at their January 25, 2021 Regular Council meeting

CO-OP MARKETING PROGRAM 2021 UPDATE

The Tourism Coordinator gave an update on the Co-op Marketing Program for 2021. The following points were provided:

- We received feedback and made some minor changes

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- We changed the intake to include two periods instead of one – the first intake period deadline will be in February and the second will be in the summer
- The application and guidelines will be posted to the website in January
- Social media communications and an e-blast will be sent out as well
- COVID-19 updates can be found on the Tourism Vernon website under Discover and then the Partners tab
- The Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce (GVCOC) and the Downtown Vernon Association (DVA) both support and encourage shopping local with their respective campaigns
- MRDT funds are available for tourism marketing efforts within our region

STAKEHOLDER VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE UPDATE

The Tourism Coordinator gave an update on the Stakeholder Virtual Open House. The following points were provided:

- The virtual event is slated for February 18, 2021 as a zoom webinar - will provide more details at the beginning of 2021
- A save-the-date was just sent out in the Tourism Vernon Christmas E-newsletter
- It was requested that Tourism Commission members create a candid one-minute video to reflect on how COVID-19 affected their business in 2020 and highlight the challenges they overcame
- The Tourism Coordinator will contact Davison Orchards and other key stakeholders and will create a 15-minute video montage to be presented at the Virtual Open House .
- Stakeholders are curious as to what highs and lows other tourism businesses faced in 2020
- Destination BC and the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) have confirmed that they will provide guest speakers for the Stakeholders Virtual Open House

NEW BUSINESS:

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Tourism Vernon

- The Manager, Economic Development and Tourism has been working with the Sports and Cultural Society of the North Okanagan (SCSNO) regarding a potential bid for an event in 2022. This may be brought forward for discussion to an In-Camera Tourism Commission meeting in January

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- The World Travel Awards were cancelled in 2020 and haven't been rescheduled yet for 2021
- The Chair of the Tourism Commission has reached out to the TOTA for an update

Silver Star Mountain

- The Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Symposium is scheduled for Fall 2021 at Silver Star Mountain Resort with the possibility of a "field trip" to Predator Ridge Resort. A save-the-date has been sent out by the North Okanagan Cycling Society.
- They also shared that another Crankworx Summer event is possible for 2021, similar to the Crankworx event they held in 2020.
- Both of these events have been previously held at Whistler, but it would be easier to manage restrictions in a smaller community

Vernon Winter Carnival Society

- The Vernon Winter Carnival Society has faced challenges in organizing events this year, due to COVID restrictions
- They have been in daily contact with the Ministry and Public Health Authorities and are altering events to abide by the orders
- Events that have been approved, but have been altered to adhere to Public Health Orders, are as follows: Reverse Parade, Chili Cook Off, Scavenger Hunt, Celebration of Talent, Jam Cam and Raffle Draws
- Other events have been placed on hold until January 8 to see if restrictions will be lifted
- The DVA has previously hosted up to five events during the Carnival but have scaled down to two this year and they are: Chili Cook Off and a Scavenger Hunt
- It was suggested that the Winter Carnival Society send out a video to get the word out to the community that the Carnival is going to continue with innovative and creative COVID safe events
- It was also suggested that crowd control planning should be considered, and to create a video "walk-through" explaining what to expect at events this year
- The Commission discussed how they can support the Carnival

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- Councillor Gares (Winter Carnival Council Representative) will contact Vicki Proulx, Executive Director to ask for a list of events that are going ahead and events that are undetermined
- Councillor Nahal made a suggestion to incorporate 'shop local' into the Carnival with an event to attract residents downtown
- The Tourism Coordinator shared that Tourism Vernon has been in touch with Vicki Proulx regularly
- Tourism Vernon is a diamond sponsor. We have our logo and messaging in the brochure including a Top 15 things to do in Vernon during Winter Carnival list
- Tourism Vernon is also sponsoring the ice playground

Tourism Vernon

- The Tourism Manager position has been posted
- There were concerns if this was a good time to be hiring
- The Manager, Economic Development and Tourism addressed concerns: After budget discussions with Council and receiving MRDT funds, we feel confident that Vernon will be in a good place and are optimistic for 2021
- Destination BC presented their 3-year plan and a key tactic will be disbursement of travelers to smaller communities
- It is expected that there will be a return to normal by Fall 2021
- Tourism in late summer early fall could be very busy with pent up demand

Arts and Culture

- The Vernon Community Arts Centre shared that they have had a 75% – 100% uptake in local shoppers at their annual Artsolutely sale this year. The shop local movement is working. They are exploring how to retain the local shopping market going forward.
- They managed to stay within the guidelines using more imagery and videos

Sovereign Lake Cross Country

- Expressed concerns regarding funds that were allocated for the Ski Nationals event that was cancelled in 2020.

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- The Manager, Economic Development and Tourism confirmed that those funds would be rolled over and be available to support the event next year

Predator Ridge Golf & Resort

- July market has been extremely higher than previous years with August and September sales topping July's numbers
- The winter market has been booming due to travel restrictions for snowbirds
- Travelers feel safe at Predator as it is its own community with a focus on golf, wellness and biking
- Their electrostatic cleaning process instills confidence in guests

Restaurant

- Marten Brewpub has seen a tremendous increase in take-out orders since switching to Skip the Dishes
- They have had to raise their costs by 10% to offset the 25% fees that Skip the Dishes charges. Although sales are up, they are still losing 15%
- It was suggested to offer discounts for pick up orders or to search for another delivery company that offers better rates
- Summer months in 2021 are completely booked with weddings and Christmas is completely booked with parties
- A request was made for Council to provide a letter of support and to lobby senior levels of Government regarding capping delivery charges
- Okanagan Spirits is also frustrated regarding lack of Federal support to distillers providing hand sanitizer during the pandemic. The Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce is lobbying the government on their behalf
- The Manager, Economic Development and Tourism will do some research with the Province, the restaurant industry, the Downtown Vernon Association and the Chamber of Commerce for discussion in January

City of Vernon

- Councillor Nahal mentioned that Councillor Anderson will be bringing a motion to Council in January regarding an

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outdoor skating rink and requesting a letter of support from the Tourism Commission

- The Manager, Economic Development and Tourism will look into this for discussion at the January 20th Tourism Commission Meeting

Moved by Councillor Nahal; seconded by Claus Larsen:

THAT the Tourism Commission request a letter of support be sent to Council in support of an outdoor skating rink.

CARRIED.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Tourism Commission is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 20, 2021** at 8:00 a.m. via zoom.

The Tourism Commission meeting adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Claus Larsen

Chair