



# THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

## MINUTES

### TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING

HELD WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2021

VIA ZOOM

**PRESENT: VOTING:**

Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider  
Richard Rolke, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce  
Kevin O'Brien, Attractions  
Dauna Kennedy, Arts & Culture  
Councillor Kari Gares (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  
Mayor Victor Cumming (Alternate Member)

**NON-VOTING:** Ian Jenkins, Silver Star Mountain Resort

**ABSENT:** Brett Woods, Biking  
Janna Maderyc, Accommodation Provider

**STAFF:** Kevin Poole, Staff Liaison, Manager, Economic Development & Tourism  
Torrie Silverthorn, Tourism Coordinator  
Karen Savill, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development and Tourism  
Janice Nicol, Deputy Corporate Officer

**ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 a.m.

**ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Nominations for the position of Commission Chair for 2021 were called for three times.

Claus Larsen was nominated and accepted.

Moved by Richard Rolke, seconded by Gale Woodhouse:

## **TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES – JANUARY 20, 2021**

THAT Claus Larsen be elected Tourism Commission Chair for 2021.

**CARRIED.**

Nominations for the position of Commission Vice-Chair for 2021 were called for three times.

Dauna Kennedy was nominated and accepted.

Moved by Troy Hudson, seconded by Claus Larsen:

THAT Dauna Kennedy be elected Tourism Commission Vice-Chair for 2021.

**CARRIED.**

### **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Moved by Kevin O'Brien, seconded by Dauna Kennedy:

THAT the agenda for Wednesday, January 20, 2021 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

**CARRIED.**

### **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Moved by Dauna Kennedy, seconded by Kevin O'Brien:

THAT the minutes of the Tourism Commission meeting held Wednesday, December 16, 2020 be adopted.

**CARRIED.**

### **UNFINISHED BUISNESS**

### **TACTICAL MARKETING PLAN 2021 UPDATE**

The Tourism Coordinator outlined the draft Tactical Marketing Plan for 2021 (attached to agenda). The following points were provided:

#### **Tactical Marketing Plan**

- Annual Marketing Plan prepared as per usual but tweaked to add an administrative section
- Tactics remain the same but allocation of dollars has been slightly adjusted.

#### **Budget**

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- Budget was submitted to the Chief Admin. Officer in August
- Will end with surplus of just over \$300,000
- \$200,000 of this surplus will be transferred to reserves to assist with recovery
- Document is not final as we are waiting for MRDT for November and December
- Thank you to Marketing Sub-committee – for their time and commitment to this process
- The plan includes a shift in strategy, need to be able to hit ‘go’ when it is time, focus efforts once pandemic restrictions ease
- The spend on digital is higher than usual, which gives greater insight and stats
- The amount budgeted for travel and transportation – need funds for bringing media in for hosting once that is allowed, staff travel remains at nil
- There will be a trial mobile visitor info centre (VIC) that will be reviewed with Commission after summer. The plan for 2022, based on success of mobile VIC, will be developed at that time.

Moved by Dauna Kennedy, seconded by Claus Larsen:

THAT the Tourism Commission endorse the 2021 Tourism Tactical Marketing Plan and proposed amended 2021 budget, as presented at the Tourism Commission meeting of January 20, 2020 by the Manager, Economic Development and Tourism.

**CARRIED.**

### **2021 VISITOR GUIDE**

2021 Visitor Guide included in Tactical Marketing Plan. Represents a significant cost but is provides great marketing. There has been a reduction in the number of pages in the guide, with streamlined info and a focus on regional (similar to other DMO’s).

### **CO-OP MARKETING PROGRAM 2021 UPDATE**

The Tourism Coordinator provided an update on the applications and noted that volunteers are needed for the Co-op Marketing Sub-committee.

- Four applications received to date for the first intake period with deadline of February 1, 2021
- New this time – funding will be reimbursed only after campaign or event is complete. If event does not proceed, grant will not be reimbursed.
- Those that have event in July can apply in February to secure approval early

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- If event is cancelled, please advise Tourism Coordinator as soon as possible so funds can be reallocated accordingly
- Approval usually known in one month, best to submit application early if possible
- Messaging for Co-op Marketing Program:
  - E-newsletter
  - Industry exclusive Facebook group
  - Tourism Vernon/City website
  - Contact with previous applicants
  - Various press and media outlets.

A call for volunteers for the Marketing Sub-committee was made – only those that are not submitting for 2021 Cooperative Marketing Funding are eligible.

Moved by Dauna Kennedy, seconded by Claus Larsen:

THAT the Tourism Commission appoint Richard Rolke, Mike Van Horne and Clinton Bialas to the 2021 Co-op Marketing Sub-committee.

**CARRIED.**

### **STAKEHOLDER VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE UPDATE**

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

- Event is planned for February 18 (Sign-up is open) and will include many great speakers including a researcher from Destination BC
- Please spread the word amongst your networks and attend the event if you are free
- An individual email will be sent to each Commission member requesting a short video about your experience being a partner in local industry by answering the following questions:
  - What word would you use to summarize 2020?
  - What was an unexpected challenge you encountered in 2020?
  - What is something you can thank 2020 for?

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

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### **ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION**

#### **Arts & Culture**

##### **Arts Council of North Okanagan**

- Approaching 2021 with cautious optimism
- Moving forward with cultural master plan and a strategic plan moving into 2022
- Glad for co-op funding opportunity.

##### **Art Gallery**

- As part of the Cultural plan –an economic impact study for arts and culture being prepared, will provide benchmark with other cities – more information to be provided next meeting
- Regional District North Okanagan submitted grant application – looking for advocacy for positive outcome
- Fundraising campaign currently involves one on one private asks until it is safe to launch a public campaign
- Okanagan Print Triennial (International Printmaking Exhibition) proceeding from March 18 – May 19, 2021 – is a high caliber event in partnership with UBCO – Gallery is proud to be a part of this event. Great potential in future years to be heads in beds with international and regional guests.

#### **Ski Sector**

##### **Sovereign Lake Nordic**

- Extraordinary season to date, membership grew by 45% (gained 1,000 members)
- New demographic - many new, young faces and families
- With new market segment came challenges – Sovereign has a small staff, there were more first aid incidents but overall, has been a fun season
- Controls that were put in place proved successful, RFID cards provided good stats for future
- Ended up cancelling many programs but managing of group sizes and safety protocols successful
- Demographic of guests - mainly local and regional.

##### **Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce**

- Continuing to support and shop local
- Webinars set up for members, running from February through summer on a variety of topics to assist businesses
- Also, will be holding Townhalls with elected officials
- Please let the Chamber know if you need anything.

#### **City of Vernon**

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- This has been a challenging year for many organizations, many have far exceeded expectations and have been innovative and quick to adapt
- Kudos to those that shifted and maintained business, flow of Fraser Valley and Alberta will start when restrictions reduced.

### **Golf Sector**

#### **The Rise**

- Weather of late has been a bit of challenge, course is quiet right now – preparing for opening
- Renovations being done including finishing off 18<sup>th</sup> hole (Par 3), new water feature from Hole 6 to 9 with over ground waterfall and rockbed feature (including new bridge construction)
- Clubhouse building permit is under review with building department
- Winter sales good for memberships, looking forward to early April opening.

### **Attractions Sector**

#### **Kalavida Surf Shop**

- District of Coldstream is going through a re-design for Kal Beach. Would be helpful to know where paddle launch will be as this will have a large impact on Kalavida's business;
- Need to re-tool business and renovating back end of store now that it is visible from kilometer zero of the Rail Trail.

### **Accommodation Providers**

#### **Prestige Hotel**

- No new report – in survival mode currently and awaiting upswing.

#### **Silver Star Mountain Resort**

- Has been an interesting season with guests from Vernon and area only
- Busy with Passholders – Parking reservations and limited tickets successful for abiding by pandemic restrictions
- Majority of marketing – advising people NOT to come to mountain, keep Vernon and employees safe
- Doing best to not get in news and keep staff safe
- Bike planning for summer has begun, large number of people tubing and skating – staff encouraging social distancing.

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### **Restaurant Sector**

#### **Marten Brewpub**

- Thanks to Commission for support addressing and advocating for a reduction in delivery fees charged to restaurants – pleased with the quick capping of fees by province
- The Marten has been getting busier on the weekends
- Addressing concerns over guests visiting and testing positive – have included a health check/physical assessment as part of first contact at restaurant
- Have expanded on grant applications including a potential underground beverages component of shelf stable products (fortified kombuchas will be on the market in the new few months)
- Looking at revenue streams that enable patrons to purchase from home
- Will be utilizing the old-fashioned mail-out to Vernon area residents
- Other restaurants also reporting an uptake in business over the last few months.

### **Accommodations Provider**

#### **Predator Ridge**

- Quiet at this time but busy for real estate
- Skating and tennis have been popular
- Staying adaptive.
- Will continue long term rentals until April

### **INFORMATION ITEMS:**

#### **REVIEW OF TOURISM COMMISSION BYLAW AND BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY**

The Commission reviewed the Tourism Commission Bylaw (Terms of Reference) and the Bullying and Harassment Policy and have confirmed via email to the City of Vernon.

#### **PROVINCIAL CAP ON FOOD DELIVERY FEES**

The Mayor was able to speak with the Province the same day as last TC meeting about unfairness of delivery fees charges to restaurants. Glad that fees have been capped.

#### **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Tourism Commission is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 17, 2021** at 8:00 a.m. in the Okanagan Lake Room.

The Tourism Commission meeting adjourned at 9:04 a.m.

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**CERTIFIED CORRECT:**

*Claus Larsen*  
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Chair