



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

**MINUTES OF THE
TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2021
VIA ZOOM**

PRESENT: VOTING:

Richard Rolke, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Dauna Kennedy, Arts & Culture, Vice Chair
David Gibbs, Accommodation Provider
Mike Fotheringham, Okanagan Indian Band
Troy Hudson, Ski
Councillor Kari Gares (Appointed Member)
Mayor Victor Cumming (Alternate Member)
Kevin O'Brien, Attractions
Gale Woodhouse, Arts & Culture

ABSENT:

Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider, Chair
Brett Woods, Biking
Michael Van Horne, Golf
Susan Lehman, Downtown Vernon Association
Clinton Bialas, Restaurant
Matt Scheibenpflug, Accommodation Provider
Ricardo Smith, Sports and Events
Janna Maderyc, Accommodation Provider

NON-VOTING:

Ian Jenkins, Silver Star Mountain Resort

GUESTS:

Glen Benischek, Sports & Culture Society of the North Okanagan
Val Trevis, Sports & Culture Society of the North Okanagan
Mel Spooner, Sports & Culture Society of the North Okanagan

STAFF:

Torrie Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism
Karen Savill, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development and Tourism
Morgan Mardiros, Tourism Summer Student, Visitor Servicing Team
Paige Latta, Tourism Summer Student, Visitor Servicing Team

ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 a.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by Gale Woodhouse, seconded by Richard Rolke:

THAT the agenda for Wednesday, May 19, 2021 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted:

CARRIED.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by Troy Hudson, seconded by Councillor Kari Gares:

THAT the minutes of the Special Tourism Commission meeting held Tuesday May 4, 2021 be adopted.

CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

STAFFING UPDATE

The Manager, Tourism provided a staffing update for the position, Manager, Economic Development and Tourism. The following points were provided:

- John Perrott will be starting Monday May 31, 2021 as the new Manager, Economic Development and Tourism. John is currently the Manager of Economic Development and Tourism with the City of West Kelowna.

NEW BUSINESS

STAFFING INTRODUCTIONS – RECORDS/ COMMITTEE CLERK

The Manager, Tourism provided a brief introduction for the Records/Committee Clerk. The following points were noted:

- We're happy to welcome our new Records/Committee Clerk, Jade Adams-Longworth, for those of you who haven't met her already. Unfortunately, Jade was unable to be here today.

STAFFING INTRODUCTIONS – MOBILE VISITOR SERVICING TEAM

The Manager, Tourism provided a brief introduction of the Summer Students for the Mobile Visitor Servicing Team. The following points were noted:

- We're happy to welcome our new Tourism Summer Students, Morgan Mardiros and Paige Latta. Morgan and Paige will be our mobile visitor servicing team. They will be greeting visitors and locals throughout the community from now until the end of August. You can meet them on the rail trail this Saturday.

STAFFING INTRODUCTIONS – TOURISM MANAGER

The Administrative Assistant, Economic Development and Tourism provided a brief introduction of the new Manager of Tourism. The following points were noted:

- For those of you who don't already know, Torrie Silverthorn has been promoted to the Manager, Tourism for the City of Vernon. Congratulations Torrie!
- The Manager, Tourism noted: We need to come out swinging and use every opportunity that we have during recovery. Will be looking to our stakeholders for opportunities to work together.

**PRESENTATION –
SPORTS &
CULTURE
SOCIETY OF THE
NORTH
OKANAGAN**

Glen Benischek, Sports and Culture Society of the North Okanagan (SCSNO) provided the Commission with a review of SCSNO. The following points were noted:

- Non-profit organization tasked with playing a lead role in the attraction of sports and cultural events to the community. Offering tools are resources to those communities looking to host events of any size.
- Works with sporting and cultural associations along with local government to prepare bids to attract events to the community. Working alongside tourism operators to assist in preparedness and to ensure businesses maximize the economic impacts.
- The SCSNO promotes Vernon as a sport and cultural destination.
- Received funding in 2012 from the BC Winter games to start the organization.
- Entered into a two-year contract in 2019 with the City of Vernon with the option to extend the contract for a third year.
- This contact enabled the organization to hire an Executive Director.
- Have made significant progress with deliverables that were not impacted by COVID, i.e. events.
- Some of their accomplishments include creating and launching an event planning document on their website – get planning now toolkit. This document assists with pre-planning, event information, and post-event information. It includes checklists, risk management information, accommodation, and sponsorship information.
- They are prepared to assist organizations with a volunteer database – getinvolvednow.ca. Volunteers can register to be added to the database and will be informed of events & other volunteer opportunities as they arise.
- There are also 112 organizations registered on their organization database. This database includes sports groups, cultural groups and rowing clubs. Organizations can connect and be added to the database. Residents can connect and search for organizations.

- They also provide information on funding resources for events, including: Tourism Vernon, Destination British Columbia, Grant opportunities and VIA Sport.
- There are currently 19 accommodators (accounting for 1,246 rooms) registered and many local restaurants that can accommodate large groups and teams. This is valuable information, for example, for cycling events who are looking for accommodation that can provide secure bike storage.
- The SCSNO also provides letters of support for event bids and bid submission assistance, event permitting information, sponsorship advice and suggestions, case studies and other related information.
- Another deliverable achieved includes a facilities inventory. There are currently 27 parks and sports facilities and 12 cultural facilities in the area.
- Key Performance Indicators were provided in the presentation.
- Sports Tourism Economic Assessment Model (STEAM) shows the economic impact of events in the community.
- Support from the City and having an Executive Director have been integral to the successes to date.
- They were able to pivot during COVID by accessing the temporary and emergency wage subsidies to keep the Executive Director employed during 2020.
- They have invested \$13,000 on their website, planning and marketing materials which was covered by the legacy fund from the 2012 BC Winter Games.
- Event Planning is challenging, but the SCSNO would like to continue to be a resource for Vernon. They are grateful for the support from the City and hope that it will continue.

**DISCUSSION –
SPORTS &
CULTURE
SOCIETY OF THE
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- Other DMO's have a full-time staff person for promoting and attracting events. This is a more cost-effective option for the City.
- Rodney Goodchild did a great job, especially including the Arts and Culture sector and the SCSNO has done exceptional work.
- They are currently looking for a new Executive Director as Rodney Goodchild has accepted a position as the Executive Director at the Vernon Community Arts Centre.
- The event planning document is very user friendly (get planning now toolkit).
- The one-year contract renewal extension option was discussed. The Tourism Commission would like to revisit the future of this contract in September 2021 to start planning for

next year and beyond. Tourism Vernon staff will consult with the City's procurement department regarding contract options.

- The Tourism Commission supports receiving regular progress reports from the SCSNO regarding deliverables.
- Tourism Vernon staff will investigate the option to have Tourism Commission representation at the SCSNO Board.

**MOTION – SPORTS
& CULTURE
SOCIETY OF THE
NORTH
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Moved by Troy Hudson, seconded by Kevin O'Brien:

THAT the Tourism Commission direct administration to exercise the option to extend Tourism Vernon's contract with the Sports and Culture Society of the North Okanagan (SCSNO) for a third year.

AND FURTHER that the SCSNO be requested to provide an update on all deliverables of the contract to the Tourism Commission every six months, starting October 2021.

CARRIED.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

**DATE AND TIME
OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Tourism Commission is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 16, 2021** at 8:00 a.m. via Zoom.

The Tourism Commission meeting adjourned at 8:48 a.m.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Claus Larsen

Chair