



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

**MINUTES OF THE  
TOURISM COMMISSION**

**HELD WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 2022 at 8:00 AM  
OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM (COUNCIL CHAMBER) CITY HALL**

**PRESENT:** Bobby Bissessar, Accommodation Provider  
Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider (Chair)  
Clinton Bialas, Restaurant  
Councillor Durning (Appointed Member)  
Janine Collard, Attractions  
Kat Boloten, Accommodation Provider  
Peter Kaz, Marketing & Events, Downtown Vernon Association  
Richard Rolke, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce  
Vicki Proulx, Events  
Brett Woods, Biking

**ABSENT:** Clara Snedden, Accommodation Provider  
Michael Van Horne, Golf  
Dauna Kennedy, Arts & Culture  
Gale Woodhouse, Arts & Culture  
Troy Hudson, Ski  
Mayor Cumming, Alternate

**NON-VOTING** Ian Jenkins, SilverStar Mountain Resort  
Josh Welter, Executive Director, Sport & Culture Society of the North Okanagan (SCSNO)  
Cassandra Zerebeski, SilverStar Mountain Resort

**STAFF:** John Perrott, Manager, Economic Development & Tourism  
Torrie Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism  
Hannah Lucich, Tourism Coordinator  
Karen Savill, Visitor Services Coordinator

**ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 AM.

**LAND  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*As Chair of the City of Vernon's Tourism Commission, and in the spirit of this gathering, I recognize the City of Vernon is located in the traditional territory of the Syilx people of the Okanagan Nation.*

**ADOPTION OF THE  
AGENDA**

Moved by R. Rolke and seconded by Councillor Durning:

THAT the agenda of the **Wednesday, June 15, 2022**, Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

**CARRIED**

**ADOPTION OF THE  
MINUTES**

Moved by C. Bialas, and seconded by Councillor Durning:

THAT the minutes of the Tourism Commission meeting held on **Wednesday, May 18, 2022**, be adopted.

**CARRIED**

**OUTSTANDING BUSINESS**

**MRDT RENEWAL  
UPDATE**

**T. Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism**, presented an overview of the MRDT Renewal Update as follows:

- We have achieved the minimum number of signatures required for the MRDT renewal, 50% properties and 75% of the rooms.
- We will be getting a few more signatures in the next week or two, before our renewal is due July 1, 2022.
- Everything is going well with the MRDT renewal. We are presenting to RDNO this afternoon.
- Council endorsed Tourism Vernon's Five-Year strategy at their regular Council meeting on Monday June 13, 2022.
- Hotelier feedback – regarding evacuees last year, the majority had a positive experience working with the province. Despite one property having their reputation destroyed, they will still participate in the program if needed; all accommodators are having staffing issues.
- We are planning a Tourism Commission mixer with appetizers and a networking opportunity. T. Silverthorn will reach out to the group to determine a date and time for this.

**STAFFING UPDATE**

**T. Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism**, presented an overview of the Staffing Update as follows:

- K. Savill, Administrative Assistant, Tourism and Economic Development was appointed as the Visitor Services Coordinator.

**MARKETING UPDATE**

**H. Lucich, Tourism Coordinator**, presented an overview of the Marketing Update as follows:

- We are running ads and sponsored content with Castanet throughout the year with the latest content piece focusing on telling the stories of some local tourism businesses. The story had 4,214 reads on Castanet with an average time of 2 minutes 9 seconds on the page. That is a really good duration on page. This spring (March-May) we have received over 1,000 clicks from Castanet content and ads to tourismvernon.com.
- Another campaign that has done really well is our Indigenous Views campaign with Seekers Media using DBC Coop marketing funding – featuring the Kalamalka Indigenous Garden at Okanagan College, the Vernon Museum indigenous exhibits, and the Indigenous sign and Kin/Canoe beach. Played video. Seekers Media is running social campaigns to promote on Facebook and we are running a YouTube campaign to promote it.
- Must Do Canada – Matt & Karla from Calgary came to Vernon for a hosted media trip. They created a blog article about all things to do in Vernon (posted on social media) and the YouTube video will be available shortly. They loved Vernon so much, they are thinking of moving here. They have 79,000 subscribers on their YouTube channel. 2.4 million impressions. In 2017 they did a 150-day road trip for Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday and gained a huge following and were picked up by National news channels like CBC and Global News. The followers and readers align with our target market being ages 25-44, highly engaged with travelling Canada, and the blog has 80,000 monthly page views.
- Upcoming media visits – We have been talking to Gary, the owner of a professional cat influencer to arrange a trip to Vernon in September. Gary has almost a half million followers and many of them in the Calgary/Edmonton areas. Tourism Vernon is looking to get into TikTok and Gary's visit would be a great way to launch our new TikTok channel to inspire them to

explore Vernon. He has about 15.4 million likes on TikTok. Gary's Instagram account has a 4-8% engagement rate with 120-250,000 impressions per post and the stories have 45-85,000 views/impressions.

- We hosted Allan Melbourne from On the Links golf publication. He will be writing an editorial piece by early July.
- The latest local expert's content is about hiking and food. This was written by Melanie Adair who actively posts amazing content on social media of all her adventures around the Vernon area.
- Cascadia Air will be doing direct flights from Vancouver to the Vernon Airport. We are starting to plan a campaign with Narcity to promote the new flight service and also include it in our campaign with Vancouver is Awesome later this summer.
- Google analytics – our top performing website pages – Homepage, BX Falls, 118% increase to our Stay page (accommodators) compared to last spring.
- Spring photoshoot – got some shots to use for promotion focused on sports specific and active explorers. Locations included: Davison Orchards, Allan Brooks Nature Centre, Boss Creek – Grey Canal Trail, SUP, Hiking.
- Fall marketing focus will be about the endless summer in Vernon. We are planning for this and capitalizing on our shoulder season travel targeting our long-haul markets in Eastern Canada. We will also have magazine and social media content in Northwest Travel & Life Magazine in the Pacific Northwest. We are in the planning stages of these, focusing on three of our key target markets.
- Suggestion to send out a recommended marketing timeline to stakeholders to help them plan ahead for fall marketing.

**Note:** Members who need to recuse themselves are B. Bissessar, V. Proulx, I. Jenkins, and C. Zerebeski.

*Before the **CO-OP MARKETING PROGRAM – INTAKE #2** Recommendations was tabled for discussion, Commission members V. Proulx, I. Jenkins, C. Zerebeski, and B. Bissessar, declared a pecuniary conflict of interest and recused themselves from the meeting as their respective organizations applied to be considered for a grant from Co-op Marketing Funding program; four Commission members exited the meeting at 8:12 AM.*

**CO-OP MARKETING  
PROGRAM – INTAKE  
#2**

Staff provided an update regarding the Co-Op Marketing Program for intake Period #2. Subcommittee Members and staff adjudicated the applications received, with the exception of Predator Ridge Resort's application.

<b>Business</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Polson Artisan Market Events	<b>\$2,050.00</b>
Vita Resorts	<b>\$4,100.00</b>
Historic O'Keefe Ranch (Cowboy Festival)	<b>\$1,640.00</b>
Vernon Golf & Country Club	<b>\$5,822.00</b>
Vernon Winter Carnival	<b>\$4,920.00</b>
Canadian Wildlife Museum	<b>\$2,148.00</b>
Sovereign Lake Nordic Centre	<b>\$6,847.00</b>
Creative Chaos Society	<b>\$4,462.25</b>
Days Inn	<i>See Notes</i>
The Roster Sports Bar & Grill	<i>See Notes</i>
Teeter Totter Toys	<i>See Notes</i>
SilverStar Mountain Resort (Crankworx)	<b>\$8,200.00</b>
Kaleco	<b>\$2,296.00</b>
Okanagan Spirits	<b>\$7,913.00</b>
Outback Lakeside Vacation Homes	<b>\$8,200.00</b>
Okanagan Skydive	<b>\$8,200.00</b>
Destination Silver Star	<b>\$8,200.00</b>
Predator Ridge	<b>\$8,200.00</b>
Sip Happens Wine Tours	<b>\$1,640.00</b>
Vernon District Performing Arts Centre	<b>\$5,000.00</b>
Okanagan Life Private Boat Charters	<b>\$3,280.00</b>
Greater Vernon BC Winter Games	<b>\$8,200.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$101,318.25</b>

**Notes:**

1. **Days Inn** - Funding was pulled from the Small Accommodators Fund.
2. **The Roster Sports Bar & Grill** – *Request Did Not Qualify* - Only marketing to local Vernon.
3. **Teeter Totter Toys** – *Requested Did Not Qualify* - Only marketing to local Vernon.

The following comments / questions were discussed:

- We were over-subscribed by \$40,000.
- Will award \$100,000 again in intake period #2.
- The quality of applications was good.
- Days Inn will be pulled from Small Accommodators fund instead of Co-op Marketing.
- Rosters Sports Bar and Teeter Totter Toys were exempt as they did not qualify.
- The Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre will only receive half of their ask as they are marketing primarily locally but they did include partnerships as part of their campaign.
- We reduced the amount of the ask for all other applications by 18% to keep things fair and equal.
- There were a few applicants that applied to both intake periods but none have exceeded the maximum annual \$10,000 ask.

Moved by R. Rolke, and seconded by Councillor Durning:

THAT the Tourism Commission supports the funding allocation for Tourism Vernon's Co-op Marketing Program, Intake Period 2, as presented with the exclusion of Predator Ridge Resort's application.

### **CARRIED**

*Commission members V. Proulx, I. Jenkins, C. Zerebeski, and B. Bissessar, rejoined the meeting at 8:18 AM.*

**Note:** Members who need to recuse themselves are C. Larsen and J. Collard; Councillor Durning assumed the role of Chair.

*Before the **CO-OP MARKETING PROGRAM – INTAKE #2** Recommendations was tabled for discussion, Commission members Claus Larsen and Janine Collard, declared a pecuniary conflict of interest and recused themselves from the meeting as their respective organization applied to be considered for a grant from Co-op Marketing Funding program; two Commission members exited the meeting at 8:18 AM.*

### **CO-OP MARKETING PROGRAM – INTAKE #2**

Staff provided an update regarding the Co-Op Marketing Program for intake Period #2. Subcommittee Members and staff adjudicated the application received from Predator Ridge Resort.

Moved by R. Rolke, and seconded by Councillor Durning:

THAT the Tourism Commission supports the funding allocation for Tourism Vernon's Co-op Marketing Program for Predator Ridge Resort's application, Intake Period 2, as presented.

**CARRIED**

*Commission members C. Larsen and J. Collard rejoined the meeting at 8:24 AM; C. Larsen resumed the role of Chair.*

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**REQUEST FOR  
LETTER OF SUPPORT**

**J. Welter, Executive Director, Sport & Culture Society of the North Okanagan (SCSNO)** was in attendance to speak to the SCNSO's request for a letter of support regarding the **Canadian Curling Senior National Championships**.

The following comments were made:

- Vernon is hoping to host the Men's & Women's 2023 Canadian Curling National Championships. This event will include eight hotel rooms over six nights for curlers and spectators.
- The event will be in November 2023 and is expected to bring \$100,000 of economic impact to our area. Curling has a large fan base that like to follow and attend events; this is a great opportunity for Vernon.
- Curling Canada and the Vernon Curling Club are both on board with hosting it at the Curling Club. It's not feasible to host it at Kal Tire Place from an economic perspective. It has to be profitable and enjoyable so they will want to host it again.
- This event is just small enough that they can still host it at the club. It was noted that Dave Merklinger (one of the best ice-makers in the world) is living in our area.
- There are four other expressions of interest for this bid. We are up against Toronto, so we have to have a good bid. In Canada, most curling events are held in smaller communities.
- We were awarded the National Trail Running Championships in September in Kalamalka Lake Park as part of the Freaky Creeky. This should bring about 500 people to the area.

The Committee thanked J. Welter for his hard work on bidding on both the Men's & Women's 2023 Canadian Curling National Championships and National Trail Running Championships on behalf of the City.

Moved by R. Rolke and seconded by B. Bissessar:

THAT the Tourism Commission provide a letter of support for the 2023 Canadian Curling Senior National Championships.

**CARRIED**

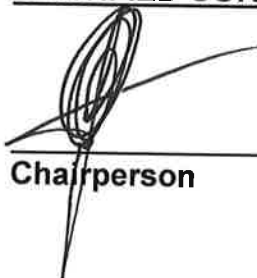
**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting for the Tourism Commission is set for **Wednesday, July 20, 2022**, at 8:00 AM at City Hall.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Tourism Commission meeting of June 15, 2022, was adjourned at the call of the Chair at 8:40 AM.

**CERTIFIED CORRECT:**



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**Chairperson**