



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2022 OKANAGAN ROOM (COUNCIL CHAMBER) CITY HALL

- PRESENT:** VOTING:
Bradley Callihoo, Okanagan Indian Band
Clara Snedden, Accommodation Provider
Claus Larson, Accommodation Provider (Acting Chair)
Clinton Bialas, Restaurants
Councillor Durning (Appointed Member)
Janine Collard, Attractions
Mayor Cumming
Michael Van Horne, Golf
Peter Kaz, Marketing & Events, Downtown Vernon Association
Richard Rolke, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Troy Hudson, Ski
Vicki Proulx, Sports & Events
- ABSENT:** Bobby Bissessar, Accommodation Provider
Dauna Kennedy, Arts & Culture
Ian Jenkins, Silverstar Mountain Resort
Gale Woodhouse, Arts & Culture
Kat Boloten, Accommodation Provider
- STAFF:** Hannah Lucich, Tourism Marketing Coordinator
Jennifer Pounder, Committee Clerk
John Perrott, Manager, Economic Development & Tourism
Karen Savill, Visitor Services Coordinator
Torrie Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 a.m.

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, seconded by Councillor Durning:

THAT the agenda of the December 21, 2022 meeting for the Tourism Commission be adopted.

CARRIED

**ADOPTION OF THE
MINUTES**

Moved by J. Collard, seconded by V. Proulx:

THAT the minutes for the November 16, 2022 meeting of the Tourism Commission be adopted.

CARRIED

The Chair welcomed B. Callihoo to the Tourism Commission.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

**MARKETING PLAN
PRESENTATION**

T. Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism, presented an overview of the 2023 Marketing Plan; a broad overview is as follows:

The following items were taken into consideration when creating the 2023 Marketing Plan:

C. Snedden joined the meeting at 8:06 a.m.

Background

New Team and Structure

- H. Lucich is now the Tourism Marketing coordinator
- New second Marketing coordinator position created and soon to be filled

Economic Factors

- Tailwinds:
 - Resilient travel sentiment
 - Pent-up demand
 - Lifting of COVID 19 Measures
 - Resilient domestic destination
- Headwinds:
 - Surging inflation
 - Slowed growth / possible recession

- Travel disruptions / Labor Shortages
- Russia-Ukraine conflict continues
- Canadians continue to prioritize domestic travel
- Despite a mild recession, domestic Market is expected to fully recover and grow in 2023
- United States & Mexico are poised to accelerate in 2023, with spending reaching 91% of 2019 levels
- Overseas markets will be the slower to recover due to recession, geopolitical conflict and weaker travel sentiment
- Full recovery of overseas visits to Canada expected to occur in 2026
- Business events presently stand at 50% of below pre-pandemic share of revenue
- Business events travel segment is expected to recover over the next 5 to 6 years
- Recover to 2019 levels is dependent on economic activities expanding over the next years

J. Perrott joined the meeting at 8:10 a.m.

New Five-Year Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies:

- Increased year-round visitation
- Increased visitor satisfaction
- Increased stakeholder engagement
- Increased community support for tourism

Mayor Cumming joined the meeting at 8:15 a.m.

2023 Marketing Goals & Objectives:

- Capitalize on the existing demand for outdoor leisure travel by promoting Vernon's exceptional outdoor experiences and complimenting activities to high-volume and high-value target markets.
- Promote Vernon's diverse experiences to high-value segments with high impact promotions with a focus on target market segments.
- Encourage longer stays and repeat visitors to come back to recreate memories made from culturally rich experiences.
- Activate local pride to share our active healthy lifestyle and convert visitors to the Okanagan way of life.
- Align destination stewardship efforts with government, industry and community organizations to support sustainable development.

- Continue to build visitation to Vernon in the shoulder seasons and winter.
- Improve and grow engagement across all Tourism Vernon's owned marketing channels.

H. Lucich, Tourism Marketing Coordinator, presented an overview of the 2023 Marketing Plan; a broad overview is as follows:

- New Tourism Vernon website:
 - Will be up and running by the end of 2023 at the latest. Valuable tool for visitor services.
- Brand assessment:
 - Tourism Vernon will be working with a third-party agency to conduct a branding and visual identity assessment.
- Digital marketing:
 - Continue to heavily invest. Facebook, Instagram and YouTube have proven to be adaptable and versatile platforms for marketing to target audiences.
- Digital Advertising and Sponsored Content:
 - Continue to emphasize digital ads and sponsored content on local/regional platforms such as Castanet and national platforms such as Global News, NHL.com and Narcity.
- Content Development: photo, video and copywriting:
 - A Tourism Vernon video was shown of the February campaign.
- Television and Radio Campaigns:
 - Staff will continue to work with organizations like Rogers Media, Corus Entertainment, Bell Media, NG Media and others to promote Vernon. Winter and spring ads will be placed on Global.
- Print Advertising:
 - Tourism Vernon will continue to choose strategic placements in high quality print publications such as Kootenay Mountain Culture and NW Travel and Life Magazine.
- 2023 Visitor Guide:
 - Extremely excited and already working on the 2023/2024 visitor guide. We will be printing thirty thousand copies. Graphic designers are already working on it.
- Market research:
 - Tourism Vernon will continue to invest in Telus Insights Data to provide information on the demographics of visitors to Vernon. We are also using the Tourism sentiment index subscription to measure promoters and detractors about the destination.

- Cooperative Partnerships Destination BC sector projects:
 - Tourism Vernon plans to participate in the following cooperative projects:
 - Mountain Biking BC
 - Golf Sector with BC's Golf Marketing Alliance Partners
 - Okanagan Rail Trail with Tourism Kelowna and the District of Lake Country
 - BC Interior Ale Trail with Tourism Kamloops and Shuswap Tourism
- Tourism Vernon is in a new partnership with Tourism Kelowna, Tourism Kamloops, Visit Penticton and Destination Osoyoos with "Travelling out in the Thompson Okanagan" which has marketing focus on the LGBTQ community. It is a smaller market but important for people to know that we are a welcoming and inclusive destination.

The following questions / comments were posed by members of the Commission:

- The Chair commented that he is very pleased with how the plan turned out.
- R. Rolke is pleased to see Tourism Vernon working with neighboring jurisdictions and asked if there are any plans to work with Armstrong, Enderby or Lumby in the future. Staff confirmed that we are Greater Vernon, which does include The District of Coldstream and the RDNO. We are in preliminary talks regarding a project that does cross two jurisdictions. In terms of the 5-year plan, our stats point us South as we have the most to gain from that direction. Tourism Vernon will continue to work with the Northern communities, however we are still a business and South has more reach.
- Staff confirmed that J. Welter is a contractor working with Tourism Vernon and they are working with him on a year-to-year basis. We are hoping to work with him full time in conjunction with Destination Silver Star.
- P. Kaz commented he is frustrated with having to update two different calendars (Tourism Vernon and City of Vernon). Staff confirmed that is due to having two audiences; visiting tourists and local residents. Right now, we are focusing on our new website as it has been on hold for two years. The new website

will have a more user friendly events calendar for ease of adding and updating events.

- Mayor Cumming commented the City of Vernon has had discussions with the District of Lake Country Council and more and more Lake Country residents are coming to Vernon for their shopping. There will be a formal request for Lake Country Council to present to the City of Vernon council so we can begin to tighten our relationship. The Northern Rail Trail will be built in 2023/2024. That will be linking us to the north. In keeping with this, its valuable to bring 2023-2027 Capital Plan to the Tourism Commission after it is approved as there are projects on that list that are relevant to this Commission, ie. upgrades to bike parks, new creek in Polson Park and new lake accesses being developed.

Moved by V. Proulx, and seconded by P. Kaz:

THAT Tourism Commission unanimously supports the 2023 Marketing Plan, as presented, and recommends that staff forward the 2023 Marketing Plan to Council for review and endorsement.

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS:

**EVENT
SUBCOMMITTEE
UPDATE**

T. Silverthorn, Tourism Manager, presented the following overview:

- The Subcommittee has had one meeting so far. Meeting two and three in new year.
- G. Woodhouse has met with the Vernon Art Gallery and Winter Carnival to discuss challengers in planning events. There was a lot of conversation around communication with the City of Vernon and how it is still a struggle. Pricing was also a part of the conversation.
- This Commission needs more information from staff before we can have a recommendation or implement a plan.
- At the second meeting staff are coming back with data and facts around planning processes and hope to have a concrete recommendation in the new year.

The following comments / questions were posed by the Commission:

- C. Larson commented that one of main issues they discussed in the subcommittee meeting is that people do not understand the process and restrictions in place. We also discussed how to create an application with the restrictions on it to make it transparent.
- P. Kaz commented if you're a huge company like Live Nation from Toronto, there should be something that can be rubber stamped a little easier as opposed to local. Live Nation has commented that Vernon is hard to work with and costly. They would rather use venues in Vernon, but the price is too high. Paperwork and pricing are my issue.
- C. Larsen requested that P. Kaz join the next subcommittee meeting.
- Councilor Durning commented that our goal is to make things better, and we need your opinions and thoughts. Please send your opinions and thoughts to Staff.
- V. Proulx did not attend the subcommittee meeting, however she had several organizations thank us for bringing up issues with cost. She will collect more information and bring it to the Commission.
- Staff encouraged everyone to let us know via the channel. We will gather all the information to help in creating a new system. It is very hard to fix if we don't have all perspectives.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Tourism Commission is set for January 18, 2023 at 8:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Tourism Commission adjourned at 9:03 a.m. by call of the Chair.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:



Chair