



# THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

## **MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING**

**HELD JANUARY 18, 2023**

**OKANAGAN ROOM (COUNCIL CHAMBER) CITY HALL**

**PRESENT:** VOTING:

Bobby Bissessar, Accommodation Provider  
Brad Callihoo, Okanagan Indian Band  
Clara Snedden, Accommodation Provider  
Dauna Kennedy, Arts & Culture (Acting Chair)  
Gale Woodhouse, Arts & Culture  
Ian Jenkins, Silverstar Mountain Resort  
Janine Collard, Attractions  
Kat Boloten, Accommodation Provider  
Mayor Cumming  
Michael Van Horne, Golf  
Peter Kaz, Marketing & Events, Downtown Vernon Association  
Richard Rolke, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce  
Councillor Durning  
Vicki Proulx, Sport & Events

GUEST:

Josh Welter, Executive Director, SCSNO

**ABSENT:** Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider  
Clinton Bialas, Restaurants  
Troy Hudson, Ski

**STAFF:** Erin Gorman, Administrative Assistant  
Hanna Lucich, Tourism Marketing Coordinator  
Jennifer Pounder, Committee Clerk  
Karen Savill, Visitor Services Coordinator  
Torrie Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism

**ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 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 V. Proulx, seconded by R. Rolke:

THAT the agenda of the Tourism Commission meeting for January 18, 2023 be adopted:

**CARRIED**

**ADOPTION OF THE  
MINUTES**

Moved by M. Van Horne, seconded by V. Proulx:

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

**CARRIED**

**NEW BUSINESS:****MANAGERS UPDATE**

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

- A new Tourism Marketing Coordinator has been selected. Hilary Irvine from the Communications Department of the City of Vernon starts January 30, 2023. She will be attending the next Tourism Meeting.
- Save the date: April 13, 2023 - Industry Conference at Predator Ridge.

**CALL OUT FOR  
TOURISM  
COMMISSION  
SUBCOMMITTEE  
VOLUNTEERS**

T. Silverthorn provided the following overview of the subcommittee for the Coop Marketing Program:

- Tourism Vernon has a 50/50 grant program, similar to Destination BC's program, where you apply to Tourism Vernon, bring 50% of the funding and an explanation of how you plan to use the money to attract people to Vernon. If you are chosen, Tourism Vernon funds the other 50%.
- Staff is looking for 3 Tourism Commission volunteers to help sort through applications and aid in deciding which groups will get funding/less funding/no funding.
- There will be one or two meetings, and each meeting will be one to two hours.
- G. Woodhouse, V. Proulx and R. Rolke volunteered for the subcommittee.
- In response to a question, Staff confirmed that as long as the funds are used by December 31, 2023, you can apply at either intake for the grant (there are currently two intakes per year).

**ROUND TABLE  
DISCUSSION**

The following questions were asked of each Commission member:

1. How is your business managing with staffing shortages?
2. Is your business setup to accept tour busses or large group bookings in 2023?
3. What is new and exciting to your business or sector for spring/summer 2023?

**C. Snedden** – Things are shaping up well. Pulled in some outside sources. We are still short in staff but we are doing the best we can. Looking good for the summer.

**I. Jenkins** – We had a good holiday break. Our light up was a success. We are ramping up for the BC Winter Games. We have approximately 100 foreign workers over the winter, however summer is looking bleak for employees. The plan is to bring on year-round full-time employees. We had a lot of students last year, but our schedules don't seem to line up well.

**B. Calihoo** – OKIB is business as usual.

**Councillor Durning** – BC Games needs approximately 400 more volunteers. Winter carnival also needs more volunteers. It's easy to sign up online and someone will call you. A lot of opportunities and short time commitments available. I. Jenkins offered to add a call out in his newsletter.

**M. Van Horne** – The retirees we hired keep coming back to work. New group of students getting into the work force which is great for summer and after school workers. We are still in need of staff.

**P. Kaz** – Winter Carnival – Sip & Save sold out. There are still tickets available for the Reklawz concert, which has a capacity of 3,500 people. Downtown Vernon Association – Had a great Christmas and winter. Hot chocolate day was a success. Labor shortage – it is causing businesses to delay opening. Chili cookoff on February 11, 2023 with six restaurants participating. Free downtown parking for the Vernon Comic Con.

**J. Collard** – We are on pace for a repeat of 2022. 20 out of 27 rental units are available, however, they are sold out for two weekends in June. We still have a staffing shortage. We are attending 3 job fairs as an Exhibitor. We have four big events per year now.

**Cassandra** (Destination Silverstar) – We are struggling with staffing due to transportation and housing. We are partnering with Vernon Winter Carnival and TOTA on seven celebrations. February 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> events: Friday night storytelling, art display. Music in all bars on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Sunday there is an artisan market. Shuttle service will be available for this event. It will leave Vernon at 10-1030 a.m. and back in the afternoon.

**J. Welter** – We have three events on schedule for the spring; CTFI Taekwon-do Nationals in May 2023. Age group 14-24. 500 athletes coming to Vernon. Pickleball Provincials from May 11-13 – first ever nationals in Vernon. 500 athletes and families. Age group 19-105. Slay the Dragon trail run at Silverstar. Over 100 people signed up already with a goal of over 500 participants. D. Kennedy offered to have a night at the gallery for events.

**Mayor Cumming** – There are a lot of events happening. He thanked everyone for the updates.

**K. Savill** – We are hiring two summer students. Please send any our way.

**E. Gorman** – Busy planning for the Industry Conference on April 13, 2023.

**C. Snedden** – Our pace is better than last year. Kitchen renovation is complete. Staffing is an ongoing issue. We have changed things to accommodate housing for our foreign workers.

**T. Silverthorn** – We will be out and about during the Winter Carnival. Between the three of us, a Tourism team member will be at most Winter Carnival events.

**G. Woodhouse** – ACE, business and not for profits are looking at an annual Vernon Culture Festival on September 22, 2023 for nine days. Artsolutely had a great year. All free celebratory days were very successful. Spring round trail event and September cultural days events. Revisiting old events and redoing successes of the past. Labor shortage for us is not due to lack of interest, it is mostly due to staff not coming in when they are not feeling well. I am also losing a valued team member due to the lack of daycare in Vernon. There is currently a 200 child wait list; a two-year waitlist. As a small organization, the doors get closed due to low staff. A documentary was just released about the Vernon Art Gallery on Telus.

**T. Silverthorn** – Mayor Cumming has suggested a presentation to this Commission. Mark Dowhaniuk, Manager, Infrastructure will be here to do a presentation during our February meeting.

**V. Proulx** – People are signing up for the Winter Carnival late, mostly due to Covid-19. Waiting until closer to make sure they are healthy to attend. There have been 1,700 tickets sold. There has been \$135,000.00 invested by us for the Recklawz concert which is a big risk for us. We get a lot of feedback from organizations and holders and I will bring an update. People are excited to have something to look forward to and see big things happening. A lot of youth engagement; we have over 300 youth volunteers signed up so far. We do need more volunteers. Vernon Recreation Services is looking for a few bartenders for one night. This is a paid job.

**B. Bissessar** – We are on par for last year. 2022 was a record-breaking year. Things are looking good for the summer.

**R. Rolke** – The number one issue is we hear from members is labor shortage and lack of housing. We are looking for ways to support members. We are hosting our 3<sup>rd</sup> Community Expo on April 2, 2023 at Kal Tire Place North; more information coming soon.

**B. Woods** – We are moving our AGM to January 26 this year. New president this year. July 15, 2023 is the date for the Bombshell Enduro at Silverstar. It will be open for registration on February 1, 2023. This is a members only event. They are hoping for 150 participants and 75 volunteers. Thursday night Toonie Rides will be happening again this year. We have been working with Jeff Black on the Trails Committee and reevaluating our trails master plan. It will take a couple of years to work on it. We are also pulling together our Becker Park Phase 2 Plan. It will be designed in 2023 and built in 2024 and has a \$500,000.00 budget. Excited to have trail crew maintenance contract, but we are still way off budget in being able to maintain. 150 trees need to come down at Silverstar. T. Silverthorn added that Tourism Vernon has been working with the project and we received a letter of support and have been invited to the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the grant process.

**Mayor Cumming** – There has been \$35,000.00 set aside so the bathroom beside the playground at Marshall Field will be open this year.

**D. Kennedy** – Regarding the Greater Vernon Cultural facility, some branding was approved at a recent IT meeting. For the new Cultural facility, Revery Architecture has been hired. Excited to work with them. They have built cultural centers all over the world. Due to Covid-19 they want to keep their work in Canada - we lucked out. Revery has been meeting with various stake holders to evaluate everyone's needs. Mayor Cumming confirmed the new Cultural Center will be located across the street from Eatology in the empty parking lot.

**INFORMATION ITEMS:**

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting for the Tourism Commission is set for **February 15, 2023 at 8:00 a.m.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting of the Tourism Commission adjourned at 9:00 am by call of the Chair.

**CERTIFIED CORRECT:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' with a horizontal line through it, and a long vertical line extending downwards from the bottom of the 'C'.

Chair