



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING HELD MARCH 20, 2024 AT 8:00 AM OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM (COUNCIL CHAMBER)

PRESENT: VOTING:

Rebecca Barton, Arts & Culture
Clara Snedden, Accommodation Provider
Mayor Cumming
Jessica Dowswell, Accommodation Provider
Kris Fuller, Sports & Events
Dan Proulx, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider
Peter Kaz, Downtown Vernon Association
Cassandra Zerebeski, Ski
Councillor Durning, Council Appointed
Shawn Patenaude, Arts & Culture
Gerran Thorhaug, Restaurant
Mike Van Horne, Golf

NON-VOTING:

Ian Jenkins, Silverstar

GUESTS:

Josh Welter, SCSNO

ABSENT: Janine Collard, Accommodation Provider
Tim Isaac, Okanagan Indian Band
Ben Suranko, Biking

STAFF: Torrie Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism
Karen Savill, Visitor Services Coordinator
Hannah Lucich, Tourism Marketing Coordinator
Hilary Irvine, Tourism Marketing Coordinator
Jennifer Pounder, Records/Committee Clerk

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 S. Patenaude, seconded by J. Dowswell:

THAT the agenda of the March 20, 2024 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

**ADOPTION OF THE
MINUTES**

Moved by D. Proulx, seconded by K. Fuller:

THAT the minutes of the February 21, 2024 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

MANAGERS UPDATE

T. Silverthorn provided the following update to the Commission:

- H. Irvine attended the BC Tourism Industry Conference in Victoria, BC. Via the “Slido” App, she asked David Eby, Premier of British Columbia, how the new Short Term Rental (STR) regulations will impact tourism, to which he brought up Vernon with an example of Predator Ridge being exempt. This is a testament to all the advocacy work that Council, Mayor Cumming, Predator Ridge and the private entity’s have been doing.
- We will have an update at the April meeting on Telus data and insights.
- Visitation to Vernon is up; we had over one million visitors in 2023, and we had another great year for hotel tax collection; a little more than 2023.
- A copy of the 2024 Visitor Guide will be coming to the Commission soon. 30,000 copies will be printed this year.
- The Tourism Vernon Industry Conference will be on April 18, 2024 at 8:30am – 2:30pm at the Prestige Vernon Lodge and Conference Centre. All Commission members are requested to attend. You will be introduced and some of you will be requested to participate.
- J. Welter announced that Vernon will be the host for the 2024 and 2025 BC Cross Country Running Championships. We will be creating an “Organizing Committee” for these events. Please let me know if you are interested in joining.

Mayor Cumming joined the meeting at 8:06 a.m.

- It was asked if any members of the group had any updates on the STR advocacy work they have been doing. The following updates were provided:
 - C. Larsen: On March 6, 2024 there was an amendment to the STR legislation in Victoria, BC.
 - Councillor Durning: Council will continue to advocate.
 - Mayor Cumming: The City has been very clear. There are four areas that need to be exempt: Outback Lakeside Vacation Homes, The Rise Resort, Waterfront Neighborhood Centre and Predator Ridge Resort (these locations were chosen due to their zoning); We are not asking for a blanket change, just ensuring the City's position is clear.
 - C. Larsen: I am proud of Vernon and how we have banded together. Shows what a close-knit community we have.
 - Councillor Durning: We are not asking to have these areas exempted, we are asking for exclusion of the zoning.
 - D. Proulx: We followed up with David Eby with a letter after our meeting. We asked for a review of the Residential Tenancy Act.
 - C. Zerebeski: David Eby confirmed in his speech and during the Q&A period that there is an exemption in the Silverstar area.
 - T. Silverthorn: Our OAP tax is in the \$150,000 - \$200,000 range, however we are expecting next year to be \$1.2 – \$1.3 million range. There will be a panel discussion at the Tourism Industry Conference on STR's. We are hoping to have planning staff attend.

CO-OP MARKETING FUNDING UPDATE

K. Savill provided a brief overview of the program for new incumbents.

M. Van Horne declared a pecuniary conflict of interest and recused himself from the meeting as his organization applied to be considered for a grant from the Co-op Marketing Funding program. He left the meeting at 8:23 a.m.

The subcommittee reviewed applications for certain things, including partnerships with other tourism businesses or hotels, increasing tourism revenue and overnight stays, content that's aligned with our 5 Year Strategic Plan and the strength of the marketing plan / campaign. If our recommendations are approved as presented today, there will be a carry-over amount added to intake two of approximately \$9,000.00.

At the end of the marketing campaign, recipients of funding are required to fill-out a post-project report, including any analytics, data, receipts and they are encouraged to share any assets from the marketing funded with money received.

There were two applications that were withdrawn; one of which we are working with to help them come up with a campaign that qualifies, even though they may end up receiving from the Small Accommodator Fund instead.

Business	Receive
Cedar Falls Campground	\$ 500.00
Canadian Wildlife Museum & Gift Shop	\$ 1,700.00
Elements Adventure Company	\$ 2,641.41
Okanagan Military Tattoo	\$ 9,812.00
The Rise Resort	\$ 10,000.00
Vernon Golf & Country Club	\$ 5,150.00
Polson Artisan Night Market	\$ 746.25
Bush Babes & Bro's Trail Running	\$ 3,800.00
Okanagan Skydive	\$ 2,000.00
Sip Happens Wine Tours	\$ 4,500.00
Total	\$ 40,849.66
Carry balance forward to intake #2	\$ 9,150.34
Intake #2 Total	\$ 59,150.34

Moved by C. Zerebeski, seconded by G. Thorhaug:

THAT the Tourism Commission supports the funding allocation for Tourism Vernon's Co-op Marketing Program, Intake Period One(1), as presented.

CARRIED

M. Van Horne joined the meeting at 8:45 a.m.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

A roundtable discussion ensued asking members for an update:

- I. Jenkins – The Seismic Timber Tour – BC Championships coming up on Easter weekend. Spring Break is not as busy as we would like. We have events planned for spring and summer including a music series.
- C. Snedden – A lot of busy weeks coming up. Summer is filling up nicely. Our staffing levels are good. Most of our renovations are now complete and we are now working on elevating our services.
- K. Fuller – It was a season of finding the funding. I am available to help with any events.
- D. Proulx – We have hired Kevin Rothwell as the Membership Manager.

- C. Zerebeski – We are building a campground – very exciting. April 6th will be a full day of music.
- J. Dowswell – Not much to report. We have two conferences coming up.
- R. Barton – We are busy. A lot of events.
- Mayor Cumming – I recently skied to the new Lodge at Silverstar. It is always open. Great to see these things. A 4km trail on the Grey Canal, between Cypress Drive heading East towards Lavington, is now open.
- M. Van Horne – We have a very positive outlook. The new building is coming along; should be completed in June or July. Group numbers are up from last year.
- S. Patenaude – Rail Trail Plein Air Event is coming up on June 9th.
- Councillor Durning – Wanted to reiterate that the \$200,000.00 Winter Games Legacy Fund supports local projects and I wanted to highlight that it is important that we continue to support this as it makes a big difference to a lot of organizations.
- P. Kaz – Food festival was a huge success. Sunshine Festival is happening June 15th. Bringing a Fringe Festival to downtown. Downtown Sounds is moving back to the Civic Plaza. We are tying in our end of summer party with the Sun Dog Festival. There will be pickleball days with games being played on the road, DJ's, music, food, etc. A new event is coming: The last Friday in November, we are blocking six blocks of downtown for "The Frostival".
- G. Thorhaug – We are supporting the Esso Cup Tournament and I am looking to sponsor more local events. We are opening a new Brown's Social House restaurant in Vernon. According to the Board of Excellence for the BC restaurant industry, the outlook is not good for the industry. Interested to know if the government will be giving businesses extra marketing funds.
- J. Welter – October to February applications go out for events. Now we wait and watch things grow from seeds we have planted.
- C. Larsen – Predator Ridge is busy. We are worried about bookings for July and August; August is at a record low right now. People are worried about possible wildfires. We are implementing a high-tech system for wildfires. I believe drought will be an issue with the recent Lumby wildfire as a sign of things to come. There is a new Wings Restaurant aiming to open up May long weekend. It's a \$4 million renovation and we are excited about opening a space for guests, owners and members to go.
- I. Jenkins: How will we know if the new STR legislation is a success?
- Mayor Cumming: We will be tracking the STR's and see how many flip over. Staff confirmed we have approximately 150 STR's right now.

- Councillor Durning: The Residential Tenancy Act is old and outdated and needs to be rewritten to match today's world.
- K. Savill – Tourism Commission member are required to RSVP to the Tourism Vernon Industry Conference invitation that was sent yesterday. Please do so through our new website.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

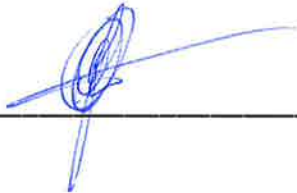
NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Tourism Commission is set for **April 17, 2024** at **8:00 a.m.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Tourism Commission adjourned at 9:02 a.m. by call of the Chair.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:


_____ Chair