



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

TOURISM COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2020

OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM – 8:00 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
2. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**
 - a) May 20, 2020 (attached)
3. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**
 - a) Round Table Discussion
 - b) 50/50 Marketing Co-op & Small Accommodators Funding Requests – Recovery Grant Program (Draft attached)
 - c) Tourism Recovery Marketing Strategy – to be sent via email on June 15th
4. **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - a) Provincial Tourism Funding – Approved (attached)
5. **INFORMATION ITEMS**
 - a) COVID-19 Physical Distancing for Businesses – May 25, 2020 Council Resolution (attached)
 - b) Temporary Expansion of Liquor Service Areas – May 25, 2020 Council Resolution (attached)
6. **NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting of the Tourism Commission is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, July 15, 2020.
7. **ADJOURNMENT**



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

**MINUTES OF
TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2020
OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM**

PRESENT: VOTING:

Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider, Chair
David Gibbs, Accommodation Provider
Troy Hudson, Ski (via phone)
Gale Woodhouse, Arts & Culture (via phone)
Richard Rolke, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Councillor Dalvir Nahal (Appointed Member) (via phone)
Heather Sharpe, Downtown Vernon Association (via phone)
Clinton Bialas, Restaurant
Janna Maderyc, Accommodation Provider (via phone)
Dauna Kennedy, Arts & Culture, Vice-Chair
Mike Fotheringham, Okanagan Indian Band (via phone)
Ricardo Smith, Sports & Events (8:06)

NON-VOTING:

Ian Jenkins, Silver Star Mountain Resort (via phone)

ABSENT: Matt Scheibenpflug, Accommodation Provider
Michael Van Horne, Golf
Kevin O'Brien, Attractions
Brett Woods, Biking

STAFF: Kevin Poole, Staff Liaison, Manager, Economic Development & Tourism
Torrie Silverthorn, Tourism Coordinator
Janice Nicol, Legislative Committee Clerk

ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 a.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by David Gibbs; seconded by Dauna Kennedy:

THAT the agenda for Wednesday, May 20, 2020 Tourism Commission be adopted.

CARRIED.

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES – MAY 20, 2020

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by Richard Rolke, seconded by David Gibbs;

THAT the minutes of the Tourism Commission meeting held Wednesday, April 15, 2020 be adopted.

CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Where are businesses at with the restart?

Predator

- Will be closed until June 1
- Looking at new accommodations structure inside and outside including using electrostatic sprayers
- Attempting to keep up with various regulations and examining what other accommodators are doing (sealing rooms to ensure everything has been sanitized) this gives clients comfort
- Extending minimum nights stays to two days in Lodge, three nights in Cottages. There will be a three night minimum stay for next year. New regulations dictate you cannot get into room for three hours after guests leave, room cannot be rented for 24 hours
- Restaurants at Predator re-opening with social distancing measures in June.

Restaurants

- Waiting to see what the regulations will be (have not been consistent) and doing the best to make customers feel comfortable
- Masks are not working, acting as a barrier but are not sustainable. Some restaurants ordering face shields for cooks and food servers.
- Businesses implementing varied plans - some have varied walk-through layout, some have only servers wearing masks
- Staff not coming back as they are collecting C.E.R.B., struggling to keep and call back staff because of this
- Hairdressers cannot get staff back until June 8
- Lack of staff impacting multiple industries
- 30th Avenue businesses –would be ideal to close 30th Avenue closed for two blocks to allow more room for social distancing, outdoor patios and appeal for Tourists.

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES – MAY 20, 2020

DVA

- Businesses on 30th Avenue keen to re-open and welcome customers, hope that locals can rediscover area with positive attitude. Further information to come as DVA membership is diverse.
- **Hotels – Prestige Vernon Lodge and Prestige Inn**
- Still closed until June 26 or July 1 re-opening
- Don Cherry's re-opening with a focus on the patio (inside will be later)
- Hotels – averaging about four rooms a nights with one staff member but staff are getting burned out
- Following Best Western protocols and have purchased multiple ozone machines - no one enters room for 48 hours after guests leave
- Would be nice if BC Hotel Association sets some uniform guidelines as there is so much information that it is difficult to sift through
- There is also a need to get each customer's phone number – this applies to all industries
- Travel restrictions will be in place until at least Fall, focus is local and then regional in June
- From Penticton south to Osoyoos, a regional agency to promote and support businesses has been created
- AirBNB is marketing that guests will have less exposure to COVID by using an AirBNB – there are no COVID guidelines currently for AirBNB

Chamber of Commerce

- Chamber continues to support business despite a reduction in staff. Still uncertainty surrounding events.

Art Gallery

- Drowning in information regarding COVID, looking at re-opening
- Encountering a challenge with office space, some staff working remotely, working virtually and promoting online
- Working on projects, financial hit will come this summer - when fundraisers and sponsorship events are cancelled
- Staff starting to return to office, looking at model for re-opening
- Cultural Centre still moving ahead, preparing for when construction can begin.

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES – MAY 20, 2020

Sun Country

- With the pandemic, it was thought there would be a 30% downturn that would take two years to recover from, however, there has been a cycling boom
- Bikes cannot be found now for under \$1500, some stores in US closed as they have no bike inventory
- Sun Country has not had so many staff working at the shop as now
- Once advertising can start regionally, will see what uptake will be.

Culture

- Connecting virtually with cultural sector for activities. New audience, keep building on this and maintaining connections made
- Arts Centre opening June 1, hoping to get back to pre COVID #'s in two years
- Larger venues such as the Performing Arts Centre have minimal optimism as they look at how group events will be held
- Need to keep groups smaller with numbers that can be controlled, possibility of some activities for children on July 1.

Sovereign Lake Nordic

- Currently in middle of budgeting session with have five different scenarios and plans to stay fluid
- Optimistic that skiing will resume as it is naturally socially distant
- Cross Country BC based in Vernon –AGM was held last week, looking at guidelines and what sporting orgs can do for social distancing
- Online training for senior athletes being held although difficult to get back up to pace with competition cancelled
- Looking at fall, focusing on local community
- This has been a great learning process in resiliency – lucky that COVID hit as season was ending
- COVID Task Force started with provincial representative to ensure unified voice and cohesive plan.

Silver Star Mountain Resort

- Opening early July, looking at plan to ensure confidence in guests for sanitization
- Refunds being given, no questions asked
- Expecting local guests for now
- Looking around world to see how other resorts are handling situation.

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES – MAY 20, 2020

- **Sparkling Hill**

- In strange holding pattern, can't open accommodations without spa
- Need to have everything in place, trying to comply and reach-out to other stakeholders to ensure consistency
- Hoping for mid-June opening if possible and keeping messaging positive.

- **Okanagan Indian Band**

- Hoping to start up a tourism survey to gauge interest
- Cannabis dispensary and tourism regulations being looked at with a COVID lens
- Funding has been received for assist with Arbour structure, where Pow Wows are typically held. Will be a great venue and may have tourism opportunities.

50/50 MARKETING COOP & SMALL ACCOMMODATORS FUNDING REQUESTS

- Program is currently on hold with applicants contacted
- Providing grants will be a great way to get back out into the market
- Discussion regarding a COVID Recovery Program with the 50/50 grant monies pending dollars received from upper levels of government
- To be discussed in further detail next meeting.

WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS

The World Travel Awards have been cancelled for this year but there is still a three year commitment beginning next year.

RECOVERY PLAN – UPDATE

The Tourism Coordinator has been tasked with formulating a recovery plan – looking at how much money can be put into this (in combination with the Co-op Program). Looking for volunteers for task force for ideas and input.

Please contact Torrie Silverthorn at tsilverthorn@vernon.ca if you are interested.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

The following items were noted:

- The provincial government has implemented new rules for PST collection, they can now be deferred
- There is currently \$222,000 in the MRDT Reserve, approved by budget to withdraw \$100,000. The Commission's approval, and Council's, will be required if reserves are to be drained. There is hope that the Province will come forward with funding.

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES – MAY 20, 2020

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Tourism Commission is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 17, 2020** at 8:00 a.m. in the Okanagan Lake Room.

The Tourism Commission meeting adjourned at 9:04a.m.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Tourism Vernon Cooperative Marketing Tourism Recovery Program

The Tourism sector has been significantly impacted by the pandemic and associated travel restrictions. In order to assist in the recovery of local tourism businesses, Tourism Vernon is launching the Cooperative Marketing Tourism Recovery Program (CMTRP).

OBJECTIVE:

As Tourism Vernon's funding is primarily derived by a hotel tax, the primary objective of the CMTRP is to assist local tourism businesses in their recovery efforts by attracting visitors for an overnight stay in Vernon. The focus will be on local, regional and short haul markets in accordance with the Provincial Health Officer guidelines on travel. The program is open to private and public sector tourism related businesses located in the Greater Vernon area.

GUIDELINES:

- Promotion should target local, regional and short haul market with the primary focus being on BC. Marketing efforts are required to be in accordance to the Provincial Health Officer guidance on travel and comply with the BC Restart Plan.
- Must align with the goals and strategies identified within the Tourism Vernon 2020 Recovery Marketing Strategy.
- The CMTRP will provide matching funds for cash contribution up to 50% (not including tax) and in-kind contributions up to 25%. In order to ensure as many businesses can utilize the program as possible, the maximum allocation per business will be \$5,000.
- Projects should focus on attracting visitors for overnight stays. Partnering with accommodators located in the city of Vernon is encouraged.
- Programs should lead to increased tourism visitation and spending.
- All projects supported by Tourism Vernon must feature our logo and acknowledge the funding support of Tourism Vernon wherever possible.
- Approved funds must be spent by December 31, 2020.

Eligible Costs:

- Advertising campaigns (radio, TV, magazine, newspaper, billboard, online/web, etc).
- Promotional materials (including production, publishing and distribution costs).
- Direct mail campaigns.

Ineligible Costs:

- Capital and operating costs (wages, phone, fax, office equipment and supplies).
- Display booths, posters, business cards, per diems.
- Development of marketing/business plans.
- Membership or registration fees.
- Capital purchases
- Website maintenance, design and/or hosting.

- Promotional items (trinkets, t-shirts, banners, flags, floats, etc).
- Travel costs.
- Attendance at Tradeshows.
- Events.

FUNDING

Tourism Vernon has allocated \$50,000 towards the Cooperative Marketing Recovery Program. Funds will be allocated on a matching basis up to 50% for cash contributions (not including tax) and 25% for in-kind contributions. Tourism Businesses located within Greater Vernon are eligible to apply. All applications will be adjudicated by a subcommittee of the Vernon Tourism Commission.

Funding will be provided upon completion of the project. Receipts, copies of advertisements and projects along with a final report are required prior to reimbursement.

To qualify for the program operators must:

- Be a tourism operator or tourism related non-for-profit organization located within Greater Vernon (Vernon, Coldstream, Electoral Area B and C).
- Encouraged to include an overnight stay in Vernon in any marketing content.
- Include the Tourism Vernon logo and website in marketing content.
- Track and report results of the marketing initiative(s) prior to reimbursement.

Application Process:

A written proposal is required and must include:

- A description of the project including target market/segment and implementation dates.
- The project's goal, objectives and performance measurements to be used.
- Anticipated cost breakdown and estimated overall budget.
- Information on project partners including contact names and addresses.
- Funding amount requested, not including tax.

Evaluation:

- **Anticipated Economic Impact (25%).** The goal is to increase room nights and tourism spending in the Vernon area. Applications should include performance measurements to assist in evaluating such as anticipated room nights, visitor spending, media reach, etc...)
- **Encourage Overnight stay (25%).** Tourism Vernon funding is derived primarily by a hotel tax on accommodation within the city of Vernon. Applications that promote overnight stays or partner directly with an accommodation provider are encouraged.
- **Leveraged funds (20%):** The goal of Tourism Vernon is to maximize the funds, so funding applications that leveraged funds beyond 50% are encouraged.

- **Target Markets (15%):** Applications that align with Tourism Vernon's target markets for recovery efforts of local, regional and within BC and Alberta if allowable by Provincial Health Officer.
- **Partnership (15%):** Applicants are encouraged to partner with accommodators or other tourism operators.

Application Due Date and Adjudication:

The goal is to assist local tourism businesses with immediate recovery efforts. As such, applications are due July 31, 2020. Successful applicants will be notified by August 16, 2020. Approved funds must be spent by December 31, 2020



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

INTERNAL M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Will Pearce, CAO **FILE:** 6901-01
PC: Kim Flick, Director, Community Infrastructure and Development **DATE:** May 25, 2020
FROM: Kevin Poole, Manager, Economic Development and Tourism
SUBJECT: PROVINCIAL TOURISM FUNDING

The Tourism sector has been significantly impacted by the pandemic and associated travel restrictions. As several accommodators in Vernon have closed or experienced drastic declines in occupancy, Administration is anticipating an approximate 75% decline in Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) revenue compared to what was originally anticipated in the 2020 Tourism budget.

On May 25, 2020, Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts, and Culture, announced a \$10 million grant to support 59 BC community destination marketing organizations (DMOs) (Attachment 1). The City of Vernon Tourism department has subsequently received \$145,300 as our portion of the funding. The grant recognizes that local DMOs can play a supportive role in economic recovery, but are facing significant financial challenges as they rely heavily on funds generated by the MRDT.

Administration is currently working on a Tourism Recovery Plan to present to the Tourism Commission at its June 17, 2020 meeting. The funds from the Province of BC will provide much needed support to assist in the recovery efforts.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive the memorandum titled "Provincial Tourism Funding", dated May 25, 2020, by the Manager, Economic Development and Tourism, for information.

Respectfully submitted:

May 28 2020 8:48 AM

X



Kim Flick

DocuSign

for Kevin Poole
Manager, Economic Development and Tourism

Attach 1: Provincial Government News Release

British Columbia News

Province supports tourism marketing organizations to be ready for recovery

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/22255>

Monday, May 25, 2020 8:00 AM

Victoria - Fifty-nine B.C. community destination marketing organizations (DMOs) severely impacted by COVID-19 travel restrictions will be supported with a \$10-million grant from the Province.

B.C.'s community DMOs are not-for-profit organizations that promote tourism to their regions. They rely on funds generated by the municipal and regional district tax (MRDT), which is charged to visitors by hotels and other types of accommodation. Without this relief funding, community DMOs would be unable to operate and support economic recovery efforts in the tourism sector.

“The tourism industry is a major economic engine and job creator for people in B.C., but the impacts of COVID 19 have left the industry struggling,” said Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture.

“We are supporting the tourism industry today to make sure we can welcome visitors to explore Super, Natural British Columbia when it is safe to do so.”

Community DMOs play an important role connecting visitors to B.C.'s communities, representing both large metropolitan centres and towns of a few hundred residents. Investments in the tourism sector's recovery now will help create jobs and spur economic growth throughout the province.

“As we look onwards to reopening and restarting the visitor economy, community DMOs are well placed to create effective marketing and development campaigns that will drive visitors to their communities across our beautiful province,” said Nancy Small, chair, BC Destination Marketing Organization Association. “This welcomed funding announcement will give many of us that ability to remain operating and plan for the future. It is excellent news.”

This funding will help MRDT-supported community DMOs retain crucial staff positions and offset fixed expenses from May to October 2020.

“Destination BC is eager to support our community partners on tourism's road to recovery,” said Marsha Walden, president and CEO, Destination BC. “From marketing, to destination development and industry learning, we're here to help restart the tourism industry as we slowly begin opening our doors again.”

Quick Facts:

- In 2018, tourism contributed over \$20.5 billion in revenues to B.C.'s economy.
- B.C. tourism supports families in communities and rural areas throughout the province, and 59 community DMOs use the MRDT for tourism marketing projects and programs in British Columbia.

Learn More:

[For more information on the municipal and regional district tax, visit:](https://www.destinationbc.ca/what-we-do/funding-sources/mrdt/faq/)

<https://www.destinationbc.ca/what-we-do/funding-sources/mrdt/faq/>

Media Contacts

Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020TAC0022-000927>

From the May 25, 2020 Regular Council Meeting:

COVID-19 PHYSICAL DISTANCING FOR BUSINESSES

THAT Council does not support posting the maximum speed limit for the entire City of Vernon road network (except laneways) within the Primary and Secondary Business Improvement Areas as 30 km/h.

CARRIED

THAT Council allow businesses in the Primary and Secondary Business Improvement Areas to expand their commercial uses into one available public on-street parking space adjacent to their business from June 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020, without a permit and without a fee, subject to entering into a use agreement and conditions to be prepared by Administration;

AND FURTHER, that Council direct Administration to waive the requirement for a Sidewalk and Boulevard Area Use Permit within the Primary and Secondary Business Improvement Areas, until December 31, 2020, to allow businesses to expand their commercial uses into sidewalks and boulevards, subject to leaving a minimum 2.0 m clear aisle for pedestrian circulation, subject to entering into a use agreement and conditions to be prepared by Administration;

AND FURTHER, that Council direct Administration to refund collected fees for 2020 Sidewalk and Boulevard Area Permits, totaling less than \$3,500, to be taken from the Business Licence Account;

AND FURTHER, that Council direct Administration to consult with the Downtown Vernon Association and to report back to Council in June 2020 with recommendations on the potential closure to through traffic of all or some blocks of 30th Avenue between 29th Street and 35th Street;

AND FURTHER, that Council allow businesses with private off-street parking lots throughout the city to temporarily expand their commercial use outdoors on up to 50% of their required private off-street parking spaces from June 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020, subject to conditions to be prepared by Administration;

AND FURTHER, that Council directs Administration to report back to Council with an evaluation of the use of on-street and off-street parking spaces for commercial uses by October 2020.

CARRIED

TEMPORARY EXPANSION OF LIQUOR SERVICE AREAS

THAT Council provide pre-approval to all liquor primary and manufacturer establishments within Vernon who may apply for an expanded service food primary, liquor primary and manufacturer licensees (i.e., wineries, breweries, distilleries) to temporarily expand their service areas until October 31, 2020 in alignment with the Liquor Control and Cannabis Regulation Branch Policy Directive No. 20-13 and City requirements.

CARRIED