



CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING

APRIL 19, 2023, AT 8:00 AM

OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM (COUNCIL CHAMBER) CITY HALL

A G E N D A

1) CALL TO ORDER

2) 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.

3) ADOPTION OF AGENDA

4) ADOPTION OF MINUTES

March 15, 2023 (attached)

5) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Event Subcommittee update (Claus)

b) Tourism Commission Member spots currently vacant or coming vacant

6) NEW BUSINESS

a) Manager's Update

- Operations and Hiring Update
- Special Projects Update

b) 2022 in Review: MRDT and Telus Data

c) Round Table Discussion

- Thoughts on TVIC
- How is business looking for Spring/Summer?
- Hoteliers: Summer pacing?

7) NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Tourism Commission is scheduled for **May 17, 2023**, in the **Okanagan Lake Room (Council Chamber) at City Hall.**

8) ADJOURNMENT



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING HELD MARCH 15, 2023 AT 8:00 AM OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM

PRESENT: VOTING:

Bobby Bissessar, Accommodation Provider
Bradley Callihoo, Okanagan Indian Band
Councillor Durning (Appointed Member)
Clara Snedden, Accommodation Provider
Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider (Chair)
Dauna Kennedy, Arts & Culture
Gale Woodhouse, Arts & Culture
Janine Collard, Attractions
Kat Boloten, Accommodation Provider
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

NON-VOTING:

Ian Jenkins

GUESTS:

Josh Welter, SCSNO
Shawna Patenaude, ACNO
Cassandra Zerebeski, Silverstar Resort

ABSENT: Brett Woods, Biking
Clinton Bialas, Restaurant

STAFF: Hannah Lucich, Tourism Marketing Coordinator
Hilary Irvine, Tourism Marketing Coordinator
Jennifer Pounder, Committee Clerk
John Perrott, Manager, Economic Development & Tourism
Karen Savill, Visitor Services Coordinator
Torrie Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism

ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 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.

The agenda was varied to add Co-op Marketing Update as the first item.

**ADOPTION OF THE
AGENDA**

Moved by P. Kaz, seconded by D. Kennedy:

THAT the agenda of the Tourism Commission meeting for March 15, 2023 be adopted as amended:

CARRIED**ADOPTION OF THE
MINUTES**

Moved by D. Kennedy, seconded by P. Kaz:

THAT the minutes for the Tourism Commission meeting of February 15, 2023 be adopted.

CARRIED**NEW BUSINESS:**

*Before the **Co-op Marketing Funding Update** was tabled for discussion, Commission members 1) C. Larsen, Predator Ridge Resort, 2) J. Collard, Predator Ridge Resort, 3) M. Van Horne, The Rise Golf Course, and 4) P. Kaz, Downtown Vernon Association, 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. Commission members exited the meeting room at 8:05 a.m.*

**CO-OP MARKETING
FUNDING UPDATE**

- Staff provided an update on the Co-Op Marketing Program for intake Period #1. Subcommittee Members and staff adjudicated the applications received.
- Staff noted that only three applications were disqualified, mostly due to the fact that their business does not attract tourists to Vernon.
- The businesses chosen were the best fit for Vernon's five-year strategy plan.
- Subcommittee members filtered through applications more thoroughly and chose applicants who attracted visitors to Vernon and requested the money to help with their marketing campaign. They also eliminated businesses that received help during the covid pandemic and are doing better now. Previous applications

were also reviewed to compare the previous request with the current application.

- Staff also noted the application used will be edited for the upcoming intakes as it is lacking a few important questions.

Business	Amount
Bush Babes & Bros Event	\$ 2,300.00
Canadian Wildlife Museum	\$ 3,500.00
Cedar Falls Campground	\$ 300.00
Downtown Vernon Association	\$ 625.00
Elements Adventure Company	\$ 1,840.00
Okanagan Military Tattoo	\$ 8,704.55
Okanagan Rail Ride	\$ 2,000.00
Okanagan Science Centre	\$ 4,491.90
Polson Artisan Night Market	\$ 1,334.00
Predator Ridge Resort	\$ 8,704.55
Sip Happens Wine Tours	\$ 4,600.00
Sparkling Hill Resort	\$ 7,000.00
The Rise	\$ 4,600.00
Total	\$50,000.00

Moved by Councillor Durning, seconded by R. Rolke:

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

CARRIED

Commission members P. Kaz, C. Larsen, J. Collard and M. Van Horne rejoined the meeting at 8:15 a.m.

K. Boloten joined the meeting at 8:15 a.m.

SCSNO ECONOMIC IMPACT PRESENTATION

Josh Welter, SCSNO, was in attendance and presented a "SCSNO Economic Impact" presentation (Attachment 1).

There were no questions / comments.

**LETTERS OF
SUPPORT**

The Commission received two requests for letters of support from J. Welter, SCSNO, for the following events:

- **Quidditch Western Regionals - November, 2023**
- **U18 Female Hockey National Championships - 2024**

The Commission had the following questions / comments:

- In response to a question, J. Welter confirmed that all venues in Vernon are willing to help with hosting events, if they are able. We have a wonderful community.
- The Commission inquired if it is a consistent issue finding venues in the city. J. Welter said it is not as easy as he would like. The more you work with certain people, the easier it becomes and we are continuing to push forward.
- J. Welter commented regarding the U18 Female Hockey National Championships, it is hard to put nine consecutive days in an arena's calendar, but we will work together and make it happen. It will also be great exposure to our junior hockey program if they have a game during the event.

Moved by **D. Kennedy**, seconded by **M. Van Horne**:

THAT the Tourism Commission provide a letter of support for
Quidditch Western Regionals – November, 2023

CARRIED

Moved by **G. Woodhouse**, seconded by **M. Van Horne**:

THAT the Tourism Commission provide a letter of support for
U18 Female Hockey National Championships – 2024

CARRIED

MARKETING UPDATE

H. Lucich, Tourism Marketing Coordinator, provided the following marketing update:

- New Tourism Vernon website development contract has been awarded to Origin. Process starts next week.

TOURISM COMMISSION

MARCH 15, 2023

- The Commission was shown the ad video titled “Spring in Vernon” that has been running since February, 2023 nationwide.
- Spring ads for digital marketing were also shown and are running under the hashtag *#SpringComesEarlyInVernon*.
- I have been attending conferences and connecting with other DMO’s and the Totem team. We are hoping to have more collaborations later this year.
- We are excited to announce that we received \$16,000 of funding from Destination BC for our co-op marketing campaign application submitted in the fall and \$50,000 in funding in partnership with Tourism Kelowna, Tourism Kamloops, Visit Penticton and Destination Osoyoos called “Travelling out in the Thompson Okanagan” with a marketing focus on the LGBTQ market. Additionally, we just received a notification yesterday that we will be receiving more funding from DBC but we are still unsure of what those amounts look like.
- The BC Ale Trail YouTube video was shown to the Commission.

There were no questions / comments.

MANAGER UPDATE

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

- The newest member of the Tourism Vernon team, Hilary Irvine, Coordinator, Tourism Marketing, was introduced to the Commission.
- Vernon has officially been named the Trails Capital of British Columbia. Thank you to Ribbons of Green for pushing the community towards this initiative.
- This is the last meeting for V. Proulx and C. Bialas. They are leaving the Tourism sector and will no longer be Tourism Commission members. B. Woods will also be stepping away in April or May of this year.
- Recently I have been focusing on destination development. For the first time ever at our Open House Conference in April, Destination BC’s senior management team will be coming to speak to the Commission.

- At the Industry Conference on April 13, 2023, all Commission members will be introduced, so come prepared. There are 120 confirmed attendees with a wait list.
- At the event subcommittee meeting, we came to the consensus that we are experiencing a lot of growing pains. What worked when booking venues 10 to 15 years ago does not work today.
- C. Larsen commented that the tourism sector has grown at a faster pace than the City and we want to work with them to help smooth out the process.

B. Callihoo left the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

**SUSTAINABILITY
DISCUSSION**

A clip of a YouTube video of Robert Sandstrom, United Nations University, that was shown at the Impact Conference, was played for the Commission. C. Larsen led a round table discussion to discover what we, as tourism leaders in Vernon, are doing for sustainability. How are we protecting our city?

- **R. Rolke** – Although an organization like ours isn't providing services, we still want to promote sustainability. I am very interested to hear everyone's initiatives. C. Larsen suggested the Chamber of Commerce offer a sustainability award and provide tools to all the businesses in town to make the award mean something.
- **K. Boloten** – We are currently in discussions with Veri Tree, and in 2024 we will be implementing a program that with every room stay, a portion of the money goes towards trees and sea kelp being replanted.
- **C. Larsen** – Predator Ridge went green many years ago. Water bottles were taken from golf carts, and installed water fountains throughout the course and at the valet station. We also contracted an eco-fee of \$2/night from guests, being held in a fund that is given back to the operator to improve in their green-ability and being more sustainable. We do a lot of snow clearing at predator ridge and have found an eco-friendly snow melter for pathways which greatly reduces the amount we use the plows.
- **B. Bissessar** – We have recently switched our bathroom amenity line to Eco Clean, a more sustainable product. We no longer offer daily housekeeping services and offer a trade in program for towels instead. The employees carpool and stagger between offices. We are currently in conversation with Soap for Hope to upcycle our used amenities.

- **P. Kaz** – We will be taking Sparkle Day this year to a new level. We have updated all lights to LED and have implemented a recycling/compost program.
- **C. Zerebeski**, Silverstar Resort – We have been working with Biosphere and also with Green Stamp to improve efficiency. We also run a compost and recycling program.
- **G. Woodhouse** – We are working with RDNO to reduce our energy impact, improving washroom facilities and running a recycling program. We are looking at attending conferences virtually. We are also working with artist groups so people will receive the message, take action and use sustainable materials.
- **V. Proulx** – The Winter Carnival reuses and recycles everything in our building. We have geared toward digital instead of printing, plus tickets are online or via the phone app. C. Larsen suggested sending reminders with mailings that virtual tickets are available.
- **T. Hudson** – I have been an advocate for the sustainability platform for a long time. Sovereign Lake Nordic Club joined Biosphere in 2019, launched a committee in November, 2022 for environmental impact and sustainability and created an eco-efficiency plan in 2019. We use all LEDs, low flow, low flush toilets, replaced our water heater, sub pump and generator. All ski trail lighting will be changed to LED bulbs, and we are considering a shift to solar. There are 37 action plans within Biosphere we are actively working on right now; not a small task. There is a composting plan in place and a carbon emissions report in the works. Currently we are working on a plan with TOTA to take to other clubs to help them. C. Larsen suggested a subcommittee be created to help the City with implementing some changes.
- **Councilor Durning** – The City of Vernon is active in their Climate Action initiatives. The Climate Action Advisory Committee oversees much of what we do. On March 7, 2023 we held our strategic planning for our upcoming session on climate care. I am looking forward to the outcomes of the set strategic plan and what we will be doing to make climate action a priority. C. Larsen requested that Councilor Durning advise Council that the Tourism Commission would like to be involved with the Climate Action initiatives.
- **M. Van Horne** – As a golf course, we do not have a huge footprint. Golf carts will be changed to lithium batteries and building renovations are being done to improve energy efficiency.

- **C. Snedden** – Prestige Hotels are also a part of the Biosphere and Green Step programs. Each hotel has been mandated to add sustainability to their health and safety meetings. We follow the go green program where you can forego your housekeeping, and aiming to make check in/out paperless. We are currently switching to purchasing bulk with refillable sanitary items, and recently installed new windows, roofing, skylights and dehumidifier.
- **D. Kennedy** – At our current facility, we are limited in what we can change. We have updated the lighting to LED bulbs. In the development of the new cultural facility, sustainability is front and center.
- C. Larsen thanked everyone for their input and suggested this discussion be held bi-annually.
- J. Welter commented that all of these changes are fantastic and we should promote this on our public and social channels. Also, a sustainability ambassador program would be great.
- In response to a question, T. Silverthorn confirmed that the City is still printing the visitor guides. The amount of copies printed during Covid was reduced and paperless was encouraged, however they received a significant amount of pushback from the older generation. We are still printing the guides but being more cautious in our distribution. K. Savill confirmed the guide is now printed on 100% recycled paper.

INFORMATION ITEMS:**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting for the Tourism Commission is set for **April 19, 2023** at **8:00 a.m.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Tourism Commission adjourned at 9:30 a.m. by call of the Chair.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

_____ Chair