



CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING

OCTOBER 18, 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

a) September 6, 2023 (attached)

5) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6) NEW BUSINESS

- Quarterly Marketing Update – H. Lucich
- Managers Update– T. Silverthorn
- Tourism Commission Term Renewals and Application Process – T. Silverthorn

7) NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Tourism Commission is scheduled for **November 15, 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 SEPTEMBER 6, 2023 AT 8:00 AM
OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM (COUNCIL CHAMBER) CITY HALL**

PRESENT: VOTING:

Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider, Chair
Mike Van Horne, Golf
Dauna Kennedy, Arts & Culture
Gale Woodhouse, Arts & Culture
Kris Fuller, Vernon Winter Carnival
Peter Kaz, Downtown Vernon Association
Mayor Cumming
Clara Snedden, Accommodation Provider
Ben Suranko, Biking
Cassandra Zerebeski, Ski
Bradley Calihoo, Okanagan Indian Band
Janine Collard, Attractions
Gerran Thorhaug, Restaurant

NON-VOTING:

Ian Jenkins

GUESTS:

Josh Welter, SCSNO

ABSENT: Richard Rolke, Chamber of Commerce
Bobby Bissessar, Accommodation Provider
Kat Boloten, Accommodation Provider
Councillor Durning, Council Appointed

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

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 G. Woodhouse, seconded by M. Van Horne:

THAT the agenda of the September 6, 2023 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

CARRIED**ADOPTION OF THE
MINUTES**

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

THAT the minutes of the July 19, 2023 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

CARRIED**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:**SEPTEMBER
MEETING**

The Chair announced that the Tourism Commission meeting scheduled for September 20, 2023 is cancelled.

The Chair welcomed Cassandra Zerebeski and Ben Suranko and thanked Richard Rolke and Troy Hudson for their service to the Tourism Commission.

C. Snedden entered the meeting at 8:05 a.m.

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

Mayor Cumming entered the meeting at 8:08 a.m.

- This Commission does not typically meet in August, however, at the July meeting we entered into budget discussion on the priorities for 2024 and the Chair felt it was necessary to continue this conversation in August. Due to the wildfire situation to the South of us, that meeting was postponed until today.
- With the help of C. Larsen, we have been doing some advocacy work with Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) and the Ministry. Need for hotel rooms for evacuees was not fully realized and our hotels are sitting empty as a result of travel restrictions.
- C. Larsen commented that he had a roundtable with Minister Popham. Discussion was on the impact from the wildfires. A lot of

businesses are fully staffed again since the Covid-19 pandemic and now without guests are having to let employees go again.

- T. Silverthorn reassured the Commission that the message has been shared with regional and provincial tourism officials
- C. Zerebeski encouraged everyone to share estimated revenue losses with TOTA; they require the numbers to build the case and find some supports at provincial level.
- T. Silverthorn welcomed B. Suranko and C. Zerebeski to the Commission.

2024 BUDGET DISCUSSION

T. Silverthorn provided a presentation to aid the Budget Discussion (Attached to these minutes as Attachment 1). Seeking feedback on prioritizing the following:

- Travel media
- Travel trade
- Sport tourism
- Corporate travel, meetings and conferences
- The floor was opened for discussion/questions:
 - In response to a question, properties confirmed capacity and size of conference spaces
 - ~ Predator Ridge – 150
 - ~ Sparkling Hill – 250
 - ~ Prestige Hotel - 500.
 - K. Fuller is fully supportive of Travel Media and would love to see it take a leading role in 2024.
 - C. Larsen stated the desire for travel media for Predator Ridge and this sector has helped get them on the map. He agrees that we need to get back to travel media and get to the next level. He also agrees that sports and events has been successful and needs to get to the next level.
 - B. Suranko – Has come across several videos created by travel media, bloggers and influencers in the mountain biking sector online. His network is amazed by our scenery and trails.
 - C. Zerebeski fully agrees with prioritizing travel media and sport tourism. Also sees need for more aggressive approach to corporate travel, conferences and business events Long term the investment will pay off. Penticton has its conference center and Kelowna has an employee in Toronto as well as one in Kelowna.
 - P. Kaz commented that Vernon has hotel rooms and no facilities. We need a high capacity venue. Regarding travel trade, we convinced bus trades in Vancouver to stop here on way to Banff. We need a reason for people to stop here.
 - T Silverthorn commented that sports do not need to be inside. Large scale events can happen outside.

- Planet bee confirmed their tour bus/travel trade business is 30% of what it was pre-Covid-19.
- I. Jenkins agrees. Make sure the support for travel trade does not get lost. As for meetings/conferences: attract events that work for the facilities and spaces we already have.
- Mayor Cumming commented that indoor event facilities are a significant loss leader for other communities. Cautious about the cost of indoor facilities that are under-utilized.
- T. Silverthorn shared that Victoria has private sector funding to support and a partner in the Empress hotel to fill and pay for conference facility. This is not an option at this point in time for Vernon.
- C. Snedden confirmed their occupancy is not even close to 2019 numbers. Filling conference space is a challenge.
- Mayor Cumming would like to see targeting conferences in a stronger role than just a support role.
- T. Silverthorn confirmed this is why we need to prioritize. We have a tiny team of staff; all four sectors have tremendous value, but attracting these sectors takes significant time, effort and capacity
- I. Jenkins – Success will be from team Vernon – industry needs to support Tourism Vernon in going after these sectors.
- G. Thorhaug – The Tourism Board in Terrace, BC, trained sales people. The Board and businesses worked together and were able to offer packages which helped attract visitors.
- T. Silverthorn asked what size of group event is ideal for local industry
- J. Welter – Whatever size of group it is, we need staff.
- J. Collard – Events make money. Significant impact for Predator and every hotel in area. One visitor coming for lunch do not make money. Groups and events are important.
- T. Silverthorn confirmed staff would explore options for pursuing all four sectors, in particular meetings and events. Listening to the group today, Tourism Vernon is currently not doing enough here.
- T. Silverthorn thanked the Commission for their feedback. She will bring forward a plan for this group to view and discuss at a future meeting.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

NEXT MEETING

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

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Tourism Commission adjourned at 8:55 a.m. by call of the Chair.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

_____ Chair

Tourism Commission Meeting

September 6, 2023



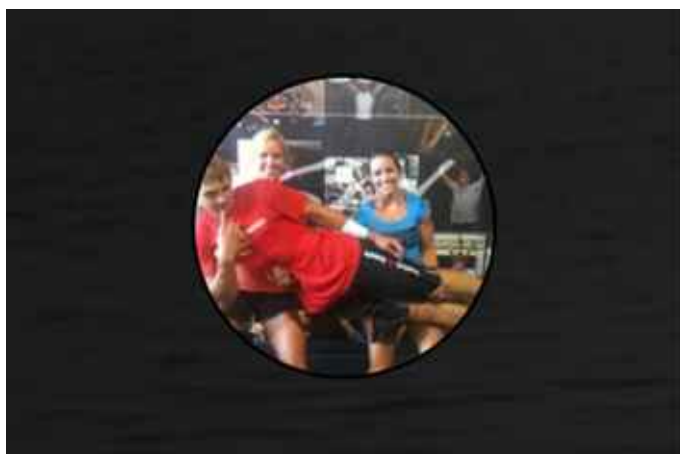
Ben Suranko

North Okanagan Cycling Society, Board of Directors



NORTH OKANAGAN
CYCLING SOCIETY

“NOCS builds, maintains, rides, protects and advocates for new trails in our area. They are the voice of mountain biking in the North Okanagan.”



**BEN
SURANKO**

CROSSFIT VERNON



Photo: VPFC

Winner of winter 2021 draw Andrea Todosychuk.

You could win big with the Vernon Professional Firefighters Charitable Society summer raffle.

The organization last held a 50/50 draw in winter 2021, when Vernonite Andrea Todosychuk won \$10,000.

The firefighters hope to raise \$20,000 again this year, so the raffle winner can take home another \$10,000.

"All the proceeds will be going to our various charity organizations that we support as well as local opportunities that present themselves," says spokesperson Ben Suranko with society.

Cassandra Zerebeski

Executive Director, Destination SilverStar



Cassandra has built exceptional teams globally, always exceeding the evolving needs of clients and partners with leadership roles at Tourism Whistler, Destination Canada, Pacific Destination Services, Whistler Blackcomb, and Accor Hotels in a tourism career that spans three decades.

A twenty-year resident of British Columbia originally from Minnesota, often deemed the most Canadian part of the US, Cassandra always puts her infectious enthusiasm to good use.



What do we need to determine today?

In which sectors do we want to play a **leading** role?

In which sectors do we want to play a **supporting** role?

- Sport & Event Tourism
- Travel Media
- Travel Trade
- Meetings & Conferences



Meetings & Conferences

The overall economic impact of Business Events on the Canadian economy is ~\$40.7B CAD.

Visitors represent the majority (81%) of the \$40.7B CAD economic impact generated by the overall meetings industry.

(Source: Oxford Economics, 2018 Global Economic Significance of Business Events Report).



Meetings & Conferences

...but are we product ready?



Meetings & Conferences

...but are we product ready?



Travel Trade

This sector includes travel agencies and tour operators.

Travel agents create and sell travel *packages* that coordinate a traveler's accommodations, transportation and activities while on vacation.

Tour operators design and market tours for specific areas.



Travel Trade

PROS

- Several local hoteliers see significant, annual impact from travel trade
- Planet Bee and Davison Orchards also benefit from travel trade

CONS

- Slower recovery from pandemic
- Expensive and time consuming to attract
- Overnight stays and disbursement into the community are minimal



Travel Media

Journalists | Travel Writers | Influencers | Content Creators



Travel Media

PROS

- Established contacts
- Value to be found in digital, savvy content creators and we are prepared
- Regional and provincial support
- Partnership opportunities

CONS

- Very time consuming
- Expensive



Travel Media



Off Track Travel

<https://offtracktravel.ca> · Recent ·

50+ Best Things to Do in Vernon: Ultimate Guide

Mar 29, 2023 — My favourites include 'Kalamalka Lake' and the Okanagan Science Centre's 'Ogopogo.' Gemma standing on sidewalk looking up at Kalamalka Lake ...
Hike to the top of Middleton... · Have brunch at EATology · Sip cider at BX Press



Must Do Canada

<https://www.mustdocanada.com> · Articles ·

28 Fun Things to Do in Vernon

Oct 18, 2022 — One of the top **things to do** in **Vernon** is hiking the Grey Canal Trail for. Turtle Mountain is an easy way to get jaw- ...



Sport & Event Tourism



Sport & Event Tourism



The city of Vernon was chosen as the first host due to its infrastructure, tough course and trail scene. The course at Kalamalka Lake Provincial Park is described as 'tough', 'challenging' and 'scenic', with no paved roads and 95 per cent single track.

Sport & Event Tourism

PROS

- Well positioned
- Potential for significant economic impact
- Can be scaled up or scaled down to fit our community
- Supportive council

CONS

- Challenges with indoor amenities
- Improvement needed throughout facility booking and planning process
- Can expect increasing cost commitments



Nikki Robinson

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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nikki@tourismkelowna.com

Contact Nikki to: Participate in co-op marketing programs for Meetings & Conventions, discuss your new business or product for the meetings & Conventions market, participate in familiarization tours for Meeting Planners, and receive bid preparation and hosting consultation.



Sara Correa

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, MEMBERSHIP, SPORTS & EVENTS

250.861.1515 ext. 218

sara@tourismkelowna.com

Contact Sara to: Become a member of Tourism Kelowna, or if you would like information on hosting a sport or event in Kelowna.



Shereen Abbas

TRAVEL MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

250.861.1515 ext. 209

shereen@tourismkelowna.com

Contact Shereen to: share new and noteworthy updates about your business or opportunities to showcase your business to travel media and influencers.

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In which sectors do we want to play a **leading** role?

In which sectors do we want to play a **supporting** role?

- Sport & Event Tourism
- Travel Media
- Travel Trade
- Meetings & Conferences





Lead

- **Sport & Event Tourism**
- **Travel Media**

Support

- **Travel Trade**
- **Meetings & Conferences**

Questions / Discussion

September 6, 2023

