

TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 13, 2014

BILLINGS, MT

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Amber Wood-Jensen, Chair—Butte

Bill McGladdery, Vice-Chair—Butte

Mark Anderlik—Missoula

Cyndy Andrus—Bozeman

Matt Ellis—Missoula

Rhonda Fitzgerald—Whitefish

Bev Harbaugh—Jordan

Glenniss Indreland—Bozeman

Gail Richardson—Bozeman

Bill McGladdery—Butte

Stan Ozark—Glasgow

Lark Paz—Crow Agency

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Dan Austin—Billings

MONTANA OFFICE of TOURISM STAFF

Jeri Duran—Division Administrator

Pam Gosink—Sales & Constituent Services Bureau Chief

Carmen Levick—Administrative Assistant

Barb Sanem—Compliance Specialist

Daniel Iverson—Public Information Officer

Garrett Norcott—DOC Legal Counsel

SUNDAY, APRIL 13, 2014

CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS

Council Chair, Amber Wood-Jensen called the meeting of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) to order at 11:30 a.m. Introductions of the audience, Council members and Montana Office of Tourism (MTOT) staff followed.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no requests to make changes to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Shelli Mann: Shelli Mann asked if the TAC had a quorum at the February 2-3, 2014 meeting in Missoula. Amber Wood-Jensen confirmed that after checking with the Department of Commerce legal counsel that there was a quorum at the February 2-3, 2014 meeting.

PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN the TAC and the REGIONS

—Laura Lee Ullrich, Chair, Southeast Montana Tourism Region Board

Laura Lee said that during a Southeast Montana board meeting, they discussed the importance of allowing ad sales for the regional visitor guides. Knowing that it was an item for discussion on the February TAC meeting agenda, the board wrote a letter to the TAC voicing their concerns. She said that because of restrictions on the use of bed tax funds, that ad revenue is a source for private funds for the entities so that they can do other projects that would otherwise not be permitted under the rules and regulations for the use of bed tax funds. Some of the uses for private funds include, but are not limited to meals for board members, attendance to the Governor's Conference on Tourism, funding for Voices of Montana Tourism and administrative costs. She said that to not have those private funds would be an issue. She stated that board members volunteer their time and do not get reimbursed for travel. Barb Sanem clarified that board members are allowed to be reimbursed for travel expenses out of admin budgets.

Laura Lee stated that she would like to see more of partnership between the Regions and the TAC rather than the parent/child relationship that seems to be in effect. She asked why the decision was made to change the process for ad sale revenues.

Amber Wood-Jensen explained that the TAC members vehemently believe in protecting the bed tax and making sure that it is spent correctly and that the rules and regulations for its use are followed so that there is no one could question the intent of the usage of the funds. She said that the TAC takes their role seriously and that the only reason they felt the need to restrict ad revenue being used for private funds was that they felt it would look inappropriate to legislators, auditors, media or anyone else that raised questions regarding the practice of using ad sale revenue as private funds when bed tax funds are used to produce the guide.

Glenniss Indreland commented that as a result of the ad sale revenue discussion at the February 2-3, 2014 meeting, the TAC acknowledged that they need to re-evaluate a number of things in the rules and regulations to be more flexible to the Regions and CVBs.

Rhonda Fitzgerald clarified that the action taken by the TAC at the February 2-3, 2014 meeting was not to take away the ability for the Regions and CVBs to sell ads, but if the project is being paid for with bed tax dollars, any funds generated by those ad sales, up to the cost of the project would be applied back into the bed tax account rather than moved to private funds.

ALLOWABLE MARKETING & ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES—Amber Wood-Jensen, Chair

The TAC reviewed requests based on input from the Regions and CVBs on their “wish list” of what they would like to see as allowable expenses. The TAC Marketing Committee will meet via conference call to discuss the following topics further and will give a report on the discussion at the June 2-3, 2014 meeting.

- 1) Commission—part of expense (production)
- 2) Board Members at Governor’s Conference—(strategic planning)
- 3) Professional development—(admin budget vs marketing expense)
- 4) Beautification projects—(infrastructure vs beautification)
- 5) Items for resale (initial inventory)
- 6) Membership solicitation—(amend membership solicitation material definition)
- 7) Governor’s Conference/In-State Conference/Convention Sponsorship—(need better definition)
- 8) Dues (USTA)—for marketing expense

INTRODUCTION TO NEW TAC MEMBER

Amber introduced new TAC member Lark Paz. Dan Austin will be the TAC mentor/buddy for Lark.

AD-HOC COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS—Amber Wood-Jensen, Chair

Amber said that the TAC is working to move forward with the following ad-hoc committees. Each committee will work on a plan and priorities and action items will be discussed in further detail during the June meeting in Red Lodge. Those committees are:

- TAC Member Role Descriptions—Amber Wood-Jensen, Cyndy Andrus
- Advising the Governor—Stan Ozark, (chair), Dan Austin, Gail Richardson and Mark Anderlik
- MTOT Partnerships—Bill McGladdery (chair), Amber Wood-Jensen, Bev Harbaugh and Kim Holzer
- Measurement & Accountability—Rhonda Fitzgerald, Cyndy Andrus and Matt Ellis
- Infrastructure & Wayfinding—Rhonda Fitzgerald (chair), Gail Richardson, Kim Holzer and Matt Ellis
- Develop & Prioritize Future Initiative/Themes—Glenniss Indreland (chair), Mark Anderlik, Matt Ellis
- Marketing Plan Reboot—Amber Wood-Jensen, Cyndy Andrus, Stan Ozark, Rhonda Fitzgerald, Marysue Costello, Alex Tyson, Gayle Fisher, Racene Friede
- Tourism Speaks Revamp/Legislative Task Force—Cyndy Andrus (chair), Amber Wood-Jensen, us, Mark Anderlik, Marysue Costello, Racene Friede

UPCOMING MEETINGS

June 2-3, 2014—Rock Creek Resort, Red Lodge

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.