

**VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)
MERCHANT WORKSHOP**

October 18, 2018 at 6:15 pm

**Piper's Opera House
12 B St, Virginia City, NV 89440**

WORKSHOP NOTES

Notice: Items on the agenda may be taken out of order; two or more agenda items may be combined for consideration; and items may be removed from the agenda or discussion relating thereto delayed at any time. This is the tentative schedule for the meeting. The Commission reserves the right to take items in a different order to accomplish business in the most efficient manner.

The following notes are a summarized explanation of the topics discussed. A taped recording of these proceedings will be kept for review.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ron Gallagher called the workshop to order at 6:15 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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L. Gilman made the motion to approve the agenda.

Second – C. DeGasperis

Approved – Unanimously

2. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS

Discussion may be limited to three minutes per person at the discretion of the Chairman. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this portion of the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action may be taken.

There was no public comment

3. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: PUBLIC WORKSHOP

A. *DISCUSSION ONLY*

Deny Dotson explained the difference between a chamber of commerce, a merchants association, and a fair and recreation board. D. Dotson briefly introduced the VCTC staff and the board members who were present. D. Dotson showed a slide that explained the VCTC budget. D. Dotson did a brief overview of Liquid Blue Events and RAD Strategies job duties.

D. Dotson introduced Stephanie Kruse from KPS3 as the moderator for the rest of the workshop. S. Kruse emphasized that the attendees were "here to be heard" and went over the guidelines for a productive conversation.

S. Kruse broke the attendees up into small groups.

S. Kruse asked Question 1 - What should be done with a tourism/marketing budget? What would you change to raise additional funds?

Group 1 Response:

Group 1 focused on the perception of Virginia City as an afternoon destination and the value of changing that perception to an overnight destination.

- Transportation is an issue.
- People do come in the evenings occasionally, but there is nothing to do.
- Group consensus is that there needs to be a commitment on both sides – VCTC should get information regarding what is really going on in town and the merchants need to be willing to tell VCTC pertinent information so that there is coordination between groups.
 - o Formalized itineraries would also be helpful.

Group 2 Response:

Group 2's discussion centered on marketing and the ways in which marketing should move.

- There should be more focus on the history of Virginia City such as more concise historical details (mining, etc.)
- Virginia City should be marketed as a 365 day a year destination (not just summertime).
- Group 2 also suggested that the pub-crawls should be held after regular business hours and not during the day.
- There was a suggestion that no outside food vendors be allowed as they undersell the local food vendors.
- There should be less direct competition in regards to all outside vendors – focus more on attracting vendors who make original items/works of art.
- While the town loves events and does not want to see them go, Group 2 stated that maybe marketing is too focused on events and would be better used focusing on the history of Virginia City.

Group 3 Response:

Group 3 spent their allotted discussion time working on suggestions for the Virginia City docents.

- Docents are one of the most important parts of the community.
- When people come to Virginia City, they generally have an idea what the city is about, but the docents can bridge the information gap.
- There were questions on how the docents should be rewarded. One suggestion was to only have volunteers.
- The final suggestions from the group were to create and maintain a docent program and to make sure the docents are directing visitors to the merchants.

Group 4 Response:

Group 4 shared three key items they would focus on -

- Major event efforts should be discussed prior to said events as many times in the past, busses came in the morning/evening and none of the merchants knew about them until they arrived.
- The merchants do not like direct competition from outside vendors.
- Current street closures do not benefit the entire town. The closing of main street should incorporate every business.

Group 5 Response:

Group 5 focused their responses on advertising.

- The observation was made that there is no commercialization of Virginia City other than Highway 50 so the group proposed more billboards be present in the surrounding areas.
- There is limited to no advertising in the airport yet there should be.
- Radio advertising could be used much more regularly and while events are going on.

Group 6 Response:

Group 6 discussed marketing.

- Marketing is ok, but the town is becoming known more as a drinking town rather than a historical town.
- More family events would bring more people.
- Based on the visitor's survey, there does not need to be more marketing for the town.

Group 7 Response:

Group 7 discussed the need to market Virginia City all year long.

- Virginia City is still alive during the winter and there is a strong need and desire for more Christmas events.
- Transportation is an issue that will always come up until a viable solution is found.
- The history of the town needs to be marketed more.

S. Kruse asked Question 2 - How do we, as a community, continue to provide feedback (on an ongoing basis)? Several people came forward (groups somewhat dissolved) with the following responses/suggestions:

- The development of a local radio station
- An interactive app that businesses can update themselves
- New maps of the town
- Monthly meetings that occur in the evenings
- More decorating in town
- More communication with the docents
- More docents in town who know and share accurate history
- A webpage that is updated daily
- A community calendar
- Continued communication through the coalition
- Own the information! If a page is established, the merchants need to update the information on it.
- A Virginia City blog
- Speak to the kids at the high school and see if there is interest in them developing a quarterly directory
- Communication can occur at the post office (bulletin boards, etc.)
- More workshops throughout the year
- Possible sub-committee to focus on issues that are brought up during workshops
- A laminated piece of paper with the town's "normal" schedule on it

D. Dotson asked the group to remember who everyone sat with at the workshop because these are the people who will work together to get to the next step in communicating.

4. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: ADJOURNMENT OF THE WORKSHOP

Chairman Gallagher adjourned the workshop at 8:40 pm.