

# VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)

November 8, 2018 9:00 a.m.

Virginia City Conference Center  
10 South E Street, Virginia City, NV 89440

## MEETING MINUTES

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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.

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

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### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ron Gallagher called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

### Pledge of Allegiance

#### 1. ROLL CALL

Leah Kruse called roll.

**Chairperson:** Ron Gallagher  
**Vice Chair:** Corrado DeGasperi  
**Treasurer:** Vanessa Stephens  
**Board Members:** Angelo Petrini  
Lance Gilman  
Arika Perry – Absent

L. Kruse noted there was a quorum present.

**Others:** Deny Dotson, Director  
Katie Demuth, Tourism & Marketing Manager  
Leah Kruse, Administrative Assistant III  
Whitney Brunson, Special Events Coordinator

### 2. 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. DeGasperi

Approved – Unanimously

### 3. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A. *October 11, 2018*

L. Gilman made the motion to approve the minutes from the October 11, 2018 meeting.

Second – C. DeGasperi

Approved – Unanimously

#### **4. 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.*

D. Dotson welcomed the new owners of the Sugarloaf, Candace and Charlie Pitts. D. Dotson encouraged everyone to go meet them and get to know them.

Aengus Luker, Storey County resident, thanked everyone for putting up no parking signs on his street. A. Luker stated that since the signs have been up he has not had any of the previous parking problems.

#### **5. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: FINANCIAL UPDATE**

- A. *Tourism Tax Report*
- B. *Transient Lodging Tax Report*

D. Dotson presented the Tourism Tax report and Transient Lodging Tax Report. D. Dotson stated that both Tourism and Lodging Tax Reports are very strong and trending up. L. Gilman stated that the Marriott ran into financial problems, but they should be reporting again by mid-2019. C. DeGasperis asked if the hotels were reporting at full capacity. K. Demuth stated that they get close, but they generally do not come in at full capacity. D. Dotson stated that he would be speaking later about some plans that would help the Virginia City hotels reach higher occupancy during the week as opposed to just the weekends.

D. Dotson shared a balance sheet that he received from the comptroller that was dated November 1, 2018 – period ending September 30, 2018, which equates to an October 1 look at finances. D. Dotson stated that a few items did not pull over to this report as the county switched to a new system, but the balance sheet is close to accurate with just a few larger expenses that are not reflected. D. Dotson stated that there was a big run on Cemetery Gin. D. Dotson said that he has alerted the comptroller's office that there was no budget for a re-run of this product, but because of the Costco addition there was a run, but the money is coming in to cover a re-run. D. Dotson stated that he was not sure if the desire for the product would continue. D. Dotson expressed concern over the fact that this was a weak year for pine nuts. Alexia Sober, Storey County business owner, asked if pine nuts are being used to make the gin. D. Dotson confirmed that they are.

#### **6. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: MARKETING UPDATES**

Ronele Dotson, RAD Strategies, Inc. presented information on how important credibility is. R. Dotson began her presentation by stating that because RAD Strategies had both video and visual, USA Today ran marketing for Virginia City and it showed up on over 40+ articles across the United States.

R. Dotson reported that RAD put together a two-month snapshot of key events that are happening in Virginia City on a one-page flyer that will be distributed to all of the local hotels. D. Dotson stated that the flyer would only focus on key events, not all of the events. A. Sober asked what the reach on the flyers was. D. Dotson answered by stating that they would be going into all local hotels so they printed 300.

R. Dotson stated that RAD is also currently working on utilizing some new communication tools and testing the mobile application. R. Dotson said that there was a lot of new communication products in the works, but that there was also a focus on expanding what is already in existence.

R. Dotson highlighted some October marketing events, which included a series of articles and pictures that Travel Nevada put together, Expedia's article on hidden gems in the country (total of 5 picked), an opportunity to begin "re-gramming" on Instagram in order to tell Virginia City's story, an article that was written about Cemetery Gin that was in Reno Gazette Journal, and a radio program called The Next Stage with Connie Wray that will focus on Piper's Opera House (will air in November).

#### **7. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: SPECIAL EVENT UPDATES**

Neil Horning, Liquid Blue Events, presented information on Christmas in the Comstock. N. Horning stated that ticket sales for the Comstock Cowboys concert are trending higher than last year and marketing has not begun yet. N. Horning

asked for approval of the budget. A. Sober asked for verification on budget items. N. Horning stated that \$50 is for the designated driver portion of The Grinch Made Me Do It Saloon Crawl, \$3500 is strictly for David John and the Comstock Cowboys, funds for decorating and advertising, and the event rental fee to Piper's.

R. Gallegher called for a motion to approve the \$8500 budget for Christmas on the Comstock.

L. Gilman made the motion to approve the \$8500 budget for Christmas on the Comstock.

Second – A. Petrini

Approved – Unanimously

K. Demuth presented information on the Veterans Day Parade and the Christmas Parade of Lights. K. Demuth stated that the Veterans Day Parade would be on Sunday, November 11 at 11:00 am and that high school choir will be singing a medley of military/patriotic songs at 10:30 am by the announcer's booth. K. Demuth shared that the Parade of Lights will be on December 1 and there will be a cash prize for first place. K. Demuth also stated that there will be another Christmas decorating contest for Comstock businesses on main street. K. Demuth said that all decorating needs to be completed by November 30 at 4:00pm. K. Demuth announced that the prizes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place are event sponsorships in the amount of \$2500, \$1000, and \$500.

K. Demuth asked for volunteers to help installing Christmas lights at the welcome center/head frame/bathrooms at the north end of town. D. Dotson reiterated the need for local volunteers to help with decorations.

D. Dotson stated that the Taste of the Comstock may be better supported by another in-town entity instead of having VCTC handle the planning and implementation.

D. Dotson stated that the mining competition that is coming to town next year is growing and he hopes to find a way for the VCTC to support it.

D. Dotson asked anyone who may have an event they want to host to contact him so that it can be added to the event calendar.

#### **8. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: COMMUNITY COALITION UPDATE**

A. Sober presented information on the Storey County Community Coalition. A. Sober announced that the meetings are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 6:00 pm. A. Sober shared some updates that included possibly forming a standing subcommittee, a way to open communication between merchants, VCTC, and residents by implementing a phone tree, a thank you for providing clear information regarding the roles and responsibilities of VCTC and the employees, and the request to keep the coalition involved in the docent program.

#### **9. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: GROUPS, FAMS, TRADE SHOWS, AND VISITOR CENTER UPDATE**

K. Demuth stated that group numbers are in line with the numbers from last year. K. Demuth said that she would like to work with merchants to give groups a discount to stores.

K. Demuth spoke about her time at the National Travel Association conference, which she recently attended. K. Demuth stated that at the conference, she met with tour operators and planners so she was able to re-introduce the area to them. K. Demuth said that she was able to get several new ideas from the conference on what to do with the groups that come to Virginia City.

K. Demuth stated the turnout for the Halloween parade was a little low due to Halloween being on a Wednesday.

#### **10. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: PIPERS OPERA HOUSE UPDATE**

W. Brunson stated that October was very busy for Pipers with four weddings and two shows. W. Brunson stated that for the October 30 Murder Mystery Show, over 90 people attended. W. Brunson stated that over 800 tickets have been sold for Nightmare Before Christmas and that is not including the 80 tickets sold for the dinner show.

W. Brunson shared some upcoming events that include two murder mystery shows, a burlesque show, Friends of the NRA event, Christmas on the Comstock concert, and Nightmare Before Christmas shows. A. Sober asked if Piper's would be selling box seats for the shows and W. Brunson responded that they are not.

W. Brunson stated that off-season tours will be on Saturday and Sundays only (unless there is a group), but private groups are still welcome as long as they call ahead of time to book.

W. Brunson shared that there are weddings scheduled through the winter and that planning is in the works for a wedding fair to show off local vendors.

#### **11. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: STAFF REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE & FUTURE MEETINGS**

D. Dotson shared a quick recap of some of the items that VCTC staff has been working on including FEMA training, Tyler training, special event follow-ups, a general marketing meeting with RAD and Liquid Blue to discuss marketing for next year, monthly County Commission meetings, and on-going communication via VCTC agendas and packets, email newsletters, and special event notifications.

D. Dotson stated that there is a potential request for the relinquishment of C Street (from Fourth Ward School to the gas station). D. Dotson stated that permitting is difficult because the section of road in Virginia City must follow the same rules as any section of I-580 does. D. Dotson shared that this relinquishment is not anywhere near completed nor is it even approved yet – it is just something that may be on the horizon. D. Dotson further explained that relinquishment would mean that NDOT would be giving C Street to the county. A. Petri expressed concerns regarding Storey County taking over C Street as he has heard that Carson City did not do well with their takeover of a main street.

D. Dotson stated that there are some new special event leads for 2019 and 2020 including Wild West Fest, Extreme Motorcycles, barrel racing, Women with Wheels Drag Racing and the International Collegiate Mining Competition. D. Dotson stated the International Collegiate Mining Competition will be here in March and that all rooms in town are booked for this event. D. Dotson said that the event will happen in March of 2019 and the people will be here for 4 days. D. Dotson stated that there will be over 250 participants in town and that this number does not include the families and friends that will travel to watch the event.

A. Sober stated that the Storey County Community Coalition would like to be more involved in the event planning and asked to be included in the workshops and/or meetings that VCTC holds. A. Sober also asked that the Coalition be included in the relinquishment of C Street conversations. D. Dotson reiterated that the relinquishment of C Street issues would need to go before the County Commissioners and now is just the time to start thinking about what this would mean for Virginia City. A. Sober asked that the Coalition be included in the conversation when the conversation becomes more substantial. D. Dotson stated that A. Sober is welcome to come to his office anytime, but the internal meetings that occur every two weeks at VCTC is for staff. A. Sober asked that the coalition be invited to events or meetings that include people who are not employed by VCTC. D. Dotson stated that there might be an opportunity for that.

D. Dotson stated that there is ongoing website and app editing happening, that the Black & Howell demolition is completed and that the next step will be to get bids for the new Visitor Center build and that the Gold Hill Hotel has a short-term lease on the Gold Hill Depot. D. Dotson also stated that VCTC is still working with the District Attorney in regards to agreements for the fair grounds and hopes to have the information with the county commissioners in December.

D. Dotson shared that there is potential for some co-op transportation arrangements in town, that there is some movement with the China Ready Program and that includes plans to have the VCTC brochure translated into Mandarin. D. Dotson also shared some updates on the docent program and stated that the V&T is very busy with the Polar Express.

R. Gallagher stated that the next VCTC meeting will be December 13, 2018 at 9:00 am.

#### **12. CHAIRMAN GALLAGHER BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: ADJOURNMENT OF COMMISSION BOARD MEETING**

Chairman Gallagher adjourned the meeting at 10:15 am.