

VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)

December 13, 2018 9:00 a.m.

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

MEETING MINUTES

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 minutes 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 meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. ROLL CALL

Leah Kruse called roll.

Chairperson: Ron Gallagher
Vice Chair: Corrado DeGasperis
Treasurer: Vanessa Stephens
Board Members: Angelo Petrini
Lance Gilman - Absent
A. Perry

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

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 Commission may combine two or more items for consideration and may remove an item from the agenda or delay discussion relating to an item on the agenda at any time.

A. Perry made the motion to approve the agenda.

Second – A. Petrini

Approved – Unanimously

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

- A. October 18, 2018 (workshop)
- B. November 08, 2018

C. DeGasperis made the motion to approve the notes from the October 18, 2018 workshop.

Second – A. Perry

Approved – Unanimously

A. Petrini made the motion to approve the minutes from the November 8, 2018.

Second – C. DeGasperis

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.

Zach Spencer, Comstock Mining, gave the board a quick update on the 41st International Intercollegiate Mining Games, which will occur on the Comstock March 20 – 23, 2019. Z. Spencer stated that D. Dotson has done a great job bringing the Muckers (from UNR) together with the people of Virginia City in coordinating this event. Z. Spencer wanted everyone to be well aware of the event and mentioned that this event takes place all over the world and that this is the first time the event will occur on the Comstock. Z. Spencer also noted that an alumni group has been added to the event, which brings a new dimension to the entire event. Z. Spencer shared that it is very easy to be a sponsor for this event and encouraged people to get involved however they can.

C. DeGasperis commented that there was an interest in coordinating tours during the Mining Games. D. Dotson stated that he will be meeting with the Mining Games coordinators in the next few weeks and that he has met with them off-site and in Virginia City. D. Dotson stated that the local hoteliers have been great, that the rooms have been booked/blocked off at all locations, and that the rooms in Virginia City will be used only for the competitors in the Mining Games.

Steven Saylor, Comstock Foundation, shared that the foundation received the Boundary Peak Pioneer Award for best non-profit of the year for 2018. S. Saylor thanked Comstock Mining and Ron James for the foresight to start the foundation and spin it off. S. Saylor shared that the foundation has received \$20,000 from NV Energy that will be used to create a new museum and visitor's center at the Donovan Mill that should be open in 2019.

Sam Toll, Battleborn Digital Media & Marketing, stated that he was thankful that the VCTC Board allowed public comment at both the beginning and the end of meetings. S. Toll stated that he has submitted an application to bring the Virginia City Hill Climb back to the area. S. Toll said that the event is tentatively scheduled for September 20 -22, 2019 and unlike in years past, he is looking forward to this event bringing a lot of people to C Street to enjoy what will be offered in terms of merchants, hoteliers, etc. S. Toll will be working with his car club contacts to bring in locals and others from outside the area. S. Toll thanked D. Dotson for reaching out to him regarding this event and stated that he is really looking forward to bringing this event back to Virginia City.

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 stated that the numbers are still strong (up a little more than 12k over last year). C. DeGasperis asked what the target according to budget and shortfall to year section of the spreadsheet was reporting. D. Dotson answered that the budget was divided by 12 months was noted there and that the numbers are ahead for the month. Nicole Barde, Storey County resident, stated that the VCTC does not report using forecasting and that they just divide by twelve, to which D. Dotson confirmed that is correct.

D. Dotson stated that Transient Lodging was reporting strongly as well. D. Dotson said that he did not think another hotel would be opening in the area in this fiscal year. C. DeGasperis stated that, last month he mentioned that there was no way of knowing when the numbers would level out (over last year's numbers) and that it is now evident that the numbers are now slowing down in comparison to the year before. C. DeGasperis questioned whether this drop-off was not due to lack of business in the TRI Center, but in Virginia City to which D. Dotson stated yes. D. Dotson also stated that he does not feel as though we have seen the maximum amount of room nights in the TRI Center yet as the businesses in that area are still working through contracts, etc. and that it could be another year before the numbers are officially trackable.

Judy Cohen, Storey County business owner, stated that something needs to be done to call people in to the area because her store has been very slow the last few weeks. R. Gallagher stated that the downturn might be directly related

to the amount of snow. K. Demuth said that chain controls from NDOT might also be a deterrent for people to come up. D. Dotson agreed that weather is definitely a factor, but that he also attempts to work with everyone and noticed that even during Christmas on the Comstock there were businesses that were not open.

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

Ronele Dotson, RAD Strategies, Inc. presented information on RAD's November marketing highlights. R. Dotson stated that through an effort from the Governor's Global Tourism Summit, 2 journalists from France and China and the international lead office representative from France and China came to Nevada and toured Virginia City.

R. Dotson shared updates to the mobile app, which included a walkthrough of the entire app and a beacon deployment demonstration. A. Perry asked what the range on the beacons are. R. Dotson stated that the range on each beacon for each location can be customized.

R. Gallagher asked if there was a tutorial on the app. R. Dotson stated that there is.

N. Barde asked if RAD collected personal information via the app and, if so, what is done with that information. R. Dotson stated that location services requests come from the phone itself so RAD does not have access to that information, but that RAD needs permission to send notifications out. R. Dotson said that the only information RAD receives from the app are the emails of users, but they still need to ask for permission to receive those.

Jess Horning, Liquid Blue Events, asked if road conditions could be added to the app. R. Dotson stated that weather conditions and webcam information can and will be added.

Alexia Sober, Storey County resident and business owner, asked if the business owners will get stickers to post at their businesses with a QR code that will allow people quick access to the app download. R. Dotson stated, yes, stickers will be utilized.

A. Perry stated that she appreciated the "grouping" of businesses/attractions on the app because it would let people know that there are historical sites all around Virginia City, not just on C Street. A. Perry then asked if the app only showed locations in Virginia City to which R. Dotson replied that the app does extend to Gold Hill.

R. Dotson shared that there are new tracking methods being used on the backside of the website so there will be different detailed reports available soon.

R. Dotson shared some social media highlights that show an increase in followers on Instagram and Facebook thanks to sharing posted photos.

R. Dotson stated that media coverage of Cemetery Gin is ongoing and that it will be featured in the Reno Tahoe Gift Guide. R. Dotson also shared that RAD will be reaching out to Instagram Influencers who specialize in craft cocktails.

R. Dotson shared that The Next Stage episode, which will discuss Piper's Opera House, will be airing soon.

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

Jess Horning, Liquid Blue Events, invited the community and merchants to an event coordination meeting on January 3, 2019 at 5:00 pm at a location that will be determined soon. J. Horning stated that LBE will send out an email, post on Facebook, and will visit the local merchants in order to get the meeting information out to everyone.

J. Horning shared a presentation with an overview of events that may take place in 2019 which included tentative dates for Devil Made me Do it Saloon Crawl, Father Daughter Day/Dance, Rocky Mountain Oyster Fry, Chili on the Comstock, Camel Races, Fiesta del Charro, Outhouse Races, and Christmas on the Comstock.

A. Perry shared that it is pivotal that we think beyond C Street for the Christmas on the Comstock events, but she is unsure how making the event focused on arts and crafts will affect St. Mary's and the other merchants who have worked so hard in the arts and crafts community that already exists. D. Dotson suggested that a Christmas on the Comstock Committee be formed in order to make the event a success for everyone. C. DeGasperis stated that the Christmas on the Comstock event might be the cultural lift that the area has been looking for.

C. DeGasperis made comments regarding the Transient Lodging Tax Report and how the numbers are reported – he

would like to know, more specifically, who is reporting which numbers. K. Demuth stated that reporting the numbers in a combined way is possible as that would not release each property's room night numbers (as that information is proprietary).

J. Horning reiterated the importance of the merchants attending the meeting on January 3, 2019 so that the details that have been brought up during the board meeting can be discussed in more detail.

D. Dotson presented a Tentative Calendar of Events.

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 presented a pros/cons list of takeaways from the workshop in October.

C. DeGasperis commented that the workshop brought up many issues and that there should be follow-up. A. Sober stated that at future events, technical jargon should be avoided as much as possible.

A. Perry stated that the workshop was a momentous occasion of effort and attempt to collaborate and communicate. A. Perry also shared that she feels that the handout A. Sober presented was worded harshly.

R. Gallagher commented that the follow-up comments were made from a very small sample of people who attended the workshop. A. Sober stated that the opinions that she gathered from the workshop up until the meeting were from a much larger sample. R. Gallagher commented that a meeting occurred that has not happened in a long time and that in and of itself is a positive thing.

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 fell a little shy of last year and part of the reason for this is because Globus bus groups are no longer coming as they have been rerouted. K. Demuth said that she is working on finding a way to work with them as she has met new contacts thanks to recently attended conferences.

K. Demuth spoke about her time at the Governor's Global Tourism Summit, which she recently attended. K. Demuth stated that she had 15 different appointments with businesses who may benefit Virginia City. K. Demuth stated that she was able to bring the sales groups from the Summit up to Virginia City for tours, lunch, etc.

K. Demuth shared the winners of the Christmas Parade of Lights Contest: Things Things Things, Sugarloaf Mountain Motel, and Barrels of Candy. K. Demuth stated that Chicken Hawk Transport was the winning parade entry.

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

W. Brunson shared that there was a great turnout for the Christmas in the Sierra.

W. Brunson stated that Nightmare Before Christmas completely sold out (at capacity) and has been great revenue generator for Piper's Opera House.

W. Brunson shared, that since May of 2018, there have been 18 special events (concerts and plays) hosted at Piper's totaling \$38,000. W. Brunson also shared that weddings for FY 2018/19 are scheduled to bring in almost \$20,000.

W. Brunson stated that changing the tours to an "open house" style, Piper's has made over \$3,000 for the season.

A. Sober asked if the community would have to pay a use fee to use either the fairgrounds or Piper's. D. Dotson stated yes, there would be a fee, but it would be a discounted fee.

W. Brunson shared that through a Community Chest fundraiser, Roseanne Cash is coming to Piper's on May 10th, 2019 and they are looking to sell-out so tickets should be purchased as soon as possible.

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

K. Demuth stated that the next VCTC meeting will be January 10, 2019 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 11:20 am.

DRAFT