

# VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)

February 14, 2019 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 Corrado DeGasperis called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

### Pledge of Allegiance

#### 1. ROLL CALL

Leah Kruse called roll.

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

L. Kruse noted there was a quorum present.

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

### 2. CHAIRMAN DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the agenda.

Second – A. Petrini

Approved – Unanimously

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

A. 10 January 2019

A. Perry made the motion to approve the minutes from the January 10, 2019 provided a correction is made stating that criteria for events to be posted to the website/flyers did exist and will be distributed.

Second – R. Gallagher

Approved – Unanimously

**4. CHAIRMAN DEGASPERIS 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.*

A. Sober, Storey County business owner, thanked the VCTC for continued advertising/marketing of events.

Rolly Lemmons, Storey County business owner, asked if there were any updates on the beacons that will be handed out to merchants. D. Dotson stated that they are almost done and hope to hand them out very soon (hopefully by spring). C. DeGasperis asked D. Dotson to remind everyone what the beacons will do. D. Dotson responded that the beacons are going to be used to promote deals, attractions, and an audio tour via the mobile app.

N. Barde, Storey County resident, asked for an update on the St. Mary's "behind the scene" tours. A. Perry stated that they are still working on the invitations.

**5. CHAIRMAN DEGASPERIS 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 and are about 18,500 over last year so things are well on track to hit approved budget numbers.

D. Dotson shared that Lodging Tax numbers are up approximately 10k from last year. D. Dotson stated that he had a conversation with Studio 6 who told him that they rely quite a bit on contracts, but that they see many construction workers at their property and that is why we have seen a recent dip in the numbers. D. Dotson stated that he is working on adding some Google key words and some new marketing for Studio 6.

A. Petrini asked D. Dotson if there were still plans to build another hotel down by Studio 6 and D. Dotson responded that he believes that it is in the works, but he has not heard anything final on the matter.

C. DeGasperis asked if Studio 6 is at 100% occupancy and D. Dotson responded that it is not.

N. Barde asked what other businesses/merchants are located in TRI that the board needs to serve. D. Dotson stated that there is some retail out there and some vacant buildings out there, but he is not sure how they will affect the VCTC and Storey County. D. Dotson said that any marketing done down in TRI would be to help the business traveler and that the drive is always to push people to Virginia City, not to a specific vendor/merchant.

D. Dotson shared that he will be presenting a tentative 2019/2020 budget to the board next month.

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

Ronele Dotson, RAD Strategies, Inc. shared that Tourism Day the Legislature was February 13, 2019 and D. Dotson attended. R. Dotson showed a video that was shared at the event.

R. Dotson also shared a new event video that will be live 2/15/2019.

R. Dotson stated that the February/March hotel promo one-sheets are now available and that some were sent to each hotel in the area. R. Dotson said that the events on the sheet were sourced from the Facebook merchant page and from events that were sent to her.

R. Dotson said that she has updated the promotion criteria that was shared some time ago and that she will be posting the information to Facebook and sending it out to merchants and she shared some highlights from the document. A. Perry asked if there was a deadline each month in order for events to be captured. R. Dotson stated that for the one-sheet, the deadline for information is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. A. Perry asked which hashtag should be used. R. Dotson answered that the primary hashtags are #VirginiaCity and #OnlyinVC. A. Perry stated that only capturing large events that have anticipated turnouts of 300 or more is limiting the events that can be captured as very few locations in Virginia City can even host that amount of people. R. Dotson stated that 300 is the baseline, but if you are doing an event that is unique and drives the Virginia City message, it will be highlighted. A. Perry said that not being clear on the guidelines could be difficult for vendor understanding down the road, but she appreciated and liked the document as it broke things down nicely.

A. Sober asked if RAD would be hosting a workshop soon. R. Dotson stated that they have one planned and hope to announce the date soon.

R. Dotson shared some general marketing highlights that included a jump in website traffic thanks to the webcam being operational again, half of all visitors are viewing from a mobile device, the special events email had an 18% open rate, the app has been updated, there were some national releases regarding upcoming events, and RAD has updated some Instagram stories.

A. Perry asked if it was possible to have arts, history, etc. as a highlighted story on Instagram and R. Dotson responded that they have a list of things that they will be adding as soon as they can.

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

Neil Horning and Jess Horning, Liquid Blue Events, presented some final budget updates on events from the past year. C. DeGasperis asked for clarification on budget numbers and K. Demuth explained that Liquid Blue Events receives a check for the total event budget and then cuts a check to VCTC for any unused funds.

A. Sober stated that according to the numbers N. Horning reported, the Devil Made Me Do It Saloon Crawl appears to have brought in less than the 300 attendees that are required to market an event. N. Horning stated that the event brought in more than 300, but not all of the attendees bought tickets, they shared samples, etc.

N. Horning stated that the presold tickets for the Father Daughter Dance are well above any previous numbers.

N. Horning shared that cooks and judges are still needed for the Oyster Fry and asked everyone to ask their friends/associates to participate.

N. Horning asked the board to approve this year's Chili on the Comstock Budget with expenses in the amount of \$34,300.

R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the Chili on the Comstock budget.

Second – A. Perry

Approved – Unanimously

J. Horning shared that this year's Devil Made Me Do It Saloon Crawl appears to be the best one yet – there were no complaints and everyone loved the drinks.

D. Dotson stated that the International Collegiate Mining Games are coming up very shortly and everything is coming together nicely for it. D. Dotson shared that all of the hotels appear to be booked and the marketing for the event will begin shortly. A. Sober asked if there are ways for the merchants in town to participate in the Mining Games. D. Dotson said that merchants should reach out to the VCTC for any deals/specials they will be offering while the Mining Games participants are in town. D. Dotson stated that the public is welcome to watch the Mining Games practices.

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

D. Dotson shared that Virginia City will be hosting 2020's Rural Roundup! D. Dotson stated that the event will be April 8, 9, 10 of 2020 and the event will bring in approximately 250 people who will stay the duration of the event. D. Dotson said that the theme for the event will be a Taste of the Comstock and the welcome dinner at Piper's will be a chance for each restaurant to share a sample. D. Dotson gave a special thank you to the Delta for being so accommodating in regards to

this event.

K. Demuth shared that some larger groups have come through or are booked to come through the area lately and this means that her attendance at the conferences she has attended lately is working to bring people to Virginia City.

K. Demuth stated that she attended the American Bus Association conference in Louisville, KY. K. Demuth had 20 appointments at this conference and she will be following up with the people she met there.

K. Demuth shared that the Adventure Pass is being updated and she is asking for a slightly larger discount to attractions in town. K. Demuth said that the Visitor Center will be pushing the sale of packages to local attractions instead of individual ticket sales.

K. Demuth stated there is a new group in town called the Silent Riders who are working with the VCTC as docents. K. Demuth shared that she is still trying to work with the airport to have a docent available at the airport during large event weekends. K. Demuth said that the VCTC is trying to use the docents for more than just local tours.

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

A. Sober presented information on the Storey County Community Coalition. A. Sober said the group is still focusing on building membership.

A. Sober shared that there is talk of doing a merchant centered website and that she has a contact who has agreed to provide video services for this potential new site.

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

W. Brunson shared that she is working on the next fiscal year budget.

W. Brunson stated that they will begin selling tickets around April 1, 2019 for a new musical.

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

D. Dotson shared a recap of his travels over the last month. D. Dotson stated that most meetings are budget focused as budgets for the next fiscal year are being built. D. Dotson stated that he attended an emergency management training, which focused on what to do if there is an emergency during a special event.

L. Kruse stated that the next meeting is Thursday, March 14, 2019 at 9:00 am.

L. Kruse reminded the board that room tax payments are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

D. Dotson said that the board is welcome to attend the 2019 Rural Roundup in Fallon.

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

Chairman DeGasperis adjourned the meeting at 10:35 am.