

VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)

September 12, 2019 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

Board Member L. Gilman 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
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

2. BOARD MEMBER L. GILMAN 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.

R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the agenda.

Second – A. Perry

Approved – Unanimously

3. BOARD MEMBER L. GILMAN BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- 08 August 2019

A. Petrini made the motion to approve the minutes.

Second – A. Perry

Approved – Unanimously

4. BOARD MEMBER L. GILMAN 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.

Elaine Barkdull-Spencer, V&T Railway, shared that the V&T has been experiencing a wonderful year and that they have brought 7,866 tourists into Virginia City via the trains. E. Barkdull-Spencer also stated that a train will be coming back on track soon and that it will have a new name for that train that will be announced shortly. E. Barkdull-Spencer also shared that VIP Polar Express tickets are almost sold out.

Jeff Wood, Storey County resident, asked if there were specific plans for additional trash pickup during Street Vibrations weekend. K. Demuth said that extra trash bins were ordered. D. Dotson stated that Virginia City needs volunteers to help pick up trash after events. J. Wood asked for a collective effort from everyone in order to keep the town clean. N. Barde asked how the VCTC has put the call to action out in the past when looking for volunteers to help clean up the trash after events. D. Dotson stated that the Virginia City Facebook page could be utilized and asked if N. Barde would like to be listed as a contact. J. Wood stated that he would be happy to be a contact. D. Dotson stated that money is not really the issue; it is the lack of bodies out helping with pick up. J. Wood asked if the VCTC could hire someone to do cleanup after major events. D. Dotson stated that there are typically rules involved with having an entity organize an event, which includes cleanup. D. Dotson said that Street Vibrations is not a typical event in that there is not one major entity running it; it is really just a sanctioned stop. K. Demuth reiterated that if someone like J. Wood could be the contact for the cleanups, the VCTC could get the information out to as many people as possible. Joe Stel, Storey County business owner, asked if it was possible to get people who have community service hours to serve involved in a cleanup project. D. Dotson shared that the VCTC has worked with the Justice of the Peace on that issue, but the people they send over are few and far between.

Ralph Ewing, Silent Riders, shared that there seemed to be a lot more people on the boardwalk before and after the Camel Races than there has been in past years due to the shuttling of people on buses.

David Abel, Storey County business owner, asked why his business is not shown on the map of the town that the Visitor Center hands out. D. Dotson stated that the map is not accurate and that several businesses are not listed on the map. D. Abel asked that just a picture of his building be included on the block that it exists so that tourists will not think that it is just empty space. D. Abel asked A. Petrini why his end of town was not included on the map. A. Petrini stated that he was unaware that the building was missing, but he thinks it should be included moving forward. D. Dotson said that D. Abel's business is represented on the Virginia City website and that all businesses are represented on social media. D. Dotson said that the map is not extremely accurate and that it is used as a point of reference only. C. DeGasperis stated that he appreciated D. Abel's concerns and that the business should be added on the next map reprint. Judy Cohen, Storey County business owner, stated that the VCTC is focusing in on the same businesses and leaving out unique businesses in the area.

Lee Nashold, Storey County resident and business owner, stated that he had many tourist issues to discuss regarding the Camel Races. D. Dotson asked if the conversation could be picked up again when the board got to the Camel Races portion of the agenda.

A. Perry shared that Saint Mary's Art Center has two receptions coming up; one this coming Saturday, which is important because it is also a celebration of life for the late Comstock artist, Louise Kerr. A. Perry also shared that there will be another art reception on October 12 that will include the grand opening of a new/permanent historical exhibition in Saint Mary's Art Center.

C. DeGasperis shared that on September 28 an artist will be at the Donovan Mill for a reception/exhibit.

5. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: FINANCIAL UPDATE

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

D. Dotson stated that the Transient Lodging Tax Report shows that the dollar amounts are down a bit, but room rentals are up. D. Dotson shared that the Silverland's new price points are doing good things for the town as more people are coming up and spending money not just on their rooms, but in town. N. Barde asked how the average room rate is calculated. L. Kruse answered that one property that did not report and that one property is purposely excluded from the totals. D. Dotson said that this is something new that the VCTC is attempting and it will be dialed in more in the future. A. Perry shared that Saint Mary's Art Center pays room tax on overnight fundraisers and would like to know if the board would consider letting the fundraiser's receive a pass on collecting room tax. D. Dotson stated that there is some specific

NRS language that the VCTC would need to be cognizant of moving forward and that he would need to research the question.

A. Petrini stated that the new rooms that are being built in the TRI area will be an excellent revenue source for Storey County.

D. Dotson shared that Tourism Tax is now up to a quarter of the VCTC budget in just two months. D. Dotson said that the change in zip code is still the driving factor in the increase we have seen.

6. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: MARKETING UPDATES

Amy Demuth, RAD Strategies, shared numerous marketing updates, which included a new Below the Surface video that was shared on Facebook on Tuesday, an impressive amount of clicks to the website thanks to the Pandora campaign, the docents that have been going to the airport have received great feedback, and that some influencers came into town and posted their own videos.

7. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: SPECIAL EVENT UPDATES

Neil Horning, Liquid Blue Events, shared that the rodeo had a good turnout and that the weather was great for the event, but that the attendance was down approximately 300 people. Jess Horning, Liquid Blue Events, stated that the attendance downfall may be related to the change in event marketing, times of the events, and less attendance from the traditional rodeo crowd. D. Dotson stated that moving the event may not have been the best idea and they will reevaluate that prior to next year's event. J. Horning also said that the rodeo was up against several other events in the area as it is a very busy time of year. N. Horning reported that this year's rodeo attendance was 1,544. J. Cohen suggested moving events to other times of the year as there is a lot going on in the middle of the busy season and some of Virginia City's events get lost. C. DeGasperis stated that he would like to continue to see growth in the Hispanic demographic at the rodeo.

A. Demuth shared some positive Camel Race reviews from Eventbrite and comments on the Camel Race Facebook event page that were also positive. A. Demuth also shared that almost all of the local news stations came out to cover the Camel Races. J. Horning said that the final Camel Race revenue will be down a bit this year as more money has been invested into the event. L. Nashold shared that he and his wife tried to purchase Sunday tickets, but they were sold out and they were told they could purchase VIP tickets. L. Nashold stated that they left and went up to F Street to watch the event and they (along with others standing there) were told by event personnel that they were not allowed to watch the show there to which everyone standing there disagreed as it was a public road. L. Nashold asked if the arena set up was smaller than last year. N. Horning stated that the vendors were moved in closer to the arena, but the seating was the same as before. L. Nashold read comments from people in town, which included it was boring, people in town did not know there were races happening, and there were not enough races. D. Dotson said that, contractually, they were only allowed to race the camels a certain number of times per day and that the Department of Agriculture was involved. D. Dotson said that F Street needs to be kept clear for safety reasons. L. Nashold reiterated that F Street is a public street. C. DeGasperis summarized by saying that having sold out shows is a good problem to have and maybe the perimeter of the event needs to be reevaluated. N. Barde asked how many higher priced tickets were sold. N. Horning stated that approximately 90% of the Sunday premium shaded seats were sold and that less of the VIP tickets were sold. J. Horning shared that they will continue to find ways to lengthen and better the shows. L. Nashold also mentioned that people complained about the amount of dust. J. Horning said that a water truck was used, but maybe it needs to run more often. A. Perry stated that she went to the Camel Races and she enjoyed the event and that it seemed to be well liked by the people in the crowd.

D. Dotson shared that the hill climb is all scheduled to go.

D. Dotson stated that time is running out to get vendor applications turned in for Street Vibrations. K. Demuth suggested that businesses that get their deliveries on Thursday should consider getting their deliveries a little earlier in the week of the Street Vibrations event.

N. Horning asked for a review and approval of the Outhouse Races budget in the amount of \$15,000.00.

L. Gilman made the motion to approve the minutes.

D. Dotson shared that the Christmas planning is still ongoing and more information will be given once available.

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

K. Demuth shared that groups are still up from last year and that most of the recent visiting FAM groups are comprised of media groups preparing for their winter reporting. K. Demuth also shared that Visitor Center sales are up even though the building is under construction and that the Reno Tahoe Territory meeting will be in Virginia City in October. K. Demuth said that Iris Farris has retired from the Visitor Center and a new employee will be hired shortly.

9. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: PIPER'S OPERA HOUSE UPDATE

W. Brunson provided a short update on Piper's Opera House which included the Black Lillies show which had nice ticket sales, an excellent turnout for country dancing, Squeak's documentary will be shown on Saturday with all proceeds being donated to Piper's, and the Austin Lounge Lizards will be performing soon. W. Brunson also shared that there may be a movie night on Halloween and more information will be given out as the event is finalized, tour schedules are always listed on Facebook, and approximately \$400 was collected from the donation box inside Piper's.

10. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: COMMUNITY COALITION UPDATE

There was no coalition update.

11. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: STAFF REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE & FUTURE MEETINGS

D. Dotson shared that the county is still moving forward on making Piper's an official non-profit.

L. Kruse shared that the next meeting is Thursday, October 10, 2019 at 9:00 am.

12. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: ADJOURNMENT OF COMMISSION BOARD MEETING

Chairperson C. DeGasperis adjourned the meeting at 11:04 am.