

VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)
July 9, 2020 10:00 am
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
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

Chairperson A. Perry called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. ROLL CALL

Leah Kruse called roll.

Chairperson: A. Perry
Vice Chair: Jay Carmona
Treasurer: Vanessa Stephens
Board Members: Angelo Petrini
Ron Gallagher
Corrado DeGasperi

L. Kruse noted there was a quorum present.

Others: Katie Demuth, Tourism & Marketing Manager
Leah Kruse, Administrative Specialist

2. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY 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.

J. Carmona stated that OSHA has been in Virginia City checking that patrons inside establishments are wearing masks and that they may issue warnings to non-compliant businesses. J. Carmona stated that the fine can be up to \$134,000.00. J. Carmona said that the reader boards on the way into town will encourage visitors to wear masks so that Storey County is doing its part in helping spread information. J. Carmona said that policing the mask policy lands in the merchant's lap and the merchant can decide to not let people into their establishment who are not wearing masks.

K. Demuth stated that the county has provided signs that ask people to wear masks and she will be distributing them to businesses in the next couple of days.

Austin Osborne, County Manager, stated that hand sanitizer stations have been placed on the boardwalk and stated that the county is looking into purchasing facemasks under the CARES Act for public use. A. Osborne thanked the community for understanding the need for canceling the fireworks on the 4th of July and apologized for the lateness in cancelation. A. Osborne said that a committee will come together to look at the events through the rest of the year to make decisions sooner rather than later as to whether they will be canceled or not. A. Osborne stated that the decision to cancel events will be collaborative, with input from the county, VCTC, and merchants.

Scott Jolcover, Storey County business owner, announced the passing of Chris Kiechler, the former proprietor of the Chollar Mine, and Richard Oates, proprietor of the Canvas Café. A minute of silence was observed. S. Jolcover stated that he would share the information on fundraising he was doing for R. Oates wife, Alexia Sober.

3. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A. 9 July 2020

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R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the agenda.

Second – C. DeGasperis

Approved – Unanimously

4. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A. 11 June 2020

R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the minutes.

Second – A. Petrini

Approved – Unanimously

5. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: FINANCIAL UPDATE

A. Tourism Tax Report

B. Transient Lodging Tax Report

K. Demuth shared that the Tourism Tax Report came in at \$30,133.64 which was a pleasant surprise. K. Demuth shared that the year-end number was \$683,444.15. K. Demuth stated that the Lodging Tax Report came in at \$17,712.72 for the month of June and that it was expected to be this low due to COVID-19 closures. K. Demuth stated that the Tourism Tax deposits for the year were down about \$9,000.00 from last year.

6. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: MARKETING UPDATES

Amy Demuth, RAD Strategies, shared a June 2020 marketing report and the highlights included the results from a survey that they put out regarding traveling in 2020 and beyond, the Everyone is a Local campaign is launching this week, a Destination Zoom that RAD Strategies participated in, an influencer from Vegas Family Guide visited Virginia City and posted about their trip on their social media accounts, a jewelry and gemstones media release, coordination of a couple interviews with KOLO 8 news, and website updates in order to keep things fresh.

J. Carmona asked if other tourist destinations are doing a marketing campaign like VCTC's Everyone's a Local campaign. A. Demuth answered that most places are implementing campaigns that welcome everyone back to their towns/communities.

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

K. Demuth shared that local merchants stated that their businesses were down roughly 25-30% over the previous 4th of July celebrations, but that they were pleasantly surprised by the number of visitors in town.

Brighton Denison, Great American Craft Fairs, shared that the Art Walk on the Comstock Craft Fair will be in Virginia City August 8th and 9th. B. Denison shared that he expects 75 – 100 art and craft exhibitors to be at the event and that they are currently working on their COVID-19 plan.

Jess Horning, Liquid Blue Events, stated that although they have not held an event in Virginia City since February, they are looking to the future and that includes the Camel Races. J. Horning said that he is waiting to here from the company who brings the animals to Virginia City as to when their final deadline is regarding cancelation. Neil Horning, Liquid Blue Events, reviewed the budget for the 2020 Camel Races with lots of emphasis on COVID-19 mandates.

R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the budget for the 2020 Camel Races in the amount of 137,000 with the understanding that the event may still be canceled.

Second – A. Petrini

Approved – Unanimously

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

K. Demuth shared that most groups have canceled or postponed through September. K. Demuth said that one of the annual bus/tour conventions she regularly attends has been changed to a virtual event, but the rest on her calendar will be in person next year.

K. Demuth stated that the Visitor Center is still at less than 50% capacity and that a cleaning company is coming in regularly to keep things sanitized. A. Petrini asked what is being done with visitors who enter the Visitor Center while not wearing a mask. K. Demuth stated that they are being asked to enter, use the restroom, and then leave. K. Demuth said she believes it is in the VCTC's best interest to purchase facemasks to give out to visitors who do not have them. J. Carmona stated that there is a hotline number that people can call to report businesses who are violating the facemask mandate so offering facemasks is a good idea. A. Perry stated that this is a wonderful way to lead by example.

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

W. Brunson shared that Piper's is running tours on the weekends, bingo nights and country dancing are still ongoing, and that the Murder Mystery play will occur in August. W. Brunson stated that events are still being booked for 2021.

R. Gallagher stated that the Fourth Ward School has selected a new director named Nora Stefu.

10. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: STAFF REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE & FUTURE MEETINGS

L. Kruse stated that the next VCTC Board Meeting will occur at 10:00 am Thursday, August 13, 2020 as a Zoom meeting.

11. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: ADJOURNMENT OF COMMISSION BOARD MEETING

Chairperson A. Perry adjourned the meeting at 11:20 am.