

VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)
November 12, 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 10:00 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 - Absent
Ron Gallagher
Corrado DeGasperi

L. Kruse noted there was a quorum present.

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

1. 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.

A. Perry stated that Virginia City has lost two members of the community: Mario Montez and Leticia Thomas and a moment of silence was held for both of them. J. Carmona stated that Mario was a C Street staple and that he will be missed.

K. Demuth shared that the VCTC will be watching for news from the governor's office regarding new mandates and that there are no events coming up in the next two weeks. J. Carmona stated that the governor did state that tourists are still welcome in Virginia City.

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

A. 12 November 2020

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R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the agenda.

Second – C. DeGasperi

Approved – Unanimously

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

A. *8 October 2020*

C. DeGasperis made the motion to approve the minutes.

Second – R. Gallagher

Approved – Unanimously

4. 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 for August 2020 is down as expected due to COVID-19 and that while the numbers for the year are ok right now, the next few months will be telling. K. Demuth stated that the Transient Lodging Tax Report for September 2020 is only about \$6,000 down from last year's number. K. Demuth stated that the numbers are probably still pretty good due to weekend lodging numbers in Virginia City.

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

Amy Demuth, RAD Strategies, introduced Regina, RAD's newest team member. A. Demuth shared the October 2020 marketing report and highlights of which include Pandora advertising that is performing very well, all of the online advertising is performing well above average, digital outdoor ads are still out in three locations in Reno/Sparks, they are working on some new Christmas ads, and an updated town map. Ronele Dotson, RAD Strategies, said that the new map gives more of an overall view of the town as being more than just one street. A. Demuth also shared that RAD has been setting up several interviews in town for Good Day Carson City, and updated numbers in regards to year-to-date earned media and social media followers.

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

Neil Horning, Liquid Blue Events, stated the Cemetery Gin's Hunt for Spirits went very well and that everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. Mandy Manyose, Virginia City merchant, stated that the Hunt for Spirits event brought a lot of people into her business. Jess Horning, Liquid Blue Events, stated that the scavenger hunt worked out so well in terms of keeping people separated due to COVID concerns. N. Horning stated the event was more about the hunt/challenge than it was about coming to Virginia City to drink. N. Horning stated that they will implement something similar to go along with the Christmas events in town. A. Perry asked if the Christmas bar crawl would crossover into some of the events that children may be involved in. J. Horning stated that the Christmas crawl is more of a shopping/explore the town type of event and that the crawl itself is pretty self-contained.

M. Manyose asked when the fireworks will be set off. K. Demuth stated that the cruise will be at 5:00 and the fireworks are at 6:00 and should last approximately 20-25 minutes.

7. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL TO PAY THE GRAND PRIX \$2500 IN MARKETING EXPENSES FOR 2020 EVENT

K. Demuth stated that the Grand Prix reached out to Deny in October and asked for the marketing sponsorship that they normally receive even though the event did not happen. K. Demuth said that the event date was changed several times and was finally cancelled in October and that some marketing took place before the event was officially cancelled. K. Demuth stated that if the board does approve payment, the Grand Prix will have to prove with invoices that show marketing did take place. C. DeGasperis asked if marketing the event was something that the Grand Prix was directed to do. K. Demuth answered that they were not told to market the event, but that they were told at the beginning of the year that the sponsorship was available. J. Carmona stated that he did not think it was fair to compensate them and not do the same for everyone else who is out money due to cancellation of events. R. Gallagher stated that he can sympathize and empathize with them, but everyone has experienced a loss of revenue this year. C. DeGasperis shared that he feels that the word that was put out to everyone was to not put out a lot of funds for events that may not occur and while he is empathetic to anyone who has lost money this year, but if we are starting to reimburse some, how do we not reimburse others? C. DeGasperis said that unless there was a real hardship that the VCTC feels responsible for, he does not feel that they should be reimbursed. A. Perry stated that the Grand Prix has done a lot of good things for the community, but paying the \$2500 sets a precedence that will be hard to take control of in the future so she agrees that there should not be payment made to them. J. Carmona asked if anyone from the Grand Prix was present at the meeting and no one

was. J. Carmona asked if the motion should be denied with the Grand Prix given the chance to appeal the decision. R. Gallagher stated that he feels the board should just say no and that they will not allow them to appeal. R. Gallagher said that if they disagree, they are always welcome to come to a meeting and speak during public comment or ask to be placed on the agenda.

J. Carmona made the motion to deny the payment of \$2500 in marketing expenses for the Grand Prix's cancelled 2020 event.

Second – C. DeGasperis

Approved – Unanimously

8. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

K. Demuth shared that some members of the VCTC board, Virginia City merchants, Liquid Blue, and RAD Strategies met to discuss a 2020-2021 strategic plan. K. Demuth shared a one-sheet that outlined the areas of focus. J. Carmona stated that he thought the meeting went well and that he felt that the VCTC, RAD, and Liquid Blue are now seen as professional entities who do a lot of good for the community. J. Carmona said that he feels as if "skeptics" are always invited and involved to future meetings, more changes will occur. R. Dotson said that she also feels that the meeting went well and always encourages more merchant involvement in future meetings. J. Horning shared that some brainstorming of new events occurred at the meeting including the idea of hosting an Everyone Is a Local Night once per month. R. Dotson highlighted some goals from the one-sheet in regards to diversity and inclusion in Virginia City including new Hispanic marketing in billboard form.

J. Carmona stated that he looked forward to future strategic planning meetings and that he hopes that a variety of merchants will be able to attend. J. Carmona also stated that he wishes more merchants would attend the VCTC meetings each month in order to be more informed of what is going on month-to-month.

M. Manyose suggested that street performers be utilized during the Everyone Is a Local Nights.

Chairperson A. Perry left the Zoom meeting and turned control over to Vice Chairperson J. Carmona.

9. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: GROUPS, FAMS, TRADE SHOWS, AND VISITOR CENTER UPDATE

K. Demuth shared that groups have not been coming to town. K. Demuth stated that she is attending a virtual tradeshow in which she has 20 appointments with bus groups. she is still working with them and she has a lot of groups scheduled for 2021. K. Demuth stated that she has set up a virtual group tour for Sierra Nevada College with a docent leading the tour. K. Demuth said that the participants will receive tickets to attractions.

K. Demuth said the Visitor Center is open regular hours and that Bloody Mucker gift boxes are for sale. K. Demuth stated that the staff at the Visitor Center is putting lights up at the welcome center on Wednesday and anyone is welcome to help. K. Demuth stated that this year's decorating contest will be different in that K. Demuth will go around and take pictures of businesses who participate, the picture will be placed on the website, and people will be able to vote for their favorites. K. Demuth stated that prizes are the same as last year – event sponsorship/marketing money.

10. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: PIPER'S OPERA HOUSE UPDATE

Whitney Brunson, Piper's Opera House, shared that Halloween country dancing went incredibly well and that the Bats in the Belfry Paranormal Tours at Piper's sold out. W. Brunson stated that November bingo has been cancelled, but future bingo nights still need prizes and to reach out to W. Brunson for more information. W. Brunson shared that the remaining events in November have been cancelled. W. Brunson stated that self-guided tours still occur and that the tour schedule is posted on the Merchant Facebook page each week and on the website.

11. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: STAFF REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE & FUTURE MEETINGS

L. Kruse shared that the next VCTC Board Meeting will occur at 10:00 am Thursday, December 10, 2020 via Zoom.

12. VICE CHAIRPERSON J. CARMONA BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: ADJOURNMENT OF COMMISSION BOARD MEETING

Vice Chairperson J. Carmona adjourned the meeting at 11:45 am.

DRAFT