

VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)
July 8, 2021, 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 recording of these proceedings will be kept for review.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson A. Perry called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

3. CHAIRPERSON A. PERRY BROUGHT THE FIRST 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.

Nora Stefu, Fourth Ward School and Museum shared that on July 10th, 2021, the museum will be hosting a fair for kids which will focus on several projects for kids ages 6 – 13. N. Stefu stated that tickets for children are \$10, and adults are free.

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

- 8 July 2021

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R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the agenda for 8 July 2021.

Second – A. Petrini

Approved – Unanimously

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

A. 10 June 2021

A. Petrini made the motion to approve the minutes for 10 June 2021.

Second – R. Gallagher

Approved – Unanimously

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

- *Tourism Tax Report*
- *Transient Lodging Tax Report*

D. Dotson shared the Tourism Tax Report and stated that this report represents a full fiscal year, and the final number was almost \$90k above the budgeted amount.

D. Dotson shared the Transient Lodging Tax Report and said that lodging sales are up, and the final number is above the budgeted amount.

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

Amy Demuth, RAD Strategies Inc., shared the June 2021 Marketing Report and highlights include outdoor advertising that is outperforming the goals set, the click-thru-rate is still well above average, advertising continues for Third Thursdays, and an update on some recent media visits. Regina Flores, RAD Strategies Inc., shared that all Virginia City social media is still growing, there are some videos being reshared with voiceovers in Spanish, and that the open rate of eblasts are still above industry average.

A. Petrini asked A. Demuth if media that visited town ever commented on businesses being closed. A. Demuth stated that when media has come on Monday evenings, they do struggle to find places to eat.

J. Carmona commented that the demand for food outweighs the options for food in town and that, although he doesn't want to see local businesses suffer by bringing in other options, it may not hurt to consider food trucks or something that will help feed the people. J. Carmona also stated that parking needs to be addressed as well.

A. Petrini asked if food vendors located on C Street state that they would be averse to having food vendors come in similar to ones that come during events. D. Dotson answered that local merchants are always given first right of refusal and that most of them would like to expand their hours or do more, but they are facing staffing shortages. D. Dotson shared that special events will include food vendors and some element of transportation.

D. Dotson commented that advertising for Third Thursdays (Everyone is a Local at Night) needs to keep evolving because it has been hard to get people in town when not enough restaurants, etc. are open.

Ronele Dotson, RAD Strategies Inc., shared that next in the video series that they have been working on is a documentary style music video.

A. Perry asked for an explanation in the difference between reels, stories, and posts. A. Demuth shared that all are in Instagram and that a post is an image or video that lives in your feed forever, a story is something that you share that is only available for 24 hours, and a reel is a mix between a story and a post that live on a reels page and you do not have to be following someone to view their reel.

R. Gallagher reiterated that people are coming to Virginia City, but there are just not enough places for them to eat.

N. Stefu suggested that VCTC purchase one or more food trucks and rent them out to local chefs or anyone who can and would use them in town. A. Petrini stated that this would be very time consuming for the VCTC. R. Gallagher stated that he is not sure that the VCTC wants to take on a project like that.

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

Neil Horning, Liquid Blue Events, shared that the 2021 Camel Race budget with the board.

J. Carmona made the motion to approve the Camel Race budget in the amount of \$154,000.

Second – C. DeGasperis

Approved – Unanimously

D. Dotson shared that Hot August Nights is back and there are over 400 cars registered. D. Dotson shared that this is the first full street closure in almost two years. D. Dotson stated that there is a raffle that anyone who spends \$5 in town can enter and the prize includes a night at a local lodging establishment, VIP Camel Race tickets, and a couple other items.

D. Dotson reminded everyone that the Great American Craft Faire is back at the Silverland Inn & Suites parking lot on August 7th and 8th.

D. Dotson shared that on October 9th and 10th there will be a biker rodeo at the fairgrounds.

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

K. Demuth shared that group visits are still going up and that the numbers appear to be settling back into the normal range for this time of year. K Demuth shared that a few conferences will be in town soon and they are all looking for offers and deals from local merchants to extend to their participants. K. Demuth stated that the parade went well, and that it was the largest parade she has ever handled in Virginia City. K. Demuth shared that sales in the Visitor Center are surpassing all previous sales.

K. Demuth shared that she is leaving her position with Virginia City and her last day is July 21st.

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

Whitney Brunson, Piper's Opera House, shared that Piper's partnered with Bats in the Belfry and did a Spirits with the Spirits and a Ghost Tour which was very well received. W. Brunson shared that a Lady an the Tramps concert is on July 9th, Bingo is on the 15th, Spirits with the Spirits on the 16th, and Country Dancing on the 30th. W. Brunson stated that A Comstock Christmas Carol audition dates are Sunday, August 22 at 4:00 pm and Saturday, August 28 at 12:00 pm.

W. Brunson shared that she is researching more live entertainment to offer to people in town during the slower seasons.

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

- *Director's Report*
- *Next VCTC Meeting*

D. Dotson shared that he is working on some better parking signage around town.

L. Kruse shared that the next VCTC Board Meeting will occur at 10:00 am Thursday, August 12, 2021, at the Storey County Courthouse (2nd floor courtroom).

A. Perry shared that some interns will be in town doing surveying over the next few weeks and they are staying at St. Mary's Art Center.

Melody Hoover, Virginia City merchant, shared that she will be submitting one personal interest story to the Comstock Chronicle each week.

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

Chairperson A. Perry adjourned the meeting at 11:18 am.