

Tourism Advisory Board

Tourism Director:
Leslie Ross

Assembly Liaison:
Diana Lapham

MINUTES-DRAFT

Members:
Sean Gaffney
Karen Hess
Allison Jacobson
Scott Sundberg
Barbara Mulford
Rhonda Hinson
Michael Marks

Meeting Date: July 8, 2016

Date of Approval: _____

Call to Order: A meeting of the Haines Borough Tourism Advisory Board was held at Assembly Chambers on July 8, 2016. The meeting convened at 9:35 a.m. with Sean Gaffney presiding.

Members in Attendance: Sean Gaffney, Michael Marks, Rhonda Hinson, Karen Hess, Allison Jacobson, Tourism Director and Assembly Liaison.

Members Not in Attendance: Scott Sundberg and Barbara Mulford

Motion by Michael Marks to excuse absences. Second - Karen Hess Approved-Unanimous

Others in Attendance: Tresham Gregg and Jan Hill

Approval of Agenda: Motion was made by Karen Hess to approve the Agenda. Second - Michael Marks. Approval: Unanimous.

Public Comments:

- Tresham Gregg recommended consideration to subsidize transportation for visitors from the Alaska Marine Highway Ferry Terminal to Haines.
- Karen Hess mentioned it was costly to commit a driver and bus for only an hour or two a few days a week to transport Ferry passengers.
- Leslie Ross shared that Captain's Choice Motel offers a service to the Ferry terminal for \$5 per person if they are already going to the Ferry Terminal or \$10 per person if they have to make a special trip to the Ferry Terminal.
- Tresham Gregg mentioned that he was concerned about long lines for the Free Shuttle Bus on days when the Grand Princess with about 3,000 passengers was in town and that maybe a second bus should be used.
- Karen Hess responded that her large capacity bus had mechanical problems and two smaller buses had to be used until the larger bus was repaired and back in service and agreed that visitors had longer wait periods than the typical 1,800 passenger cruise ship.

Chair Report: Sean Gaffney

- No Report

Tourism Director Update:

- A several page report was passed out that included information on the 1% Sales Tax for Economic Development and Tourism.
- It was reported that the Grand Princess has committed to three docking's in 2017, along with one from Royal Caribbean and 15 visits by Seabourn.

New Business:

Review of Online Audit

- The review of Haines Tourism online presence has made recommendations for the website to come up more frequently in online searches and to make the web site more secure.
- Search engine optimization, performance and results were the main goals.
- Suggestions for improvements included larger buttons, increase spending on online advertisements and that locations such as Anchorage, White Horse and Seattle drew large numbers of online inquiries.
- All online content needs to be reviewed to increase references to “Haines” and “Eagles” in order to enhance search engine references.
- The final report from consultants will be available shortly.

Video Co-op Opportunity with Rich Cooper and Frostline Productions

- Are offering co-op opportunities to local businesses who are in need of short promotional videos.
- Two packages are being offered \$2,500 for 1/2 day video production and \$5,000 for a full day.
- Rich Cooper will be in Haines for approximately 3 weeks beginning in July.
- All videos created could be combined into a longer promotional video for Haines.

Old Business:

1% For Economic Development and Tourism

- The several page report that was issued to TAB members included Agenda Bill No.: 16-669 that the Finance Committee forwarded for discussion at the 7/12/16 Assembly Meeting, email from Donald Churchill recommending Assembly members to consider repealing the 1% Sales Tax, Letter from TAB to the Mayor and Assembly members recommending support of the 1% Sales Tax, Letter from Tourism Director to Mayor and Assembly members in support of the 1% Sales Tax and how it assists the Haines economy, email from Julie Cozzi to Donald Churchill with information on Voting Result History, and assorted information on “Where our Tax Dollars Go” were reviewed.
- Discussion that followed supported keeping the 1% Sales Tax as is and that there is a need to educate the community to the overall benefits of the tax on the total Haines economy.
- It was stated that approximately 50% of the tax collected takes place in three months during the tourist season.
- TAB members were asked to attend the Borough Assembly meeting on July 12 at 6:30 p.m. to show their support.

Pitman Robinson Fund

- ADNR Superintendent Mike Eberhardt requested a letter of support from the Haines Tourism Department and the TAB for a grant he is applying for from the Pitman Robinson Wildlife Restoration Fund. This grant has the potential to fund \$750,000 of improvements for restrooms, boat dock and lake/river bank management in the Chilkoot Corridor.

Motion was made by Michael Marks to approve a letter of support to DNR and Mike Eberhardt for the grant to the Pitman Robinson Fund. Second - RhondaHinson. Approval: Unanimous.

Board Comments:

- None

Adjournment: Motion was made by Karen Hess to adjourn.

Second - Sean Gaffney. Approval: Unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Next Meeting: Will be schedule via email.