

# Wilsonville Tourism Promotion Committee

## MEETING NOTES

September 27, 2016

Willamette River Room, Wilsonville City Hall

### 1. Call to Order; Welcome & Introductions

**Voting members attending:** Jeff Brown, Chair; Al Levit, Vice Chair; Darren Harmon; David Stead; and Elaine Swyt; **Voting members absent:** Kathleen Mason.

**Ex-officio members, staff and guests attending:** City Councilor Charlotte Lehan; Danny Abrego; Sylke Neal-Finnegan; Kevin Ferrasci O'Malley; Mark Ottenad; Dick Spence; Brian Stevenson; Karla Tovar.

Summer 2016 tourism-business reports by members and guests: generally upbeat reports on summer tourism business, with some softness in July attributable to cooler, rainy weather.

### 2. Committee Business

Committee membership update: Mark Ottenad reported that re-appointments for Positions No. 1 (Kathleen Mason) and No. 2 (Elaine Swyt) occurred as scheduled in June. Position No. 7 is still vacant; however, City undertook another recruitment effort that resulted in two applications from Susi Sivyer and Karla Tovar. Mayor Knapp indicates preference for appointment in October.

**Review of Committee Charter:** Committee members reviewed highlights of charter, noting that City Tourism Grants program were scheduled to come under the committee's purview in FY 2016-17.

**Review of Wilsonville Tourism Development Strategy:** Committee members reviewed highlights of the Five-Year Action Plan and One-Year Implementation Plan of April 2016, noting that hiring of staffing resource and developing website were top priorities along with consideration of two study efforts.

**Re-cap of Last Meeting:** Committee members reviewed the meeting notes of May 17, 2016. Moved and seconded to adopt the meeting minutes. Elaine Swyt noted a correction of a typo: should be "meets" not meeting. Minutes approved unanimously as amended.

**Election of Committee Chair and Vice Chair:** As required by charter at first meeting of new fiscal year, committee members discussed leadership positions. David Stead moved to continue terms of Chair and Vice Chair; Darren Harmon seconded. Motion adopted unanimously.

### 3. Updates: Activities Since Last Meeting

**Wilsonville Tourism Promotion Coordinator position:** Committee members reviewed a draft position description crafted by Jeff Brown and Darren Harmon during the summer. Committee members discussed integrating more components of the tourism strategy into the description, along with committee management activities. Jeff Brown and Elaine Swyt suggested that the committee and fledgling tourism program would be better served by a higher-level position.

Members also discussed the pros and cons of employee position versus contracted position; conclusion was to draft an RFQ for a contractor at this time. Mark Ottenad indicated that this would need to go through City Legal process for review and approval.

**Preparations for Committee to take-on annual tourism grant programs:** Brian Stevenson reviewed the two City-administered tourism-grant programs that total \$45,000 per year: City Tourism Grant Program of \$25,000/year and Clackamas County Tourism–Community Partnership Program of \$20,000/year. He and Councilor Lehan noted that some community organizations long accustomed to using these funds had expressed concern over potentially greatly modified grant criteria focused on drawing visitors over 50 miles away.

Brian Stevenson said that the Parks & Recreation Board traditionally held an end-of-the-workday session with grant applicants for presentations and question-and-answer session, and then deliberate during the session on the specific grant awards. Committee members indicated that they were fine with this format for final review and decision.

Jeff Brown indicated that he did not think that the committee wanted to make major changes now, but wondered how the City could use the grant programs more strategically to draw out-of-town or overnight visitors. Mark Ottenad suggested that a couple of techniques could be used to obtain visitor data and to promote community events to potential visitors:

- *Event Attendee Data:* City could hire a firm to survey event attendees in-person in order to determine the number in their party, where they are coming from, events or attractions that would bring them back to Wilsonville to visit or spend the night, etc.
- *Event Marketing:* City could allot a certain amount of tourism funds for advertising the community tourism events to purchase advertisements in regional or multi-state media outlets (*e.g.*, Seattle Weekly) or state tourism publications (*e.g.*, Travel Oregon Guide) or partner with Oregon’s Mt Hood Territory for co-op ad-buys.

Brian Stevenson said that he would provide a summary of the grant awards and processes and more detailed information on the program and deadlines.

**Chamber of Commerce draft proposal for tourism website management:** Kevin Ferrasci O’Malley presented on the Chamber’s proposal for development, hosting and management of the tourism website that Elaine Swyt had designed. He noted that sufficient work had already been done that the site could go live nearly any time; he also noted that some additional components, such as an online directory product, may be desired by the committee that costs more than use of the free online directory sites such as Yelp. Mark Ottenad noted that the City and Chamber would need to negotiate a specific contract with Legal review, as is standard.

Jeff Brown moved to advance before the City the Chamber’s proposal for hosting of the tourism website with a one-year contract; second by Darren Harmon. Motion approved unanimously.

#### 4. New Business

Mark Ottenad reported on the Clackamas County Tourism community conversations on strategic priorities for 2017-2021 that is set for Wilsonville on Wed., Dec 14; Location TBD. He also reported on an Oregon Tourism Town Hall for Portland/Willamette Valley that is set for Thur., Oct. 13, 5:30–7 p.m., at Youngberg Hill, 10660 SW Youngberg Hill Road, McMinnville.

#### 5. Next Steps

Committee members discussed that all of these various projects—hiring tourism coordinator, website, tourism studies/projects, grants programs, marketing efforts—are all building towards an itemized-line budget for the FY16-17 aggregate adopted tourism budget of \$237,000.