

MOSES LAKE TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES

MARCH 21, 2012

Members Present: Bev Shuford, Brenda Teals, Lisa Garmon, Mary Perry and Scott Tymczyszyn
 Members Absent: Debbie Doran-Martinez and Christine Ritchie
 Staff Present: Spencer Grigg, Lori Moholt-Phillips and Kerri Fenner
 Guests Present: Marianne Kirwan (Moses Lake Business Association), Doreen McGraw (Columbia Basin Allied Arts), and Teri McCurry and Dale Roth (Spring Festival)

2012

Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Garmon	C	X	X									
Doran-Martinez	C	X	E									
Perry	C	X	X									
Ritchie	C	E	E									
Teals	C	X	X									
Shuford	C	X	X									
Tymczyszyn	C	E	X									

E=Excused Absence C=Meeting Canceled V=Vacant

Call Meeting to Order

The regular meeting was called to order by Chair Brenda Teals at 7:01 p.m.

Roll Call

Debbie Doran-Martinez and Christine Ritchie excused.

Introduction of Guests/Visitors

Mrs. Teals acknowledged the presence of Marianne Kirwan, representing the Moses Lake Business Association; Doreen McGraw, representing Columbia Basin Allied Arts; and Dale Roth and Teri McCurry, representing the Moses Lake Spring Festival.

Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting

Mrs. Shuford moved the minutes of February 15, 2012, be approved as submitted. Seconded by Mrs. Perry and passed unanimously.

Correspondence/Communications

Mrs. Kirwan, Mrs. McGraw and Mr. Roth each addressed the Commission and summarized the highlights of their respective events, how they will benefit the community and the reasons for their funding requests. The funding requests are primarily to offset advertising expenses. The Commission asked a few questions which were answered, including a question from Mrs. Teals to Mr. Roth regarding the sources of the Spring Festival’s income.

The Moses Lake Business Association is requesting \$3,000 for the Basin BBQ Bash to be held September 22-23; Columbia Basin Allied Arts is requesting \$6,000 to help fund their various programs in 2012; and the Moses Lake Spring Festival is requesting \$5,000.

Mrs. Teals thanked the speakers for their funding requests and for addressing the Commission. She explained that the Commission’s available funding for local groups is only \$7,000, which will not be enough to grant all of their requests. The Commission will review each of their requests and make a decision regarding how to equitably divide the available funds.

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Commission Questions and Comments - Funding Requests

Mrs. Teals reviewed the 2011 Community Grants spreadsheet and pointed out that the Moses Lake Regatta and Coulee Corridor Map events should not be occurring this year, so there is a total of \$7,000 available again this year to disburse. Mrs. Shuford asked Mr. Grigg how expenses are paid for the organizations receiving tourism grants. Mr. Grigg explained that we primarily only support advertising expenses and not operational expenses, due to the reporting requirements associated with operation expense funding. We typically receive the advertising bills directly and pay the bills, up to each organization's grant amount. Once we have exhausted their grant amount we notify the organization and let them know they are the responsible for paying all subsequent bills.

Mrs. Perry said that she did not see any revenue information in the Spring Festival's funding request. Mr. Grigg explained that their request was just received that day, and it included a list of expenditures but no revenue report. Mrs. Teals said that was why she questioned Mr. Roth about their revenue sources. Discussion held regarding the fact that the Spring Festival has had a budget of \$2,000 for many years, but they probably do have additional expenses now, including the cost of t-shirts and possibly hoop rentals. However, without being able to review any of their revenue information, it is hard to determine whether or not they need additional funding. Mrs. Perry suggested that because the Commission has no revenue information to consider from the Spring Festival, funds in the amount of \$2,000 should be granted to them with a request that they include a revenue report if they request funds from the Commission again next year. Mr. Grigg will include that information in the letter sent to the Spring Festival. Discussion held regarding what amounts should be funded to each of the three organizations.

Action Taken

Mrs. Perry moved that the Commission fund Columbia Basin Allied Arts \$4,000; the Spring Festival \$2,000; and the remaining \$1,000 to the Moses Lake Business Association's Basin BBQ Bash. Seconded by Mrs. Shuford and passed unanimously.

Significant discussion held regarding setting a new requirement that all future requests for funding are timely received and include all necessary information for the Commission to consider, including expenditure and revenue reports and evidence of 509(c) (3) or 501(c)(6) non-profit status. Mr. Grigg suggested that we set a deadline requiring that all funding requests for the year 2013 are received one month prior to the Commission's decision making time, and that all required information is included in the funding request packet. If a packet is not complete and/or is not received prior to the deadline, it will not be considered. The Commission unanimously approved formalizing the new requirements.

Web Site - Traffic Report -

Commissioners received copies of the web site traffic reports for the period of March 1-21, 2012, for review and discussion.

Mr. Grigg reviewed the web site traffic report with the Commission. The report showed 2,322 unique visitors, 3,182 visits, 7,723 page views, 58,766 hits and a bandwidth usage of 228.60 megabytes.

Mr. Grigg explained that the City is in the process of combining the number of websites we have. In the past we have had one Tourism Commission website, one Parks and Recreation website and one City Hall website. We now have one new site located at cityof.ml.com. There will be a tourism section within the new site so visitors will still get the same information. As far as the lodging information, it will direct them to the Moses Lake portion of the Grant County Tourism website where they will be able to view only the Moses Lake facilities if they want.

We will still have web stats to review. The new stats will be for the entire county area now as opposed to just Moses Lake, which should give us a better picture of the overall area and what people are searching for on the new website. The company the City went with for the creation of the new website is Civic Plus, which specializes in municipalities, visitor and convention bureaus and visitor-type organizations, so they understand tourism and what goes on with that.

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Transient Rental Income/Sales Tax Revenue – Report

Commissioners received copies of the Transient Rental Income and Sales Tax Revenue reports for review and discussion.

Transient rental income posted in February for December sales was \$26,277.18, a decrease of 21% from the same period of time last year. Mr. Grigg stated that we are beginning to close the gap from where we started out this year, but explained that it's a little misleading at the beginning of the year because a major property holder can submit their paperwork close to the deadline or after the deadline, and the State cuts off the reporting process and just carries it over to the next month. So in reviewing what happened in 2011, the January figures are a result of that – there was a significant property that was down to the deadline and posted a month later, so it skews the view of the whole year. The gap should continue to close as the year goes on and will most likely reverse itself.

Sales tax revenue posted in February for December sales was \$459,218.16, a 1% increase compared to the same time period as last year. Mr. Grigg clarified that as far as tourism efforts go, the transient rental income equates into a big chunk of our budget when it comes to tourism projects, advertising, marketing, Summer Concert Series and some of the operations of the Museum and Art Center. The sales tax goes into the general fund for City, which includes everything from streets and sewers to parks and recreation, but it has very little direct impact on our tourism efforts. It is good to review though because most of the time there is a parallel between the two, as they generally take the same spikes up and down, with the exception of when there is late reporting as there was this year.

Marketing Update – Bill Burke, Burke Marketing

Mr. Grigg reported that Mr. Burke was unable to attend tonight because he is in Spokane accepting an award for the Pig Out in the Park event. He did provide a copy of the Marketing Working Budget, which the Commission can review. The Grant County Tourism Commission is doing a television campaign in Western Washington and the Surf 'n Slide Waterpark will be featured in one of the ads. Mr. Burke informed the Grant County Tourism Board this morning that he has been researching the various advertising in Washington and it is mostly beauty shots of community activities. He would like to contrast this with taking a comedic route with advertising, specifically an ice age flood concept with a cave man that is inundated with the flood and ultimately ends up in our pool. He will use the same character in all of the advertising so it will be easily recognizable.

Director's Report

Ice Rink – Mr. Grigg reported that the City approved the purchase of 180 pairs of roller skates to use for roller skating at the ice rink in the off-season. We will initially start with opening it in the summer after school gets out on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to gauge what the public demand is. If we have a lot of public interest, we will increase the hours of operation.

Surf 'n Slide – Flowrider Annual Inspection – Mr. Grigg explained that the annual inspection of the flowrider involves lifting the giant pumps out with a crane to inspect them. Every time, one of the pumps has had to be sent to Portland to be rebuilt. With the warranty, we split the cost of repairs with the company supplying the pumps. It still ends up being a lot of money though. We have worked with the company and they have changed out the fluid in the pumps and have gone to a different viscosity of oil, as well as added data loggers to the pumps so we would know if there was excessive vibration, moisture, or something else that might help us pinpoint what could be causing the breakdown of the pumps. However, every year they have still broken down. Mr. Grigg is happy to report though that this year neither of the pumps had contamination or leakage.

Commission Questions and Comments

Mrs. Perry reported that her husband serves on the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Commission. They held their annual meeting here in Moses Lake this year and came away very pleased. They were very impressed with our council chambers and the comfortable seating and available equipment. They also really enjoyed the bags Mr. Grigg and Mr. Burke put together for them with all of the tourism information. Mrs. Perry gave them a tour of our town and many of our parks and facilities, and many of them reported they will be coming back to Moses Lake this summer on vacation to use

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the Surf 'n Slide Waterpark. They were also extremely happy with their lodging at the Comfort Suites. Mrs. Perry reported that the staff at Comfort Suites was the nicest of all the facilities she contacted. The Commission thanked Mrs. Perry for her efforts in arranging the meeting for the Fish and Wildlife Commission and for taking them around to see our City's attractions.

Mr. Tymczyszyn reported that he is excited about the roller skating at the ice rink. He also asked that the Commission members let him know if they can think of any contributions he can make for the Tourism Commission.

Adjournment

Mrs. Shuford moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mrs. Perry. The meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.