

VISITORS AND CONVENTION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

January 17, 2006

The first regular meeting of the Visitors and Convention (V&C) Commission was called to Order by Chairman Lanty Jarvis on January 17, 2006, at 4:03 p.m. in the Conference Room of Roseburg City Hall, 900 SE Douglas. Jarvis extended a welcome and appreciation to the members for their willingness to serve on the Commission. Members introduced themselves.

Present: Commissioners Jane Green, Lanty Jarvis, Terri Klein, Dotty Randall-Stapleton, Ellen Whitaker and Paul Zegers.

Absent: Commissioner Georgia Stiles.

Others Present: City Manager Eric Swanson, Human Resources Director Barbara Gershon, Finance Director Cheryl Guyett, Visitors and Convention Bureau Director Jean Kurtz, Administrative Assistant Debi Davidson and Mayor Larry Rich

COMMISSION CHARGE – ORDINANCE NO. 3213

A significant amount of background material was provided and reviewed. Ordinance 3213 provides the purpose of the Commission which is to provide a forum for evaluating and overseeing use of City funds, including the transient room tax revenues, for programs and events designed to provide enjoyable, pleasurable and recreational opportunities to local residents and visitors, promote Roseburg as a tourist destination and promote economic vitality by encouraging participation in local events and communities.

Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Provide an ongoing evaluation of the V&C Bureau's programs designed to attract visitors and promote tourism, and make recommendations on such programs;
- Review funding requests for use of City's transient room tax revenues for events designed to stimulate tourism, lengthen the stay of visitors to the area and increase visitor spending, review City Manager's budget for the use of transient room tax revenues and make recommendations to the City Budget Committee and City Council;
- Receive comments and suggestions from the public and businesses affected by tourism regarding special events and tourism promotion;
- Assist existing events and programs and achieve major event status by providing advice on event planning, advertising, fundraising and assistance in understanding local regulatory and public safety requirements.

Meetings are scheduled for the third Tuesdays of each month at 4:00 p.m., with agendas mailed out on the previous Thursday. Municipal Code requires members to attend 75% of the regular meetings in each calendar year. A majority of the membership (four) is required to have a meeting quorum. Commission members should contact the Chair regarding issues they wish placed on the agenda. If unavailable, Gershon or Davidson may be contacted.

HISTORY OF VISITORS AND CONVENTION PROGRAM

Lanty explained that V&C services are provided through a standard personal services agreement between the City and the Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce. The scope of work outlines the activities agreed to under the terms of the contract. Pursuant to the current

Hotel/Motel tax ordinance and the service contract, all monies collected which are not designated for streetlight/sidewalk or economic development, go to the Chamber for performance of V&C services. The City Manager oversees this contract. The Chamber Director is designated by the Chamber Board to oversee operations of the Chamber and the V&C services. Jean Kurtz serves as the V&C Bureau Director and is responsible for program operation. The Chamber has a voluntary Chamber Tourism Advisory Committee which advises the Director and the Chamber Board on tourism services and activities. There is a City Council liaison position as part of that committee.

Rich noted the original intent of this Commission was to organize a tourism event, such as an October Harvest Festival. Steering Committee meetings on that issue were "side-tracked" regarding City input on how the Chamber runs the \$500,000 program. The Chamber's focus is on attracting out-of-town tourists. However, the City is also interested in helping local events succeed and grow. Swanson reported the City disbanded a former V&C Commission which left oversight solely with the City Manager and left a void in terms of policy. The City Council believed re-instituting this Commission would provide more direct policy involvement in V&C services.

Jarvis stated the Chamber will develop a budget asking for their necessary dollars. In the past, they automatically received 58% of the taxes. This Commission can discuss and make recommendation to the City Council as to whether that practice or the tax level should change. He did not desire to change the Chamber contract or their level of funding but as tax dollars, we may not wish to automatically send all increases to the Chamber. This Commission may wish to design something outside of the Chamber program. Rich pointed out that those tax dollars can only be spent in a designated manner so if this Commission designs a program which doesn't fit statutory requirements, other funding sources may have to be developed.

ROOM TAX HISTORY

The current transient room tax of 8% was last increased in 2002. Jarvis stated some statutory requirements regarding expenditure of the tax do not apply to current revenues because they were adopted prior to July 2003. Commissioners were asked to familiarize themselves with the Summary of House Bill 2267 prior to the next meeting to better understand how those funds may be used. Information was provided on programs and goals designed by the previous Commission. The Commission may wish to amend those documents in relation to the new and current charge.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Randall-Stapleton moved to nominate Georgia Stiles to serve as Vice-Chair. Motion was seconded by Klein and carried unanimously.

BUDGET

Jarvis stated the Commission needs to receive supplementary budgets from the Chamber and other parties who may request funding. The City begins works on the proposed 2006-2007 budget in February. A final budget recommendation must be made by late-March. With approval of the Commission, Jarvis may establish a committee to assist in studies or other performance of duties such as budget preparation. By contract, all tourism money collected will be given for their programs which are to be reviewed by this Commission. Some of that money is allocated for the building and exhibit update. The prior Commission did not expend

all their funds; therefore, there is a \$135,000 now available to this Commission with no additional funds coming in. Initially, the electorate determined where funds should be spent but the Council determines the percentage allocation to those programs.

Discussion was held on how hotel/motel operators may feel about rate adjustments. It was noted that input was received from the operators each time the rate was adjusted. Each adjustment, however, was dedicated to specific purposes. State law provides that we cannot change the percentage that is dedicated to tourism; but there is no qualification as to who shall spend those tourism dollars. Thus, if someone applies they have to fit within certain criteria and the overall tourism plan. Rich noted that rather than increase the tax rates to accommodate local events, consideration may be given to altering the percentages designated to streetlight/sidewalk or economic development.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Kurtz offered to discuss and explain the V&C Bureau budget and program during the next meeting. The Bureau's monthly report, along with pertinent Chamber information will be included in each meeting agenda. Kurtz noted the average number of visitors to the center is 19,000 annually. Whitaker noted Motel 6 sold 21,000 rooms in 2005.

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Debi Davidson
Administrative Assistant