

## **Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting**

**Thursday, March 8, 2018 – 1:00 p.m.**

**Ramada Columbus Hotel & Conference Center – Columbus, Neb.**

Commission Chair Deb Loseke called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Commissioners present: Darrin Barner, Heritage Homes of Nebraska; John Chapo, Lincoln Children's Zoo; Roger Dixon, MECA of Omaha; Roger Jasnoch, Kearney Visitors Bureau; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Starr Lehl, Scottsbluff Economic Development; Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County CVB; Barry McFarland, Mac's Creek Winery; Ashley Olson, Willa Cather Foundation; Sarah Sortum, Calamus Outfitters; Jeanna Stavas, Whispering Pines Bed and Breakfast

Commission staff present: John Ricks, Heather Hogue, Jenn Gjerde, Alex Duryea, Micheal Collins, Erin Wirth, Karen Kollars and Shelley Reed

### **1. Approval of Meeting Agenda**

Lehl motioned to approve the agenda. Jasnoch seconded the motion.

Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Barner, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sortum, Stavas. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

### **2. Open Comment Period for Items on the Agenda**

Loseke opened the public comment period at 1:07 p.m.

No comments.

Loseke closed the Public Comment Period at 1:07 p.m.

### **3. Approval of January 18, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

Kuhn motioned to approve the meeting minutes from October 19, 2017. Jasnoch seconded.

Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Barner, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sortum, Stavas. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

### **4. Financial Update and Finance Committee Report**

Jasnoch shared that the finance committee met the morning of March 6. He provided an overview of the FY 16-17 carryover, FY17-18 overall budget and the remaining balance, which as of February 28, 2018 was \$4,726,580.86. A handout with more detail was provided in the meeting packet.

Dixon motioned that the commission approve the finance report and update. McFarland seconded the motion.

Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Barner, Chapo, Dixon, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sortum, Stavas. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

## **5. Commission Chair Report**

Loseke welcomed everyone to Columbus. No Report.

## **6. Director's Report**

### **A. Commission Budget**

Ricks provided an overview of the agency budget process to be debated in the legislature this spring.

### **B. Staffing**

Ricks shared that the Marketing Manager position was recently filled by Jenn Gjerde, which opened up the Public Information Officer II position. The PIO position will be filled by Erin Lenz in April. Accountant, Shelley Reed, has resigned and interviews to fill her position will take place in the coming weeks.

### **C. Tourism Promotional Cash Fund status**

Ricks explained the reasoning behind LB802 and that it is expected to pass before the end of the 2018 legislative session.

### **D. Plains Safari**

Ricks deferred to Alex Duryea who explained that 261 people are registered for the Plains Safari event, pre tours are filling up, moderators are needed and hotel rooms should be booked ASAP.

### **E. Commission Grant Programs**

Ricks deferred to Heather Hogue who recapped a press release sent out on Wednesday, January 31.

## **7. Commission Committee Reports**

### **A. Policy & Procedures**

#### **I. Rules & Regulations**

Kuhn shared that the grant regulations approved at the January 16 commission meeting were approved by the Attorney General's office and have been provided to the governor's policy and research office for review. Further rules and regulations regarding the grant programs and Tourism Marker program will be discussed by the committee at future meetings.

#### **II. Bylaws**

Kuhn recapped why the bylaws were created and shared that they will need to be updated because of the new commission structure. Kuhn proposed that the executive committee review the bylaws and bring it back to the full commission for the May meeting.

**B. Tourism Marker**

Jasnoch shared that no valid applications have been received for the Marker program. He is in discussion with a few communities.

**C. Marketing**

Dixon deferred to John Ricks and John Gjerde who discussed the Crane campaign running in Kansas, Missouri and South Dakota TV markets, upcoming campaign conception, the spring/summer media plan, upcoming media tours and work/success with Dave Fluegge's social media blitz's.

**8. NETA Legislative Update**

Jasnoch provided an overview of legislative bills NETA is monitoring.

**9. Discussion of changing the format of meeting agendas**

Lehl shared that she has done some research and would like to see the agenda formats changed in the future to allow public comment after every agenda item. The entire commission then discussed industry communication and how the change may affect the meeting structure. It was decided to keep the agenda structure as is for future meetings.

**10. Discussion of video conferencing**

Jasnoch proposed that the commission continue to look in to video. The entire commission then discussed adding more meetings each year and technology pros and cons. It was decided that the commission would continue discussing doing six meetings a year when the 2019 meeting schedule is planned in August of 2018.

**11. 2018 Group Tours project**

Micheal Collins shared the handouts he's using at events like ABA and IPW and gave an overview of the FAM tours the Commission will be involved with in 2018.

**12. 2018 Nebraska Passport program update**

Erin Wirth provided a handout to commissioners and gave an overview of the programs economic impact, participation benefits, budget and the list of 2018 stops.

**13. New Business**

**A. Next Meetings**

May 8, 2018 at 1:00 in Lexington

August 29, 2018 in Grand Island

October 16, 2018 in Nebraska City

**Adjourn**

At 3:39 p.m. Jasnoch motioned to adjourn. Barner seconded.

Roll call vote- Commissioners in favor: Barner, Chapo, Jasnoch, Kuhn, Lehl, Loseke, McFarland, Olson, Sortum, Stavas. Opposed: none. Abstain: none. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Gjerde.