



Oregon Travel Information Council

1500 Liberty Street SE, Suite 150
Salem, Oregon 97302

Minutes – Rest Area Committee
OTA Offices, Portland
Thursday, August 4, 2016

Members Participating:

Bob Russell, Mike Marsh, Ed Washington; Kathy Watson (by phone)

Members Excused:

Ryan Snyder

OTE Staff Participating:

Nancy DeSouza, Executive Director; Tim Pickett, Operations Director; Jason Nash, Rest Area Division Administrator; Heather Swanson, Rest Area Operations Manager; Jessica Carbone, Office Assistant

The meeting of the Travel Information Council Rest Area Committee was called to order by Chair Russell at 10:05 a.m.

Roll Call: Russell, Marsh, Watson

Minutes Approval: Marsh proposed amendments to the June 2, 2016 minutes: On the second page, second paragraph change “Marsh confirmed it is was” to “Marsh confirmed it is the.” In the Grove of the States Project Plan section change “there are to components” to “there are two components.” Marsh moved to approve the June 2, 2016 minutes. Russell seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved with the amendments.

Washington arrived at 10:07 a.m.

Safety Committee and Incident Updates: DeSouza reported that the agency has reestablished a functioning safety committee. Nash is actively involved and HR Manager Jeremy McQuain organizes and runs the meetings. Safety checklists for quarterly inspections have been completed for each rest area and the administrative office. Nash covered some of the issues that have been addressed by the committee. For example, there was the approval of a change in dress code to allow a larger brim hat to allow for more protection from the sun. Russell asked if the administrative office was participating in the meetings as well. Carbone confirmed her participation.

Nash reported on recent DEQ compliance issues. A pre-enforcement letter was sent by DEQ that Deadman Pass was not in compliance with E. coli checks for two quarters of 2014 and all of 2015, despite having a supervisor on site who is Wastewater System Operator Certified by DEQ. Because the Deadman Pass system is a lagoon that requires irrigation, E. coli tests are required to be conducted and reported in every quarter that irrigation occurs. Irrigation can only be done from April through October,

for a total of three quarters a year. All chlorination tests conducted before each irrigation day demonstrated adequate chlorine levels, but this is not sufficient to meet the E. coli testing requirements.

DEQ will determine whether penalties will be levied. ODOT was cited for failures in 2010, making this a repeat offense. Russell asked how much the fine was in 2010; DeSouza said there were two fines, each about \$3,000. Russell asked if it was DEQ's policy to increase the fines on the second offence. DeSouza said that in general she believes that to be true.

The agency accepted full responsibility for this lapse with the DEQ, and DeSouza has assured them that this will not happen again. DeSouza and Pickett will centralize TIC's regulatory compliance tracking in Heather Swanson's position, including compiling a database of all regulatory and reporting requirements throughout the agency.

Related to this process, staff also discovered that ammonia testing at Stanfield was missed and that required reports at Baker Valley had not been filed. Staff are working with DEQ to correct these errors. Russell asked how many of our rest areas currently require testing. Nash listed Boardman, Stanfield, Deadman, Gettings Creek, Oak Grove and Baker Valley. Memaloose and Weatherby requirements will be added as soon as the waste water permits can be obtained. Russell asked if there were any other issues, besides wastewater. Nash said that he knows of no additional issues, but there are other types of reports that must be sent in.

Marsh asked if the situation developed because someone knew on the staff and didn't say anything or if it was just lost during the transition. Nash responded there was one initial test done at the time the rest area transferred from ODOT to TIC, but continuing the testing had lapsed. DeSouza said that following internal and DEQ investigations, those shown to be responsible for the lapses would be held accountable. Marsh inquired into the scale of the safety risk to the public. Nash said he believed there was minimal risk because of the results of the chlorination testing during irrigation.

Regulatory compliance has been added to the rest area evaluations. Russell noted that necessary adjustments are being made and trusts the agency is looking into and correcting any other compliance issues. DeSouza noted that Watson had recommended lead testing of potable water in the rest areas, and this is currently underway at all locations.

Capital Projects:

ADA Compliance:

DeSouza reported that in response to pending legal action, ODOT is conducting ADA-related inspections of their publically accessible facilities, including rest areas. Nash will train in ADA requirements, and attempt to identify what rest area improvements would trigger additional requirements for ADA compliance. OTE will meet with ODOT to help determine the effects on capital improvement projects.

Oak Grove Capacity Expansion and Design Status: Nash reported that seismic and structural issues mean that no attachments can be made to the existing buildings, and the roof cannot be replaced. The recommended option is to raze and rebuild to current standards. Branch Engineering estimated a cost of \$900,000 for new buildings on both sides of the rest area. Marsh asked about the need to upgrade Oak Grove verses the needs of the other rest areas. Nash replied that all of the other rest areas along I-5 already had their capacities upgraded by ODOT prior to TIC transfer, but Oak Grove had not. The group discussed options for kits and pre-fabricated structures. Watson suggested looking at Stillwater Dwellings. Russell supported the possibility of prefabricated buildings and suggested contacting Genoa Ingram at the Manufactured Housing Association for potential options. Washington asked if the rest area

would be closed during the construction. Nash said that the family bathrooms could remain open, with portable toilets to help meet the demand.

Project Options 2016-2017: Pickett reported that capital projects have slowed due to a number of different factors. There is \$1.3 million allocated to planned projects that have not been completed, including a number that could be affected by new ADA compliance requirements. There is a sufficient pool of money for a number of projects to be completed. The Finance Committee had expressed concerns about carrying forward large reserves when there are areas of needed investment. Pickett noted that it took about five years of fairly conservative spending to accumulate these funds. Absent a more direct source of funding for capital projects, it would take a considerable amount of time to accumulate this amount again. DeSouza pointed out that without an inflation factor in rest area funding, as costs rise, it will become increasingly difficult to rebuild reserves for capital projects.

Marsh discussed the priority of different projects. Pickett explained that a large part of the hold on these projects is the uncertainty of additional costs an individual project might incur if it triggers additional and costly ADA upgrades, which is still unknown.

The group discussed a truck lane curve at Santiam that is potentially hazardous if taken too quickly. This opened into a larger discussion of holding back on some of the current projects mentioned if the money can be allocated to larger projects that may be needed. In this particular case, Washington suggested large rocks and signage as a cost-effective option to encourage trucks and trailers to take the curve correctly.

Watson said opportunities were available in planning for Oak Grove upgrades and to develop plans as a guide for improvements at other locations. She suggested a possible design and construction process that could be used throughout the rest areas, where sponsorships, electronic kiosks and other information devices can all be tried out in one place. DeSouza said she had initiated conversations with Travel Lane County as a possible partner at Oak Grove southbound.

Government Camp Update: The Cooper Spur land swap is moving forward. The condition of the Summit Ski Area parking lot appears to be in sufficient repair to allow snowplowing this winter, ensuring access to the rest area.

Sponsorships:

Grove of the States Update: DeSouza reported that Annie von Domitz is working on sponsorship and fundraising options for the Grove with executives from Friends of Trees. Any specific plans will be brought to Council for approval. This will provide a foundation for use in other rest area sponsorships as TIC decides how best to market sponsorship opportunities and maximize dollars. Contracted tree removal begins soon.

Performance Measures:

Rest Area Inspections: All baseline inspections have been completed. Procedural additions are being made to the inspection form. The next round of inspections will begin this month. Russell asked how staff are receiving the inspections. Nash reported staff is receptive. Marsh asked if staff feel that it is a fair process and understand the criteria, and Nash said they do.

Other Measure Updates:

Swanson updated on the quantity of comment cards returned and will present the new safety category as soon as that data is compiled. Russell commented that vending seems to be an issue in some rest areas. DeSouza said that she and Pickett are meeting with Commission for the Blind leadership following this

meeting to discuss options and upgrades in the rest areas. Pickett presented updated customer counts and costs per visitor. Safety and Tourism/Economic development measures still need to be developed. Todd Davidson of Travel Oregon said he will support combined efforts to re-branding OTE, particularly in rest areas.

Other Business:

Anti-Sex Trafficking: DeSouza attended a meeting called by Sen. Hansell to develop an anti-sex trafficking bill. It is his intent that posters or stickers be placed in individual stalls in all restrooms operated by TIC, ODOT and OPRD. DeSouza offered support of the anti-trafficking movement, and discussed concerns with public perception of the safety of the rest areas and the anticipated costs of vandalism. ODOT representatives made clear that rest area staff paid with highway funds cannot do the installation and upkeep work. It is expected that the proposed measure will provide a mechanism for other funding for the programs materials and work. DeSouza invited Nita Belles, executive director of Not in Our Backyard, to provide anti-trafficking training to rest area staff in September and October meetings and recommended the “Truckers Against Trafficking” online training to committee members to better understand the scope of the issue.

Rest Area Exclusions: The new superintendent of State Police approved Lt. Duvall’s proposed training program to take the exclusion program statewide and authorized funds for training. A schedule is being developed to train troopers to implement the program in all OTE rest areas.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

Next meeting: September 1, 2016, 10:00 a.m. at the OTA Offices, Portland.
