



Oregon Travel Information Council

1500 Liberty Street SE, Suite 150
Salem, Oregon 97302

Minutes – Rest Area Committee
OTA Offices, Portland
Thursday, June 2, 2016

Members Participating:

Bob Russell; Mike Marsh; Ed Washington; Kathy Watson

Members Excused:

Ryan Snyder

Guest:

Gwenn Baldwin

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 10:09 a.m.

Roll Call: Washington, Marsh, Russell, Watson.

Minutes Approval: Watson moved to approve the April 6, 2016 minutes. Marsh proposed amendments: changing of “March” to “Marsh” in the approval of the minutes, changing from “capitol projects” to “capital projects,” and “administrate rule” to “administrative rule.” Washington seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved with the proposed amendments.

Business Meeting:

Rest Area Capital Projects: At the request of Chair Russell, Pickett began a discussion of capital projects in the rest areas, focusing on the \$500,000 expansion of capacity at Oak Grove. There are available funds for all planned projects. Funds are available in total through the end of the calendar year of just under \$1.5 million with an aggregate capital plan of \$1.3 million. The plan also includes \$200,000 for project overruns or unforeseen projects. The total amount for capital investments approved by Council in the budget was \$1.54 million. The capital investment expenditure will not touch the \$750,000 reserve. \$210,476 in investments have been made this biennium in the rest areas, including the purchase of a \$13,500 tractor in May.

The committee discussed the Finance Committee’s direction regarding increased investment in the rest areas. Topics included the level of spending for upgrades to the façade of the proposed expansion at Oak Grove. The committee discussed whether the rest areas need to have a similar identifying look or design direction, before work is done on Oak Grove

Nash presented a three-phase outline that would allow work to proceed on the project, but would also give the Council time to make decisions throughout. With the committee's approval, the staff will begin phase one by spending approximately \$2,500 with Branch Engineering to determine DEQ's requirements, commission a concept drawing, and to develop an estimated cost of the project both with and without façade improvements.

Marsh confirmed the committee's direction to proceed with a phase approach with Oak Grove and several other projects that will be coming before the Council. The committee unanimously agreed.

Baldwin and Watson left the meeting at 10:27a.m. for previous commitments.

Sponsorships – Update on rule status with ODOT and FHWA: Public comment closed May 23, 2016. DeSouza has had no update from ODOT if there has been any public comment and when the rules would go into effect

Grove of the States Project Plan: The plan has been submitted to ODOT. The ODOT forester will re-survey the trees to allow the lumber of the cut trees to offset the total costs of the removal. Swanson explained that there are two components to the tree removal RFQ. Potential proposers can either bid on cutting down and removing the lumber, grinding the stumps or both. Russell asked if there were any estimates of what it would be for us to remove the lumber ourselves. Pickett replied that estimates by certified foresters were done and that information can be provided to the committee. Marsh suggested adding a sentence to define what "competition" means in the statement of work. DeSouza gave a run-through of the planting schedule for Feb 11, 2017. The committee discussed the sponsorship opportunities available and how those would be acknowledged in the Grove. The Council will review the sponsorship pricing structure before it is implemented.

Performance Measures:

Implementation of Rest Area Inspection Form:

Nash reported on the implementation of the inspection forms in the rest areas. He still has three inspections remaining. These first inspections are considered a baseline. Starting July 1, 2016, Nash will conduct inspections twice a year in each rest area. Once the data is collected for each rest area, goals will be developed for each location to improve and how to report that information. The committee discussed how to use this data, and agreed it might be too early for detailed reporting, instead using an aggregate score.

Measure Updates:

Swanson has the new comment cards that include the safety category. Those will be distributed and launched July 1. The process of expanding the training for rest area exclusions throughout the state has slowed, but is still happening. Swanson has started to track customers by side of rest area, but the agency is unable to provide cost per visitor by side, as expenses are not separated. Not including capital investments, the statewide cost per visitor is an average of 33 cents. Looking at individual rest area costs per visitor there are some outliers (i.e., Suncrest and Tillamook). The tourism and economic development measurement is still pending on meetings with Travel Oregon and other partners.

Other Business:

Pickett informed the committee that in Senate Bill 1591 the insertion of a prohibition on the use of transient lodging tax fees for rest areas also appears to prohibit the use of local transient fees and any funds that may have originated in those fees. It could be a potential issue with the requested community investment in the Tillamook rest area and any local DMOs who may want to work with us.

Watson rejoined the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Next meeting: July 7, 2016, 10:00 a.m. at the OTA Offices, Portland.
