



Oregon Travel Information Council
1500 Liberty Street SE, Suite 150
Salem, Oregon 97302

MINUTES
Oregon Travel Information
Council Quarterly Meeting - December 6, 2016

Embassy Suites, 9000 SW Washington Square Rd. Tigard, OR 97223

Council Members:

Gwenn Baldwin, Chair

Kathy Watson, Secretary (by phone)

Ed Washington

Ryan Snyder

Bob Russell, Vice Chair

Mike Drennan

Mike Marsh

Excused:

David Lohman

OTE Staff:

Nancy DeSouza, Executive Director

Tim Pickett, Operations Director

Annie von Domitz, Heritage and Community Assets Manager

Jessica Carbone, Office Assistant

Guest:

Craig Campbell, Victory Group

Convening: The public meeting of the Travel Information Council was called to order by Chair Baldwin at 9:01 a.m. Baldwin noted attendance for the record.

Business Meeting:

Approval of Minutes: Marsh proposed amending “6:2:1” to “1.62:1” in line four under Committee Reports, Finance. Drennan proposed deleting the word “about” from line nine and changing “marketing help” to “marketing help” in line seven of page seven. Russell proposed changing “Anew” to “A new” in line 14 of page three and deleted the line “Russell suggested contacting the Oregon Forest Industries Council for possible information.” from line 23 of page five. Russell moved to accept the minutes as amended. Marsh seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: None.

Committee Reports:

Finance: Marsh reported Revenues are slightly ahead of budget and Expenditures are slightly below budget, except for a few noted incidences. There was some impact due to the redefinition of Capital Investment that now has to be expensed. The agency has seen some increase in legal costs for work investigating the legality of marijuana signage, but that has been controlled by DeSouza working with DOJ. The Moss-Adams accounting review was returned with no footnotes or suggestions. This speaks to the great job done by Pickett, Diane Welter and the whole accounting staff. Pickett will be talking more about the upcoming budget, but staff has made recommendations that have been reviewed by management. Marsh said he was briefed on the current version and handed out a summary page of the assumptions used to create the recommendations in the budget. He said the budget looks manageable for 2017-19, but after 2019 there are major questions pending a transportation package. The budget will be discussed again at the Council meeting in March and will be ready for adoption in June.

Heritage Trees: Washington reported that the first grove, The Drake Homestead Grove, in the Class of 2017 Heritage Trees has been adopted. He was pleased to report there are more nominations under consideration. He is working on a nomination for a Copper Beech Tree in front of the PSU library. Drennan asked if there was a date set for the Annual Dedication. Von Domitz said that the dedication is tentatively scheduled for June, along with a joint meeting with the Historical Marker committee. Both the tree and marker committees each have a new member from Bend.

Historical Marker Committee: Washington reported the text of the Triple Nickle Marker is still being refined. The marker committee recently had a meeting in Arch Cape, on the Oregon Coast. The Cannon Beach marker in Arch Cape is in need of replacing and a local community group is hoping to work with the committee to replace it with a new interpretive panel. Von Domitz spoke about the new installation of Applegate Trail Markers in the rest area by the US Parks Service.

Rest Area Committee: Russell said that Oak Grove has been the center of committee conversations for the last couple of months. With the settlement of the ODOT-ADA lawsuit, there are uncertain risks to the capital budget. All rest areas must be brought up to 2010 ADA standards within five years. Jason Nash is touring our rest areas along with an ODOT representative to determine the expenditures that will have to be made. DeSouza said that one of the questions that will have to be addressed is if nonessential features of the rest area cannot be made compliant within a reasonable cost structure do they need to be removed. Russell said that some handicapped parking places may need to be refit to a 2% or less grade. DeSouza said that ADA complaints would go to ODOT for review for possibly earlier than scheduled implementation on the five-year plan. For essential facilities, the overall upgrades look manageable. Restroom

interiors are generally compliant, except for a need to replace or retrofit hand dryers.

Russell said that the agency is now in a good position with regulatory compliance. Heather Swanson has created a database that includes all the permits and their requirements for all rest areas and obtained documentation that those that do not have permits do not require them. The agency has permission to expend 80% of the DEQ penalty on an environmental project with the Umatilla tribe to support a stream restoration project. The remainder will be paid to DEQ.

Russell reported the Safety and Economic Development rest area performance measures were still under development, but the others were complete. Rest Area Sponsorship options are being investigated with marketing organizations to present the possibility of handling the marketing altogether or working with staff in an advising roll. Baldwin asked if there are firms that have experience with this type of marketing and Pickett said yes.

Oak Grove restroom replacement: Pickett reported that Branch Engineering sent an amended design report for a single-side replacement. Staff asked Council to support expending \$19,500 for site engineering and buildable rest area plans. Once the full design and specifications for this project are complete, we can request project bids for Council approval. The Rest Area Committee recommends LEED and other energy-efficient features be used as possible. Nash met with the Energy Trust of Oregon and learned that since power is supplied by a co-op, the project is not eligible for its grants. Branch Engineering has LEED expertise and is willing to work with us on preparing the building for any future energy efficiency retrofits that might not be financially feasible in the initial build. Watson urged staff to choose Oregon-based products where possible.

DeSouza update the Council on the status of the proposed Anti-Human Trafficking bill. She invited Nita Bells from Bend anti-trafficking non-profit "In our Backyard" to provide training for I-5 rest area staff on sex trafficking awareness, and a video of the training was shown to I-84 staff.

Executive Committee:

Baldwin reported the Executive committee had not met since the last Council meeting. A meeting will be scheduled in January to begin the annual review of the Executive Director. She encouraged Council members to contribute thoughts, changes to the current process, things to incorporate, or points of view. The review is scheduled to coincide with the next Council meeting in March. She updated the Council on current litigation.

DeSouza briefed the Council on likely talking points for the joint meeting with the Tourism Commission. Much of the discussion will center on what is being done externally and how we can better partner with Travel Oregon. It is problematic for TIC to promote a brand or image that sets it apart from the State of Oregon and confuses officials and the public with Travel Oregon's efforts. Drennan asked how the coalitions called out in the strategic plan might change with this new partnership. DeSouza said that Travel Oregon will define much of that relationship, but OTE will partner with local DMOs and communities to meet the needs of different regions.

Chair's Update: Baldwin said the Chair's update had many of the same points as the Executive Director's update, but added that conversations have been re-engaged with the Governor's Office on appointments and re-appointments and more information is to come soon.

Executive Directors/Staff Reports:

Overview/ Updates: DeSouza said the Grove of the States restoration is going exceedingly well. Von Domitz reached out to Willamette Valley Development Officers Association for references of contractors to guide and assist with the fundraising process. To date, the project has received support primarily from in-kind time, labor and expertise. There is the possibility of a group of graduate students from OSU doing the irrigation work as part of practicum project. February 11, 2017 will be the planting day for the new trees, with the August dedication date to be determined. DeSouza moved the discussion to performance measures. Von Domitz shared that the Heritage program's performance measures will include reaching out to past project participants to gauge long-term satisfaction. They are tracking the value invested in the program in both dollars and hours donated. Some examples of donated time would be maintenance volunteers, hours worked by members for speaking engagements and researching the history of a tree or for a marker. The committees asked for their programs' mentions in earned media to be tracked. The final measure will be the maintenance standards of the markers.

DeSouza said that the settlement of the ODOT-ADA lawsuit will likely require an addendum to the interagency agreement dealing specifically with the terms of the settlement. When drafted, it will come before the Council for approval.

She discussed working with DOJ to research the legality to approve or deny cannabis signage.

DeSouza met with the Governor's Marijuana Policy Advisor who agrees that this may be a larger policy issue that needs to be decided above the agency level.

Council took a break at 11:23 a.m. Watson left the meeting at this time.

Council reconvened with the Oregon Tourism Commission at 12:23 p.m.

Joint Meeting with the Oregon Tourism Commission/Working Lunch

Tourism Commission Chair Alana Hughson opened the meeting with self-introductions.

Baldwin expressed her appreciation to be able to build relationships with Alana and the Oregon Tourism Commission and the work of DeSouza and Travel Oregon CEO Todd Davidson.

Davidson gave his appreciation for DeSouza's and OTE's staff for being proactive and transparent as they work together. DeSouza gave a brief history of the Travel Information Council. She explained that TIC is a services agency, with infrastructure that can be utilized by our tourism partners starting with Travel Oregon and with the DMOs and local businesses. She shared some of the points OTE and Travel Oregon have been discussing, including ending the use of OTE as an assumed business name. Davidson committed to including OTE in the "Oregon" brand. He also said OTE would work with them to share information, such as heritage sites, with travelers on the Travel Oregon website. Davidson gave a brief history of Travel Oregon.

Kenji Sugahara asked if there were plans to prepare the rest areas along the I-5 corridor for the

larger-than-normal traffic brought in by the events like the World Track and Field Championships. Davidson replied there was not at this point, other than the fact that there is awareness that it exists. DeSouza said that we need to be able to prepare the infrastructure that we have, by bringing in portable rest rooms or increase the visits by the janitorial staff, to handle these large events.

The meeting concluded with agreement for closer partnership and cooperation to leverage the Travel Information Council's infrastructure and heritage assets to the benefit of Travel Oregon's messaging and outreach, as well as guidance on TIC's outward imaging.

The joint meeting ended at 1:10 p.m.

Council reconvened at 1:15 p.m. Craig Campbell and Ryan Snyder joined the meeting at this time.

Continuation with Executive Director Report: DeSouza updated the Council of early Emergency Management preparations for the August 21, 2017 solar eclipse. There will be much higher congestion on the roads and in the rest areas along the eclipse's path, with the likely possibility of thousands of people all wanting to be in the same area for a very limited amount of time. DeSouza reported that the Council-approved sign fee increase for 2017 has been implemented. The Sign Program milepoint review has been completed and is in review at ODOT. All drinking water sources in OTE rest areas and central office were tested and found to be clean. The Oregon State Police exclusion program is going well, with statewide training nearly complete. The program is building relationships between our staff and OSP. They are discussing expanding the exclusion program to local area law enforcement in areas where they are able to respond more quickly than OSP. DeSouza expects a Safety performance measurement by next summer in cooperation with OSP for safety evaluations of individual rest areas. Russell asked if staff works toward connecting people who may need help to social services. DeSouza said yes, and it also done by OSP when staff is not present.

DeSouza is working with Governor' Policy Advisor Karmen Fore on Council appointments and reappointments. DeSouza noted that the one remaining legal action against the agency will be settled soon. She is assisting Lincoln City Tourism in their proposal to Oregon Parks and Recreation to take over tourist information and other operations of the D River Wayside, since OTE removed its dilapidated kiosk at that location.

2017-19 Biennial Budget Preparation: Pickett shared confidence in the use of historical data to guide decisions in planning the budget. He presented the current budget draft and the assumptions behind it. It is based on stable funding from ODOT for 2017 and assumption that there will be a continuation of that same funding level for the remainder of the biennium, normal growth of the Sign Program and Heritage programs, and the continuation of current staffing levels. This would leave the 2017-19 budget solid, safe and not put cash balances at risk. The budget uses a bottom-up process based on responsible managers taking responsibility for their own budgets.

Drennan asked if there was a planned capital budget for the upcoming budget. Pickett said that there is an active capital budget planned for 2017-19. The Other Funds side is operating on the assumption that we will invest \$750,000 a year in signs. While there may seem to be rest area

capital improvement money to spend in the upcoming budget, we will be dealing with the lack of an inflation factor. If things continue at \$6.55 million with no additional modifications, additions, or cushion, we begin to show negative results in 2019-21.

Drennan asked if the agency planned to mirror traditional state agencies if they are asked for a 15% budget cut, salary freezes and furlough days. DeSouza said that as a semi-independent agency, we would need to consider those items, particularly those dealing with personnel cost savings to provide some level of parity with other state agencies' cuts. Furloughs would require changes to our service model in the rest areas and sign installations, but may be feasible in the central office. This will come before the Finance Committee and Council for discussion as the State's plans are set.

New Business:

Agency contracts – Boardman Janitorial Contract: Staff recommended the awarding of the contract to Patriot Building and Grounds Maintenance for \$59,580 per year. The contract is for one year, renewable for up to an additional four years. Drennan moved to approve the contract for the Boardman janitorial. Russell seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2017 TIC Quarterly Meeting Schedule and Locations:

- March – March 17, 2017, OTE offices, Salem
- June – OTE offices, Salem TBA
- September – Somewhere in Oregon TBA
- December – Portland Area TBA

Information/Policy Discussion:

Legislative Update/Planning: Campbell said with the failure of Measure 97, the state faces a \$1.7 billion shortfall. The focus of the Legislature will be to resolve that. During the last election, majorities shifted enough that to achieve any kind of transportation package, Democrats and Republicans must work together. A transportation funding package has the support of the Governor's Office, Senate President, the Speaker of the House and the two Republican caucuses. It is hoped inclusion in a successful package will resolve our issues for stable rest area funding. The Executive Committee will schedule a meeting to discuss details of what is needed. Three pieces of legislation directly impact us: our agency governance bill; the Human Trafficking bill that would place informational posters in the rest areas; and the Right to Rest Bill.

Other Business:

None.

Adjourn:

Next Meeting: Friday, March 17, 2017 – OTE Offices, 1500 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR 97302.