



Oregon Travel Information Council

1500 Liberty Street SE, Suite 150

Salem, Oregon 97302

MINUTES

Oregon Travel Information Council

Quarterly Meeting – April 06, 2016

OTE Offices, Salem, Oregon

Council Members:

Gwenn Baldwin, Chair
Kathy Watson, Secretary
Charlotte Lehan
David Lohman (by phone)
Mike Marsh

Bob Russell, Vice Chair
Mike Drennan
Ed Washington
Ryan Snyder

OTE Staff:

Nancy DeSouza, Executive Director
Jessica Carbone, Office Assistant
Diane Cheyne, Field Operations Administrator

Tim Pickett, Operations Director
Jason Nash, Rest Area Division Administrator
Annie von Domitz, Heritage and Community
Assets Manager

Guest:

Craig Campbell, Victory Group

Convening: The public meeting of the Travel Information Council was called to order by Chair Baldwin at 11:07 a.m. Baldwin noted attendance for the record.

Approval of minutes: Secretary Watson presented the December 16, 2015 Quarterly Meeting minutes. Marsh moved to approve the minutes. Lehan seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

Public Comment: None.

Executive Session: *The Council adjourned to Executive Session at 11:10 a.m., pursuant to ORS 190.660 (2)(i) regarding review and evaluation of the employment-related performance of the Executive Director. The Council returned to open public session at 11:34 a.m.*

Public Session: Washington made a motion to approve the annual performance rating of Executive Director Nancy DeSouza as “Outstanding.” Marsh seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Baldwin extended her appreciation for the progress DeSouza’s leadership has made, and for what the organization has been able to accomplish in the last year. Washington made a motion to accept the combined goals for the Executive Director for 2016 -17. Drennan seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Business Meeting:

Committee Reports:

- **Finance Committee:** Committee Chair Drennan presented an overview of recent financials and reported that finances look good. There have been many positive results in many categories. The new accounting manager will enable staff to achieve the goal of reconciling all accounts. He praised the staff’s work on receivables as absolutely outstanding. There have been no overdue accounts past 60 days for the past three months. There has been a large increase in the repair of signs with deferred maintenance. The committee approved a formal letter of commendation for Accountant Michelle Roth for her dedication.

Drennan asked the Council if they wanted to regularly discuss the previous financial statements at Council meetings. Russell said that he reviews the statements when they are sent out and does not feel it is necessary to go over them again in the meeting. Watson agreed. Any noted discrepancies or questions will be sent to the Council.

- **Heritage Tree Committee:** Washington updated the committee on the Statewide Heritage Tree Ceremony on April 8 and said the presentation of the second annual Maynard Dawson Award will be awarded to Catherine Mushel at the Portland Arbor Day Ceremony. Chair Baldwin asked if there was a reason only one tree was given Heritage status this year. Lehan explained that it was just how this year’s cycle worked out. The committee’s very high standards, the legacy and significance that needs to be documented, as well as the health of tree, make the process highly selective. Even with these standards, there are a total of 68 Heritage Trees and groves. The committee is actively searching for certain kinds of trees, such as a tree planted and grown for its medicinal purposes.
- **Historical Markers Committee:** Committee Chair Lehan reported the Salemtowne volunteers would soon start their repair season for the wooden beaver boards. The committee is considering how proactive to be in maintaining and updating the current signs. Lehan is in contact with Clackamas County tourism because the Willamette Falls area is on the verge of National Heritage status and this may be good time to reevaluate the location and the content of the signs there. Washington asked if Willamette Falls had major Native American significance. Lehan respond there was major Native American significance to the falls for multiple tribes. She said that Native American significance that may have been overlooked in the initial conception of the marker is always considered when the committee is looking at updating or

repairing. The committee sometimes updates a sign that doesn't need to be repaired only to update the written interpretation. Baldwin asked how potential signs the committee discovers (for example, the story of the Triple Nickels) that aren't brought forward by an interested party are handled. Von Domitz said the committee can act on its own, and that the Triple Nickels marker has been approved and the committee awaits full funding.

The Council broke for lunch at noon and returned to Public Session at 12:34 p.m.

- **Rest Area Committee Report:** Rest Area Committee Chair Russell reported on performance measurements for the rest areas, with the goal of completion in time for the 2017 legislative session. Nash will conduct quarterly evaluations of each rest area, which will be used in staff performance evaluations and reported as an external measure for the Legislature. Internal measures will include contractor evaluations and vending machine ratings. Customer comment cards will be used as an external measurement with the addition of a safety question. The committee is considering measures to show the use of the rest area. DeSouza handed out maps with the cost-per-customer for each rest area location. Pickett explained these numbers included general expenditures and expenses under \$5,000, but not capital expenses. Safety information will be collected from comment cards, staff incident reports and from of OSP exclusions. The contribution of the rest areas to tourism and economic development will be discussed as measures at a later date.

Lohman joined the meeting at 12:52 p.m.

Russell and DeSouza discussed rest area sponsorships. Tier one will be the overall sponsorship of the rest area resulting in a mainline sign. Tier two is for major elements of a rest area, and tier three will be component pieces of the rest areas (i.e., trees, benches). The committee is exploring the possibility of outside marketing help. Any revenues from sponsorships become part of the agency's highway funds, with the required restrictions on their use.

Lohman left the meeting at 1:00 p.m. for a prior commitment.

- **Executive Committee:** Chair Baldwin reported on the meetings regarding the recommended performance appraisal of the Executive Director. Upcoming meetings will be to develop recommendations to Council for the legislative agenda.
- **Chair's Update:** Chair Baldwin updated the committee on the trial scheduled for the week of May 23, 2016. She asked the Council to be responsive to any request by DOJ. Baldwin, DeSouza and the Governor's Office have begun a conversation regarding staggering the terms of reappointment for Council members, with five members' terms ending in 2016 because the actions taken in 2012. Also discussed are aligning schedules and terms to the fiscal year, include holding TIC officer elections at the second quarterly meeting.

Executive Director/Staff Reports:

- **Staff recognition:** DeSouza introduced OTE Accounting Manager Diane Welter, Accountant Michelle Roth, and Accounting Techs Yolanda Ruiz and Melissa Auman. Drennan read into the record a letter from the TIC Finance Committee commending and recognizing Roth's contributions, exceptional job performance and personal commitment to improvement of the agency's accounting structure.
- **Sponsorships Rules:** DeSouza reported that the sponsorship rules were submitted by ODOT to the Secretary of State's Office for public comment. She expressed enthusiastic thanks for the leadership of ODOT Director Matt Garrett and his team in completing the negotiations, and for the cooperation of the FHWA. Chair Baldwin will share TIC's appreciation with Transportation Commission Chair Tammy Baney. Drennan asked if the rules were OARs, and DeSouza responded that these are ODOT's Administrative Rules.
- **Government Camp:** DeSouza discussed the ongoing parking lot concerns and the recent involvement by Karmen Fore with Congressman Blumenauer's staff. The Council discussed options for long-term solutions, including the potential to move operations to a location where a state or local government agency controls the total access and egress, and for which highway funds could be used for maintenance of property under TIC's control. Russell discussed beginning a search for alternative locations. Watson recommended consulting with Matthew Drake, CEO of Mount Hood Meadows.
- **Exclusion Program:** DeSouza and staff are working with Oregon State Police Lt. Steve Duvall as the new head of patrol and Senior Trooper Guy Nelson to expand exclusion training statewide. This program will give troopers a tool to improve the safety of rest areas for both criminal offenders and those committing serious or repeated violations of rest area rules.
- **Oak Grove Expansion:** Nash updated the Council on the proposed capital project of expanding restroom capacity at Oak Grove to handle growing demand. Russell asked if the funds available for expansion should be used on other repair projects. Pickett said that all known and immediate issues are already accounted for in this biennium's capital projects budget. Russell said that if all the known issues have been addressed, then expansion makes sense. He agreed that the rest area façades do need to be updated.
- **Vending:** DeSouza discussed the current status of vending in rest areas. A new vending rating form is being used for performance measurement, and conversations with the Commission of the Blind continue efforts to upgrade and repair current vending cages and machines and expand to additional rest areas.
- **Performance Measures:** In addition to the earlier presentation during the Rest area Committee report, Diane Cheyne is working on sign and kiosk performance measures and von Domitz is working on heritage programs performance measures for future discussion with Council.
- **Sign Program:** OTE and ODOT staff are beginning discussions of potential rule changes regarding highway-to-highway signage to clarify language and respond to ODOT sign density concerns. Russell asked if there was an update of the MUTCD and Cheyne said that it is still

in progress, with an undetermined release date. DeSouza said FHWA has given an initial opinion that cannabis signage will not be allowed in Oregon's right of ways, and she will consult DOJ regarding the legal status of addressing current and future signage requests. Staff also are considering creation of "districts" for wineries, distilleries and breweries that will help meet signage requests in areas to address increasing demand and lack of room for growth.

- **Governor's Tourism Conference:** At Councilor Watson's suggestion, OTE partnered with Travel Oregon on two contests related to rest areas. Carole Astley reported to von Domitz that the relationship between the two agencies has never been better.

Other Business:

Sign Fees: Drennan asked about the status of the yearly committee meeting to evaluate current sign prices. Cheyne stated that when the agency switched software packages from Client to SAP, the milepost numbers on which the pricing is based were not entered correctly. Cheyne is in the process of ensuring those numbers are accurate.

Lohman returned to the meeting at 1:55pm.

At Council's request, DeSouza repeated to Lohman the agency's extreme gratitude to ODOT Director Matt Garrett for his leadership. She reported that the completion of sponsorship rules and advancement of the Grove of the States project is largely due to his cooperation and direction.

Cheyne continued her comments on ensuring mile post accuracy in the database. There was discussion on how the original mile points and traffic counts were recorded and the degree of change.

At the request of Campbell, the Council suspended the sign fee discussion to cover the legislative update, as Campbell had a prior commitment and needed to leave the meeting shortly.

Legislative Update: The language for the legislative concept placeholder draft is due to the Governor's Office in April. The concept draft could include the resolution of stable funding for rest areas, creating a provision for inflation, an alignment of our budget cycle with calendar year payment for rest areas, and a provision for capital projects. DeSouza informed the Council that the Executive Committee had recommended a schedule to have a legislative concept before the Council on June 6 to meet the June 24 final language filing deadline. Campbell updated on the 2017 session. There are a number of interested groups working together for 2017 transportation package, which could include rest area operations and funding.

Sign Fees: A separate meeting on sign fee reviews will be held soon to discuss the annual evaluation of sign pricing, to include Russell and Drennan. DeSouza will schedule.

Grove of the States: Von Domitz discussed the project schedule, saying the planning committee meets later in the week to look at the first draft of the site plan by the landscape architect. This will be part of the official proposal to ODOT for approval. Once approved, an RFP for will be issued for tree removal and they will actively seek sponsors.

Heritage Conference: Lehan reminded the Council that the Statewide Heritage Conference will be the first part of May and encouraged attendance. Lohman congratulated the staff on a very well done “Deep Roots” Newsletter.

Sign Program RFP: Cheyne informed the Council that an RFP for sign installation and maintenance contract is out for bid. To realign the contract year with the budget cycle, this contract is only for one year. Chair Baldwin asked what percentage of the \$290,365 capital installations are done by ODOT and what percentage is private contractors, and Pickett stated the percentage can vary depending on where the work is scheduled. Council will be asked to approve the contract for the winning bidder at the June 6 meeting.

New Business:

Action/Voting Items: None.

Adjourn:

- Next Meeting Monday, June 6, 2015 – Bend, Doubletree Hotel
- September 20, 2016 – OTE Offices, Salem
- December 6, 2016 – Forest Grove (part of the meeting will be in conjunction with the Oregon Tourism Commission)

2:55 p.m. – Meeting adjourned.
