



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING HELD JANUARY 17, 2024 AT 8:00 AM OKANAGAN ROOM (COUNCIL CHAMBER)

PRESENT: VOTING:

Peter Kaz, Downtown Vernon Association
Dan Proulx, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Councilor Durning, Council Appointed
Shawna Patenaude, Arts & Culture
Jessica Dowswell, Accommodation Provider
Clara Snedden, Accommodation Provider
Janine Collard, Accommodation Provider
Mike Van Horne, Golf
Cassandra Zerebeski, Ski
Kris Fuller, Sports & Events
Mayor Cumming

NON-VOTING:

Ian Jenkins, Silverstar

GUESTS:

Josh Welter, SCSNO

ABSENT: Gerran Thorhaug, Restaurant
Rebecca Barton, Arts & Culture
Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider
Bradley Calihoo, Okanagan Indian Band
Ben Suranko, Biking

STAFF: Jennifer Pounder, Record/Committee Clerk
Torrie Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism
Karen Savill, Visitor Services Coordinator
Hannah Lucich, Tourism Marketing Coordinator
Hilary Irvine, Tourism Marketing Coordinator
John Perrott, Manager, Economic Development and Tourism

ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:07 a.m.

**LAND
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

As Staff Liaison of the City of Vernon's Tourism Commission, and in the spirit of this gathering, I recognize the City of Vernon is located in the traditional territory of the Syilx people of the Okanagan nation.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Moved by P. Kaz, seconded by K. Fuller:

THAT the agenda of the January 17, 2024 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Councilor Durning, seconded by M. Van Horne:

THAT the minutes of the December 20, 2023 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

CORPORATE SERVICES ORIENTATION

The Manager, Tourism provided the annual orientation for members, which included review of the following:

- Corporate Policy
- Tourism Annual Plan
- Tourism Bylaw 5683
- City of Vernon's Bullying & Harassment Policy

INTRODUCTIONS

Roundtable introductions were held.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

There was a call for nominations. C. Larsen volunteered via absent ballot to continue his role as Chair. After three calls for nominations, none were received. C. Larsen was elected Chair for 2024.

J. Collard, C. Snedden were nominated for Vice Chair. By a closed-ballot vote of six to four, C. Snedden was elected Vice Chair for 2024.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

ROUNDTABLE UPDATES

A roundtable discussion ensued asking members for an update on main challenges currently facing the local tourism sector:

- D. Proulx – We have created a task force for unexpected consequences from the new short-term rental legislation recently passed; Predator Ridge and Outback Lakeside Resort are examples of properties facing serious financial losses due to the new Short Term Rental regulations.
- C. Zerebeski – We have been working with members to correct their address to Silverstar in order to qualify under the new short-

term rental rules. Shuttles are still running on Saturdays from downtown Vernon to Silverstar.

- J. Collard – We are looking OK for summer 2024. We plan on hitting the market hard and fast. Weddings are disappearing; 'The Engagement Gap' as referred to on CNN is affecting us.
- P. Kaz – We are the same; short-staffed.
- K. Fuller – We are hoping for snow for some of our events during Winter Carnival. We are also collecting items for our online auction. The Winter Carnival starts in 14 days. In response to a question, K. Fuller confirmed they have a great volunteer database. Our volunteers are only called on once per year, thus eliminating "volunteer fatigue".
- J. Dowswell – The economy, and lack of staff and available housing are major issues for us. Economics are also hurting us; social, corporate and all fronts. Lack of travel services are also hurting us.
- Mayor Cumming – We are holding our breath waiting for summer as we are going to be re-building several intersections and work on naturalizing Vernon Creek will continue in Polson Park.
- S. Patenaude – The Arts Council is still not back to pre-covid numbers. We are suffering from a lack of volunteers, participation and key roles not being filled. The Arts council has stepped up as community group for the 2024 Sun Dog Festival. Another barrier is accessing Polson Park this summer. We may need to find another venue. Councilor Durning will gather more information regarding Polson Park's closing and provide the information to the Tourism Manager.
- I. Jenkins – Our challenge this summer is going to be short-term bookings. We are continuing to look for a long-term resolution for staff housing.
- M. Van Horne – Nothing to report. Staffing worries for upcoming season are lack of available housing and staff transportation; Transit to our golf course would help. Our new building should be finished by June, 2024.
- It was confirmed that Vernon has been awarded the position of host to the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association's Annual Summit on October 22-24, 2024.
- C. Snedden – Occupancy is a struggle.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

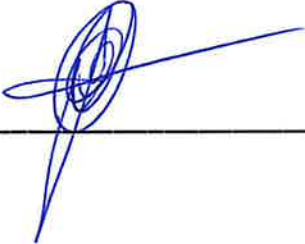
NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Tourism Commission is set for February 21, 2024 at 8:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Tourism Commission adjourned at 9:04 a.m. by call of the Chair.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:


_____ Chair