

Wilsonville Tourism Promotion Committee

MEETING NOTES

Tue., Feb. 16, 2016 • 10 am – 12 pm

Wilsonville City Hall

1. Call to Order; Welcome & Introductions

Voting members: Jeff Brown, Chair; Al Levit, Vice Chair; Darren Harmon; Kathleen Mason; David Stead; Elaine Swyt.

Ex-officio and guests: Danielle Cowan, Kevin O'Malley, Carolyn McCormick, Mark Ottenad, Suzy Sivyer and Brian Stevenson.

2. Organizational Matters

Re-cap of Last Meeting: Committee members reviewed the meeting notes of Jan. 6, 2016.

Resignation: Committee members discussed the resignation of Margaret Usher, Position 7, with a term ending 6/30/18. Mark Ottenad indicated that the Mayor and Council would seek to make an appointment to fill the remainder of the term of the position.

Committee members discussed potential applicants who might fill the vacant position, including long-time community volunteer Dick Spence, retired logistics manager of Xerox; the owner of Oswego Grill; a member of the area arts & culture community; and possibly a property manager of a city lodging facility.

Mark Ottenad noted that the Tourism Promotion Committee has a special Council requirement for members to be professionals or others who are actively engaged in the tourism and hospitality sector and related industries.

3. Subcommittee Reports & Discussion

Organizational Structure Subcommittee: Jeff Brown and Darren Harmon reported that they had three meetings, including with Stan Sherer, Parks & Recreation Director, about staffing resource and other tourism-related matters. They indicated that Stan Sherer was open to staffing the tourism program with Parks & Recreation Dept. human resources using TLT funds. They reported that new duties could be added to existing staff up to a certain point; and that a new hire would be considered when additional tourism duties exhausted current staffing capacity.

Committee members asked what background, if any, did existing Park & Rec staff have in the tourism and hospitality industry. Committee members discussed that obtaining an experienced, seasoned tourism professional would allow work to progress faster and more efficiently.

Committee members discussed that the City-supported organizational framework for "Visit Wilsonville" will be that of the Parks & Rec Dept. initially, and then could look at eventually becoming the independent, nonprofit DMO.

Committee members discussed that a number of the tourism-related efforts and programs have direct tie-in with the Parks & Rec Dept., including advertising and handling park facility rentals and overseeing the tourism grant programs.

Committee members also considered the proposed study of an indoor or all-weather sports complex facility could be under the pending Parks & Rec Master Plan update; or possibly the Planning Division's Town Center Redevelopment Master Plan; however that may too confining.

Jeff Brown recommended that 75% of TLT revenues be dedicated to tourism, up from the historical 44% and current budget forecast of 50%. Committee members discussed that such a recommendation may be premature until specific projects or programs with known budgets are presented for City and Council consideration.

Marketing Subcommittee: Elaine Swyt, Al Levit and Kevin O'Malley presented on work of the subcommittee which focused on marketing and especially Internet options. Both the *Tourism Development Strategy* and the committee members' experiences indicate that achieving a robust online presence is key to promoting tourism in Wilsonville to outside markets and increasing visits. They indicated that a good tourism website could serve a number of functions, including providing information to both attract visitors to the Portland area to consider staying in Wilsonville, as well as to linger longer and provide more local stimulus. *See attached subcommittee report.*

Subcommittee members also suggested that marketing efforts such as Internet campaigns could be done in cooperation with others to focus on various niche markets. Elaine Swyt indicated that she could look at mocking-up components of tourism website to get some sense of the look and feel of an online product.

4. Tourism Committee Plans for City Council

Committee members discussed components of the One-Year Implementation Plan and Five-Year Action Plan that is to be presented to the City Council. The plan in essence demonstrates how the committee recommends fulfilling "actions for success" of the *Tourism Development Strategy*.

Mark Ottenad indicated that, based on the committee's discussions to date and the new subcommittee reports, he would seek to provide a first draft the plan to the committee, hopefully by Feb 19 or 22. The draft plan would focus primarily on the organizational framework, including human resources staffing, and marketing program, principally online/Internet products, along with study recommendations that the committee had discussed on several occasions.

5. Tourism Grant Programs Updates

Brian Stevenson presented an update on two tourism grant programs operated by the City: City "Community Tourism Grant Program provides up to \$25,000 in grant funds and the Clackamas County Tourism "Community Partnership Program provides up to \$20,000.

Elaine Swyt, who also serves as Chair of the City Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, noted that these are the grant programs that the committee is to eventually oversee. The Board is to review grant applications, see grant applicant presentations and make grant-award decisions:

- Thur, Feb 25, 4:30 pm, Park & Rec Admin Bldg, 29600 SW Park Pl: *County community grants*
- Thur, March 10, 4:30 pm, City Hall: *City grants*

Committee members are invited to attend to see how the process is currently conducted in order to have a better understanding and develop ideas for modification of the process or criteria with a greater tourism promotion focus.

Committee members also discussed pending Travel Oregon grant programs, and recommended that the Parks & Recreation Dept. consider applying for Travel Oregon matching grant.

Meeting adjourned at 12 Noon.

TOURISM SUB COMMITTEE: MARKETING & WEB PRIORITIES

Scoping Definition of "Visit Wilsonville" Website

Sub Committee members: Al Levit, Kevin O'Malley, Elaine Swyt

The first work session of the Tourism Sub Committee - Marketing and the Web - explored how best to focus our priorities going forward. We developed the following working outline to guide us:

I. TARGET AUDIENCE

We felt the following were the primary audience for a standalone tourism website and related marketing materials:

1. Visitors already here.
2. Prospective visitors for business reasons or family celebrations
3. Visitors planning to attend nearby sports activities
4. Traveling families with children (parks, FFC, Library, World of Speed)
5. Residents & relatives of residents
6. I-5 Travelers
7. Content Providers – Will need to inventory these

II. PRODUCTS: WHAT ARE WE OFFERING?

We agreed on the following. "Visit Wilsonville" will:

1. Provide an easy to navigate resource to those already visiting and who are thinking of visiting our geographic area to visit – play --- stay
2. Inform prospective visitors about our city and what makes us a great place to visit and live
3. Provide a way for content providers to get the word out about their products (restaurants, hotels, events and local activities)
4. Provide a community resource for residents and those working in our city to inform and to help spread the word
5. Give a good reason to local content providers to post their information on our website
6. Give an alternative resource for outside area content providers to post their information. (Need to discuss with our counterparts on how to co-op market and use technology to augment their efforts with ours)
7. Provide resources to other tourism sites to help their clients (AAA, Woodburn Outlet, Chamber of Commerce, etc)

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8. Provide some unique reasons that will draw Internet searchers to our website.
See Point III.

III. KEY MARKETING ATTRIBUTES & ASSETS

We brainstormed the following as the primary reasons people would want to stay and play in our city, attributes that make our city a “unique” experience for our visitors. We consulted the work done already by the Tourism Taskforce when creating this list.

- Small Town, Easy to Get Around
- Rapid transit access to Portland and SMART available throughout the city
- Memorial and Murase Parks – Water features, space for outdoor recreation and sports fields
- Family Fun Center
- World of Speed
- Aurora Colony
- Golf Courses, Tennis Courts
- Many Events Year Round – create a list: Wilsonville Arts Festival, Fun Run, etc.
- Event Venues (Weddings and Celebrations)
- “Gateway” to the North Willamette Valley
- Central location for visits to wine country
- Pickle ball
- Public art
- Walking and biking tours
- River and boating activities
- Many historical cemeteries for genealogical research very close by
- Festivals – Dahlia (Canby), Tulip (Woodburn)
- Historical sites – Canby Ferry
- Convenience to shopping – Costco, Fred Meyer, Fry’s, Target and within a few exits to Woodburn Outlets and Bridgeport

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IV. ADDITIONAL WAYS TO ATTRACT VISITORS & WEB TRAFFIC:

We also thought the following online and offline features would help draw traffic:

- Virtual Visitor Center
 - ✓ What to do on your "First Night" in Town –locating leads, coupons at local establishments, etc to check out "night before" or only if in town for one night activities i.e. trivia nights, bingo, scheduled local events, entertainment venues, specials at local restaurants, etc.
 - ✓ Ask the Curator i.e. "Where to entertain a family of 4?" (Categorical Search Engine –Pert Chart FAQs)
- Design an online and for print "Fantasy Map" of the City
- Improvement Ideas –
 - ✓ Onsite and online maps
 - ✓ Clear signage
 - ✓ Work with SMART, P&R, Chamber to make convenient these materials
- Attractive Video& Photo Content
- Ability to Rate Restaurants, Events, etc.
- One-Stop Resource Finder for Northern Willamette Valley
(Includes geographic area from Aurora, Canby, St. Paul, McMinnville, Dundee, Newberg, Wilsonville, Tualatin, Sherwood, Tigard, Lake Oswego, West Linn, Oregon City and maybe Beaverton and Milwaukie.)
- Maybe a mobile app
- Geo-caching?
- Create seasonal events that might attract local and traveling traffic: i.e. New Year's Eve, Fourth of July (waterfront), etc.

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V. WHAT CONTENT? FOCUS ON LOCAL & SELECTED OVERLAP

We agreed that content should focus on what is available locally with some selected overlap with the agreement and the on-going partnership with counterparts. No need to reinvent the wheel or overtly compete.

1. Focus on local points of interest - Pull from "Asset List" document.
 - Restaurants
 - Events
 - Accommodations
 - Clubs and Organizations
 - Area Recreation Businesses - FFC, Golf Courses

2. Open Question - How to Share Content Overlap?

This is where it will be necessary to “co-op” with our counterparts (i.e. WCVA, TCA, TualatinValley.org, MtHoodTerritory.com, TravelOregon.com, etc.):

- How to share/post content/resources without competing
- How to market for each other
- How to build alliances with mutual content providers