

TOURISM TAX ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES APRIL 27, 2023

Commissioner Gil Almquist called the meeting of the Tourism Tax Advisory Board of Washington County to order at 9:30 AM on Thursday, April 27, 2023, in Conference Room #182 of the Washington County Administration Building, 111 East Tabernacle, St. George, UT. Those in attendance were: Tourism Tax Advisory Board: Dorothy Heers, Tracey Welsh, Rich Stehmeier, Brett Burgess, Kevin Smith and Ken Neilson. Others in attendance include Deputy County Attorney Steven Scott, Commissioner Gil Almquist, Tourism Director Brittany McMichael, Tourism staff members Sara Otto, Joyce Kelly, Jamie Allen, Leslie Fonger and Chad McWilliams.

WELCOME

Commissioner Gil Almquist welcomed all in attendance and determined that a quorum existed for voting on action items.

CONSIDERATION OF FEB. 22, 2023 MINUTES

MOTION: **Motion by Rich Stehmeier to approve the February 22, 2023 Minutes.**
 Motion seconded by Ken Neilson and carried by a unanimous vote.

TRT UPDATE:

Ms. McMichael reported that 2023 TRT, January through February is down one percent (-1%) from 2022. 2023 hotel ADR is up two percent (2%), January through March, from 2022. 2023 hotel occupancy is down four percent (-4%), January through March, from 2022.

Tracey Welsh and Brett Burgess reported that their properties were seeing about the same ADR and Occupancy rates as those presented.

Ms. McMichael presented a video by the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office, highlighting the benefits and cycle of Washington County TRT funds. Ms. McMichael stated the video will serve as a message to the community, educating them about how TRT is collected and spent. Commissioner Almquist spoke about the history of TRT and its significant importance to residents of Washington County.

CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING REQUESTS:

- **Old Dixie Hwy 91 Multi-Use Path & Bike lane**

Tom Jorgenson, Ivins City Assistant Engineer, explained that the construction of a new portion of trails would provide users with access to outdoor activities, create safer access to Fire Lake Park along the busy highway and provides a connection to the existing path system and trails that connect resorts, Tuacahn, Snow Canyon, and Shivwits Reservation. Mr. Jorgenson also reported that widening the Old Dixie Hwy 91 would provide safe passage to users that use the route to travel the Veyo Loop. The total cost of the project is estimated at twelve million, four-hundred

thousand dollars (\$12,400,000.) Ivins City is seeking one million dollars (\$1,000,000) from the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office Capital Projects Fund to support lengthening the multi-use path.

**MOTION: Motion by Kevin Smith to Recommend Funding as Presented.
Motion seconded by Tracey Welsh and carried by a unanimous vote.**

- **Canyonview Park Parking Areas & Trail Alignment**

Ryan VonCannon, Santa Clara City Parks Director, explained that the bids to complete the Canyonview Park parking areas and trail alignment came in much higher than originally expected. He also reported that since 2020, tournaments at Canyonview Park have increased significantly, bringing more visitors to Washington County. Mr. VonCannon reported that the new parking area would add around one hundred and fifty (150) spots to the park which improves the experience and allows larger events at the park and BMX park. The total cost of the project is estimated at nine hundred and ninety-six thousand, nine hundred and seventy-one dollars (\$996,971.) Santa Clara City is seeking two hundred and forty thousand dollars (\$240,000) from the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office Capital Projects Fund.

**MOTION: Motion by Dorothy Heers to Recommend Funding as Presented with the
Motion seconded by Ken Neilsen and carried by a unanimous vote.**

- **Pioneer Park Interpretive Trail Project**

Shane Moore, St. George City's Director of Leisure Services, reported that the new trail at Pioneer Park would include multiple stops with descriptive markers that detail the Dixie Spirit and the historical significance of the pioneer settlement in St. George. The trail would support bikers, hikers, runners and walkers. The total cost of the project is estimated at one million, six hundred thousand dollars (\$1,600,000.) St. George City is seeking eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000) from the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office Capital Projects Fund.

- **Town Square Park Repairs & Improvements**

Ms. McMichael explained that Town Square Park needs repairs and improvements caused mainly by events held in the park. Improvements would provide better capacity for large events and high-crowd months. St. George is seeking six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) from the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office Capital Projects Fund.

**MOTION: Motion by Rich Stehmeier to Recommend Funding as Presented with the
exception of St. George City's application for Town Square Park repairs and
improvements which are recommended at two hundred thousand dollars
(\$200,000) for a total of one million dollars (\$1,000,000.)
Motion seconded by Kevin Smith and carried by a unanimous vote.**

EVENT FUNDING REQUESTS:

- **LPGA & PGA Tour- Championship Series at Black Desert Resort**

Patrick Manning, Managing Partner of Black Desert Resort, explained that Black Desert Resort would be hosting a PGA and LPGA tour annually for ten (10) years beginning in 2024. He is seeking a sponsor partnership with the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office in the amount of two million, two hundred thousand dollars (\$2,200,000) for the 2024 PGA tour and two million, five hundred thousand dollars (\$2,500,000) sponsor partnership for the 2025 PGA and LPGA tours.

MOTION: Motion by Ken Neilsen to Recommend Funding as Presented with the Motion seconded by Brett Burgess and carried by a unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Kevin Smith gave an update on Tuacahn. The theatre grossed over five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in 2022.
- Rich Stehmeier reported that St. George Regional Airport (SGU) received ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) from the State of Utah for four projects; an environmental study to construct a sighting tower, improvements on the roads into the airport, the purchase of land for future growth and improvements to the terminal. He also stated that March 2023 was the airport's third-highest March for passenger totals.
- Joyce Kelly reported that 2024 is Utah's 100th anniversary of film in Utah.

NEXT MEETING

- Fall funding requests

The next meeting will be held on June 22, 2023.

Minutes prepared by Jamie Allen
Adjourned at 11:50 AM