

Minutes Approved at the 12/4/2023 Board Meeting



**Utah County Tourism and Tax Advisory Board Meeting
Monday, October 2, 2023 @ 11:30 am**

Board Members Present:

Kurt Christensen, Hyatt House PG/Provo
Chad Linebaugh, Sundance
Graydon Pearson, Hyatt Place Provo
Danny Wheeler, Utah Valley Convention Center
John Garfield, Provo Marriott
Lee Adamson, Explore Utah Valley

County Representatives Present:

Tom Sakievich, Utah County Commissioner
Adam Beck, Utah County Attorney
Lisa Shepherd, Utah County Commission Office
Laurel Price, Utah County Commission Office
Nicole Neer, Utah County Commission Office

Others Present:

Kathy Lewis- Orem City

11:30 a.m. Welcome- Danny Wheeler welcomed the board to the meeting and turned the time over to Kurt Christensen for a financial report.

11:35 a.m. Funding Review Update- Kurt Christensen

Kurt Christensen provided a funding update on TRCC and TRT funding.

11:40 a.m. Danny entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the August 7, 2023 minutes. John Garfield made a motion to approve the minutes. Chad Linebaugh seconded. Passed: 6/0

There was discussion and several questions about the amount funded for parks and CIP line items in the budget. The suggestion was made to sit down with the Auditor's office and someone from the Commission Office to look at the numbers.

Danny Wheeler stated that the Sundance Nature Alliance will move to later in the meeting.

11:50 a.m. Dry Creek- Lehi City

Original Funding Request and Recommendation was \$1,500,000

Project Reviewer: Lee Adamson

Project Presenter: Steve Marchbanks

This is an update on the Dry Creek project given that the funding deadline from the county is coming up early next year. The Dry Creek project was started by Lehi City eight years ago. The project was planned to be similar to Tibble Fork and offer paddleboarding, swimming etc. Steve stated that the project was planned to be a regional park. The project has been delayed due to various reasons. Weather, budget increases, utility

increases. Steve stated that Dry Creek is still a project that Lehi City wants to build and stated that the city is hoping for an extension on the Dry Creek agreement for another three years. Steve stated that Lehi City has already made significant investment in Dry Creek and they don't want to lose that investment by not completing the project.

Danny Wheeler stated the original proposal showed \$4.5 million total for the project with a \$1.5 million dollar ask from TRCC. Steve said that the city is still planning to spend \$3.5 million but did acknowledge that the city council did pull the funding to divert to other projects. The hope is that the city will have the funding to begin construction within the next year. Steve did mention that the city won't be able to do the floating piers and step pier because of the water level fluctuations.

Kurt Christensen pointed out that the TTAB board is requesting that all projects have an impact study to determine return on investment for the county and tourism in the county. Lee Adamson stated their economic impact indicator is more for events and conferences as opposed to parks and recreation facilities.

There was a question about whether there would be room for food trucks. Steve stated that he didn't think the city would encourage that.

12:05 p.m. Utah County Fair
Project Funding Request: \$250,000
Project Reviewer: Jared Kearns
Project Presenter: Craig Conover

Craig stated that they projected 23,000 more attendees to the fair this year. They doubled the amount of vendors and saw double the revenue from the vendors. The food vendors did very well as well and the fair did collect a portion of that revenue. Sold out the Monster Trucks and Demolition Derby. They saw a 25% increase in the free rodeo. Total fair revenue was \$310,000. Expenses were \$483,000. The ask from TRCC dollars was up to \$250,000 which means they came \$76,000 under that ask.

Craig stated that they doubled the open class for the fair this year. They hope to provide more space for the kids corner next year. Craig stated that he hopes the commissioners will allow him to serve as fair director again.

12:15 p.m. Hale Center Theater- Pleasant Grove City –The Ruth
Project Funding Request: \$5,000,000
Project Reviewer: Chad Linebaugh
Project Presenter: Cody Hale, Christine Petersen, Linda Hale, Jeff Fisher, Mayor Guy Fugal

The theater started 30 years ago by Cody and Linda Hale. The Hale Center theater in Pleasant Grove and Sandy are both 501c3's but are run by different boards. They are two separate non profits. Hale Theater which is currently in Orem is the 4th largest theater in Utah. The new building will be in Pleasant Grove where land was donated by DoTerra.

Jeff pointed out that Utah County is the fastest growing area in Utah according to Kem Gardner. The entertainment and eating out industry is very popular in Utah County. Hale Center Theater has been growing at 5% for the last five years. The theater expansion is needed because of this growth. Jeff stated that 20% of the patrons of the theater come from outside the county. Of that 20%, 10% come from outside of the state.

Moving to Pleasant Grove will also help to keep Utah County residents in our county for theater. The main reason that they moved to Pleasant Grove was because of the land donation from DoTerra. Jeff stated that the building will be owned by Pleasant Grove City and Hale Center Theater will make the bond payment. Hale theater will be a 77,000 square foot building with two theaters. One larger theater and one smaller theater. 1100 seats total. Their current theater is 11,000 square feet. Economic impact right now is \$15 million. The new theater will have a \$50 million economic impact. Estimating a half a million people will visit the new theater.

Jeff stated that a large portion of the theater will go to Hale Education theater to help promote community theater growth in the state. Pleasant Grove City will own the building and will bond using a municipal bond and Hale Center Theater will make bond payments. The building is currently under construction. Building will be complete by the end of 2024. Hoping to open in January 2025. The total project amount is \$56 million.

There was a question asked about food serving using external caterers during specific times. The caterers will be rotated for these events. This is similar to the Founders Club at the Hale Theater in Utah. It was pointed out that this would compete with restaurants. However, there would be 1100 patrons coming to the theater and many of those patrons may eat at restaurants in the area.

The parking will be shared with DoTerra and is an overflow parking area for DoTerra. Mayor Fugal stated that the city expects this will bring a lot of revenue into the city and they are very excited about this project. Christine Petersen is the general counsel for Pleasant Grove and is excited about the private/public partnership. Pleasant Grove City will own the building for the usable life of the building.

Danny Wheeler stated that the ask of \$5 million is very high. If the TTAB Board recommended less than \$5 million, what would that do for the project? Jeff stated that they would have to find private donors to make up the difference. The theater stated that they will rent the building out for private events as well.

1:25 p.m. Sundance Nature Alliance Introduction

Julie Mack introduced the board to the Alliance which is 501c3. Julie talked about their new program called Voices for Nature.

1:30 p.m. Discussion and motions

Utah County Fair

John Garfield made the motion to approve up to \$250,000 for the county fair.

Graydon Pearson seconded. Passed: 6/0

Dry Creek-Lehi City

Danny pointed out that the deadline for funding for Dry Creek according to the current agreement is March of 2024. Lehi City is asking for a three year extension on that agreement. Kurt Christensen stated that a three extension seems like a long time. Lee Adamson stated that Lehi City diverted a lot of the money for Dry Creek to Family Park in the city. Danny Wheeler stated that the original request was centered around making the park a regional park with overflow parking and equipment rental for water activities. Neither of those two items will be part of the project now. Adam Beck was asked what the administrative burden for the delay would be. Adam stated that it would be less time to amend the agreement rather than start with a new project. **Kurt Christensen made a motion to not extend any agreements on the Lehi Dry Creek Project. Motion was seconded by John Garfield. Passed: 6/0**

Hale Theater (The Ruth)- Pleasant Grove

Graydon Pearson stated that its very unusual to see a large land donor with a project like this and to see the city bonding on the project as well. John Garfield pointed out that the ask had increased by \$2.5 million and was the county asking to bear more of the cost than the state or city. Kurt stated that the city is bearing the risk of the bond and Danny heard The applicant says that the city would be more like a \$7 million investment.

John was concerned that the \$5 million ask was too high. Danny agreed with John. There was a discussion about the impact indicator and whether it can gauge the impact on projects like this. Kurt Christensen was asked about his thoughts on the project since he has a hotel right across the street. Kurt stated that he is very excited about the project and that he thinks the theater will positively impact the area as a whole including hotels.

Chad Linebaugh stated maybe the board should consider funding \$2.5 million with the additional ask based on a performance goal to incentivize the theater. Danny Wheeler stated that he is supportive of \$2.5 million rather than the full \$5 million ask. Kurt suggested that perhaps the board approve \$2.5 million as the floor and invite the theater back after an economic impact study is done. **Lee Adamson made a motion to approve \$2.5 million as the floor and the board may support more depending on the results of economic impact study. Motion was seconded by Chad Linebaugh.**
Passed: 5/1 John Garfield was the no vote.

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

2023 Meeting Dates

December 4 – Hyatt Place Provo