

TOURISM TAX ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 23, 2023

Tourism Interim Director Brittany McMichael called the Meeting of the Tourism Tax Advisory Board of Washington County to order at 9:30 AM on Thursday, February 23, 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: Commissioner Victor Iverson, Dorothy Heers, Tracy Welsh, Rich Stehmeier, Nate Wells, Kevin Smith and Ken Neilson. Others in attendance include, Deputy County Attorney Steven Scott, Tourism Interim Director Brittany McMichael, Tourism staff members Sara Otto, Jamie Allen, Leslie Fonger and Chad McWilliams.

WELCOME

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

CONSIDERATION OF DEC. 8, 2022 MINUTES

MOTION: **Motion by Ken Neilson to Approve the December 8, 2022 Minutes. Motion seconded by Rich Stehmeier and carried by a unanimous vote.**

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ms. McMichael introduced Jamie Allen to the board as the new Deputy Clerk who will be taking minutes and providing schedules, updates, etc. for TAB Board meetings and other tourism events involving the board.

Ms. McMichael reported that 2022 TRT was four point nine percent (4.9%) higher than 2021 TRT. (Actual data shows 2022 TRT was 4% below 2021 TRT. A motion was made and accepted on April 27, 2023 to amend these minutes to reflect correct data.)

Hotel ADR is up five percent (5%) from 2021. Hotel RevPar is up one percent (1%) from 2021. Hotel occupancy is down four percent (4%) from 2021. In 2022, Washington County had the third-highest TRT collections of all counties in Utah. Zion National Park visitation was down seven percent (7%) from 2021. Washington County State Park visitation was down twenty-three percent (23%) from 2021. St. George Regional airport visitation was down sixteen percent (16%) from 2021.

Brittany McMichael and other Greater Zion staff members reported on their key initiatives for 2023.

- Move the entire Greater Zion team into the new, County Administration Building, housing the team all under one roof for the first time in five years
- Opening the new, interactive, Greater Zion Visitor Center
- Launching the Land of Forever stewardship initiatives

- Hosting The IRONMAN 70.3 North American Championship, held on May 6, 2023
- Hosting the National Association of Counties Western Interstate Region Conference in May 2023
- Facilitating production of two major motion picture projects to be filmed throughout Washington County
- Rebuilding the recently acquired website, ZionNationalPark.com
- Hosting the Utah Tourism Conference in September, 2023
- Producing a new Vacation Planner
- Facilitating the development of major trail projects including the Zion Corridor trail system, NICA trail system and the Spring Hollow mountain bike trail system

MARKETING REPORT:

Sara Otto reported on the success of the Land of Endurance ad campaign and introduced the Land of Forever Stewardship campaign.

Brittany McMichael introduced the Utah Office of Tourism's, 2023, Mighty Five campaign.

FILM AND INTERNATIONAL UPDATE:

Brittany McMichael spoke about Kevin Costner filming four movie productions, one has already been filmed in Grand County and the additional three are to be filmed in Washington County. The estimated economic impact of filming the two productions is \$90 million dollars.

Ms. McMichael reported that France and Germany should meet or surpass 2019 visitation numbers, the UK will remain a little slower to return to pre-2020 numbers, and visitation from Australia and New Zealand visitor numbers are increasing.

CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING REQUESTS:

Non-Profit Marketing Sponsorship Requests

Arts to Zion is seeking \$10,000 for the printing of 80,000 gallery and museum maps, and the promotion of a traveling Smithsonian Exhibit. The funding recommendation is \$10,000.

The Silver Reef Foundation is seeking \$10,000 for social media marketing and website improvements. The recommendation is \$5,000.

The Southwest Symphony Orchestra is seeking \$10,000 for the creation and promotion of Vivaldi's Four Seasons Video with world-renowned violinist, David Park.

Tuacahn Center for the Arts is seeking \$75,000 for marketing support for Broadway in the Canyon. The recommendation is \$75,000.

Non- Profit Event Funding Requests

The Film and Media Alliance is seeking \$2,000.00 to promote and market the International Film Festival. The recommendation is \$2,000.00.

The St. George Dance Company is seeking \$3,025.00 to promote and market the Red Rock Dance Festival. The recommendation is \$3,025.00.

Kayenta Arts Foundation is seeking \$20,000.00 to promote and market the Festival of the Americas. The recommendation is \$10,000.00.

The World Senior Games is seeking \$55,000.00 for the promotion and marketing of the 2023 World Senior Games. The recommendation is \$55,000.00.

MOTION: Motion by Rich Stehmeier to Recommend Funding as Presented with the exception of the Southwest Symphony Orchestra application which will be recommended for \$10,000. Motion seconded by Ken Neilsen and carried by a unanimous vote.

For Profit Event Requests

Vacation Races is seeking \$60,000 to offset shuttle costs during the Zion Half Marathon. The recommendation is \$5,000.

MOTION: Motion by Tracey Welsh to Recommend \$5,000 for the 2023 Zion Half Marathon and ask that Vacation Races provide a proposal to Washington County for future funding. Motion seconded by Rich Stehmeier and carried by a unanimous vote.

Copper Rock Golf Course is seeking \$50,000 to market and promote the LPGA Epson Copper Rock Championship. The recommendation is \$50,000.

MOTION: Motion by Ken Neilson to Recommend Funding as Presented. Motion seconded by Tracey Welsh and carried by a unanimous vote.

Tuacahn Grant Support Request

Tuacahn is seeking to add seating to the Tuacahn Outdoor Amphitheatre and parking areas to the facility. The recommendation is \$500,000. (To be distributed as \$250,000 in 2023 and \$250,000 in 2024)

MOTION: Motion by Rich Stehmeier to Recommend Funding as Presented. Motion seconded by Dorothy Heers and carried by a unanimous vote.

Destination Development Application Preview

Leslie Fonger presented summary reports for Destination Development projects for review at the April meeting. Projects include:

- Ivins City- Old Highway 91 widening and paved path project
- Santa Clara City- Canyonview Park parking areas and trail alignment
- St. George City- Pioneer Park interpretive trail project

BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS

Rich Stehmeier stated that the airport's drop in visitation was a reflection of the last year's pilot shortages, however, January 2023 visitation had already seen the airport's 4th highest January visitation. Rich then stated that from the airport's initial opening in 2011 to the end of 2021, the airport had received a one-hundred and thirty-eight percent (138%) increase in visitation. He reported that in 2023 the airport would be working on bringing back its LA market flights and looking into the possibility of adding other service markets. He also mentioned that other airlines are interested in SGU airport but pilot shortages will continue to delay any progress. Rich also spoke about the opening of the airport's new lounge, Tailwinds.

OTHER BUSINESS/ NEXT MEETING

- Kevin Smith provided information about Tuacahn's impact and history
- Brittany McMichael provided the 2021 Kem Gardner Study for Washington County and spoke about Greater Zion's plans to create a new economic study, specific to Washington County

The next meeting will be held April 27, 2023.

Minutes prepared by Jamie Allen
Adjourned at 11:50 AM