

Visitors Promotion Committee
February 8, 2017
MINUTES

In attendance: Lynne Ireland, Roland Morgan, Colette Wear, Amy Dickerson, Jeff Cunningham, Becky Perrett, Kerry Eagan, Nicole Fleck-Tooze, Michelle Waite, and Bill Avery

Staff attending: Derek Feyerherm, Jeff Maul, Kyle Fischer, Ron Kalkwarf, Tracie Simpson, Kelsey Bousquet, Derek Bombeck and Rachel O'Donnell

Call to Order and Introductions:

Lynne Ireland called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m. and introductions were made.

CVB Staff Overview and Presentations: Jeff Maul asked each of the CVB staff to give an overview of their backgrounds and their markets. Derek Bombeck stated that he has business and sports management degrees from Nebraska Wesleyan and University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He was on the track team while at UNL. Prior to the CVB, he spent 10 years working for the Nebraska Athletic Department, the last four as Director of Events. He has been with the CVB for over three years and focuses on the sports market. Larger events he has been working on include the State Volleyball and National High School Rodeo Final bids, along with the USA Wrestling World Trials in June. In March Bombeck will attend the National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) Symposium where Lincoln is a candidate for Tourism Destination and he is running to serve on the national board of directors. Colette Wear asked who can vote for the NASC awards. He said that it is a committee of 50 representatives.

Rachel O'Donnell represents the social, military, education, religious and fraternal markets (SMERF). She is a recent graduate of UNL's Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Management programs (HRTM). Prior to the CVB, O'Donnell interned with the Lancaster Event Center and UNL Admissions. One of her focuses is to expand the CVB's Religious Advisory Committee (RAC). Currently RAC's focus has been on women's ministry but O'Donnell wants to expand it to include other focuses such as youth ministries. She wants to expand the military reunion market and is working on itineraries that will highlight what there is to offer to this demographic. O'Donnell serves on the advisory council for Jazz in June, represents the CVB at Rotary East and sits on the Veterans Freedom Music Festival planning committee. Michelle Waite asked how the music festival is promoted as UNL and other colleges have a veteran population. O'Donnell stated the committee is partnering with Alpha Media and is focusing on social media as well.

Kelsey Bousquet has been with the CVB for almost four years and is a graduate of UNL's HRTM program, with minors in leadership and business administration. She interned with the CVB while in college. She focuses on the state association, group tour and hobby markets. Bouquet wants to grow the group tour market and is partnering with counterparts around the state and the Nebraska Tourism Commission. In March there will be a group tour Fam Tour of Southeast Nebraska that the CVB is participating in with the goal of 8-10 operators. The goal is to do these Fam Tours annually. Bousquet recently attended the American Bus Association (ABA) Annual Meeting where she met with tour operators. She completed the pre-requisite requirements for a Certified Travel Industry Specialist (CTIS). She will work to complete this certification over the next year. Bousquet is active in the

community having served on the planning committee for the Nebraska Cattlemen's Ball, board member of EventLNK, and committee member of NSAE and Kiwanis. She is looking to get more engaged with Meeting Planners International. One of her biggest successes has been working with the Nebraska Health Care Association to bring their annual meeting back to Lincoln. It had previously left due to inadequate exhibit space which they will now do at Pinnacle Bank Arena.

Tracie Simpson has been the CVB's Services Coordinator for the past 10 years. She takes over working with an event after the sales team books it. She offers services such as registration assistance, name badges, lines up dignitaries, welcome banners, etc. Simpson also oversees the Visitors Center in the Haymarket, the Be A Tourist In Your Own Hometown campaign, and the service teams that works conferences. Additionally, Simpson assists the sales team by doing retention calls for events that routinely hold events in Lincoln to ensure they are returning to the city. Maul pointed out that Simpson had previously worked for the State Fair for seven years. Ireland complimented Simpson on her work in nurturing the Lincoln Attractions and Museum Association. Waite asked if Simpson could assist with coming up with ideas for things to do/see when UNL is looking to onboard senior employees such as Vice Chancellors. Simpson said she would be happy to assist.

Approval of November Minutes: Ireland asked for a motion to approve the November minutes. Becky Perrett made the motion to approve. Motion was seconded by Amy Dickerson. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of January Financials: Ron Kalkwarf gave the financial report. Income was ahead of budget at \$1,222,880 due to advertising from the Visitors Guide and a State Tourism grant. This income was offset by the correlating expenses. Medical insurance is under budget due to premiums staying flat. Net income for July 2016 through January 2017 is \$24,964. Dickerson made the motion to accept the financials. Motion was seconded by Roland Morgan. Motion passed unanimously.

Amended By-Laws: Kerry Eagan reviewed amended by-laws for the Lancaster County Visitors Promotion Committee. The primary need to amend the by-laws was into include an ex-officio seat on the committee for Lincoln Parks and Recreation and to correct an oversight to include the Chief Administrative Officers for the Lancaster County Board. An additional change was to include the purpose of the committee to review from the County Visitors Improvement Fund. Ireland asked Eagan if the changes will be acted on by the commissioners. Eagan stated the board already acted on the amended by-laws and were effective as of January 3, 2017. Waite asked if the reason to add Parks and Recreation was due to it being an attraction. Eagan said the addition was due partly to the number of grants the department has asked for over the years and due to the closeness the department had with both city and county government.

VPC Grant Guideline Discussion: Maul discussed the proposed grant guideline changes as recommended by a smaller group of VPC members who have been meeting to review the application. The goal is to clarify the process to help applicants and to better delineate between the major and minor grants. The process is for the VPC to review the suggested guideline revisions and make a final recommendation at the May meeting. Proposed changes include better defining how many requests an applicant can have. Minor grants will be able to apply for one a year and major multi-year grants applicants will not be able to apply until their previous request has been completed and paid out. Another revision includes further outlining that major grant applications must receive initial blessing from the County Commissioners and then go in-front of the VPC. Clarification will be made on what

general maintenance or replacement of an existing component will not be allowed under IRS rules. This addition is recommended by the Nebraska Tourism Commission and is already included in the grant guidelines of nearly 75% of other Nebraska counties. The timeline to submit and the reviewing of grants is also being adjusted to include minor grant applications due by April 30th and October 31st for reviewing at the May and November VPC meetings. Major grants will be due January 31st or July 31st with reviewing at the February and August meetings. Also added will be the requirement to provide a project budget that requires discussion on whether private funds will be used for the project. Another suggestion is to include requirement of proof of county recognition. Maul also said that a revised multiplier will be included but is waiting on updated formulas from Nebraska Tourism Commission. Waite agreed that a better multiplier is needed that may better reflect overall attendance versus just overnight stays. Perrett suggested that the multiplier should be based on the lodging tax coming back into the fund versus overall economic impact. Ireland asked the committee to review the suggested changes and to report back to Maul any additional comments. Waite encouraged that the final document be disseminated to all past applicants to ensure they know of the changes.

Directors Report: Maul referred everyone to the 2017 Visitors Guide in their packets noting that 80,000 copies were produced. In addition to tourists, the guide goes in Chamber relocation packets, corporate offices, etc. Maul said planning is underway with Lincoln Calling to create a SXSW feel. Staff of the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development will be in Austin for SXSW in March and will be promoting Lincoln to job seekers. Continued planning is underway with events for NE150. USA Wrestling World Trials will be in Lincoln at Devaney Center June 9-10, 2017. Maul recognized Dickerson and the CVB sales team for their collaborating in the successful bid of National High School Rodeo Finals in 2020 and 2021. The event will bring 1,700 competitors and an estimated annual impact of \$16 million to Lincoln. This bid would not have been possible without the VPC and County Board approving \$3 million in upgrades to Lancaster Event Center. Dickerson thanked the committee and Bill Avery for their support through this process and recognized the community effort including UNL that went into the bid. Maul reminded everybody of the Solar Eclipse happening on August 21st and outlined the events happening at Haymarket Park. NSAA Championships were next discussed with Maul stating that Lincoln was successful on a three year extension of State Volleyball, contract renewal on State Baseball and Football and successfully hosting the first ever Unified Bowling Championships. Maul said that Lincoln's support through ticket sales make the city an easy sale. The 2017 Legislative Session was discussed. Maul reviewed legislative bills of interest include LB115 & LB379 (event funding from general fund), LB222 (redistricting of Tourism Commission seats), LB312 (tax on fine art purchases by museums), LB373 (tax on event registration), and LB477 (misleading gas prices). Discussion on these bills occurred between VPC members.

Derek Feyerherm gave a CVB sales update. The CVB issued 188 leads and proposals in 2016 with 75% encompassing new business for Lincoln and 78% were regional or national. There were 103 booked events for 36,261 booked room nights. This was lower than Feyerherm projected but noted there was carry-over contracts into 2017 that he initially believed would have been finalized in 2016. Feyerherm discussed various 2016 trends including a six year low on lost business, large focus on individual hotel contracts versus citywide business and the largest increases were in the association and hobby markets. Feyerherm said there has been 23 leads for 20,569 room nights issued in 2017. Additionally 14 events have been booked for 16,914 hotel rooms. Feyerherm projects a record year in 2017 in booked business. Upcoming tradeshow was next discussed with a summary of Bousquet's attendance at the American Bus Association Annual Meeting in January with 21 appointments. Feyerherm said the next tradeshow will be National Association of Sports Commission Symposium in

March with Bombeck attending. Hotel surveys with general managers are still ongoing with primarily north, airport and downtown hotels remaining. Feyerherm said these one-on-ones have been beneficial. Lincoln.org has received an enhanced photo library for meeting planners and hotels to utilize. Feyerherm stated that the website hotels use to respond to leads was also overhauled. Marketing materials and proposals will be getting updated in the upcoming months.

New Business: Ireland referenced the other materials in their packets. She also discussed the events around NE150 including an official postage stamp being revealed for Nebraska on March 1st with other ceremonies including those headed by the governor and secretary of state. Ireland said that recently announced was a mobile childrens' museum which will be traveling around the state and will be in Lincoln on September 22-23. Dickerson asked if there was a website with all of the activities. Ireland referenced www.ne150.org.

Adjourn: Being no further business, Wear made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Perret and passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 2:46pm.