



City of Kirkland
Tourism Development Committee (TDC)
Meeting Minutes
June 6, 2013
9:00-10:00 am
Norkirk Room

Present: Toby Nixon (Chair), Dan Mayer, Jac Cooper, Kathryn McNeill, Maxim Khokhlov, Belinda Jensen, Ellen Miller-Wolfe (staff), Philly Hoshko (staff)

Absent: Michelle Quisenberry

Guest: Penny Sweet

Approval of Minutes

The meeting began at 9:03 am. The committee approved the minutes of May 2, 2013 (Dan moved, Belinda seconded, unanimous).

Farewell and Thank You to Penny Sweet

Penny expressed her fondness of working with the committee and is excited to pass the torch to Toby for all the great things he will do to move the committee forward.

Introduction of New TDC Chair – Toby Nixon

Toby reviewed his meeting with Penny and staff and was most curious about the legal constraints in which the committee can operate. He reviewed key notes from the lodging tax webinar and that he is interested in the extent to which the City is required to record the numbers and the methodology for documenting the numbers as accurately as possible.

Toby presented his professional background and that he is excited for the learning opportunities that will come with being on the TDC and is looking forward to working with the committee to attract more people to Kirkland.

In regards to Toby's question regarding reporting and tracking of tourists, Penny mentioned that we do better reporting than other cities and that it is hard to measure.

Ellen mentioned that we receive the numbers that we report from the event organizers and most of the events guesstimate the numbers that they report. Ellen also mentioned the possibility of doing a workshop for applicants to assist them in correctly completing the application and part of this workshop could offer suggestions on counting tactics. Toby mentioned that the State was asked for suggestions on how to measure tourists and that they seemed to not have any good suggestions.

LTAC Funding Application

Ellen reviewed the history of the legislative process and the concerns of if day trippers were going to be counted as tourists. Current legislation does count day trippers. Ellen also explained the competing views of the Washington Lodging Association and Cities. Cities want to fund all sorts of events and WLA is most interested in events that result in overnight stays. End result of the legislation ended up being something for everyone. AWC staff person hinted that the legislation would not be revisited anytime soon but city staff believes it will.

Additional discussion occurred around how far events can go to mine the data that needs to be reported. There is a belief that it would be an invasion of privacy to heavily push questionnaires and surveys. Hotels have a competitive business interest in keeping their demographics proprietary.

Now that operations can be funded, the Kirkland TDC needs to determine if they want to place criteria to place on what type of operations funding can be used for. Philly will research and present the type of operational expenses that were funded in 2012.

Ellen explained the application process and that the City Council is locked into recommendations from the LTAC. The City Council can adjust the amounts but is not able to add new events to be funded.

Unforeseen Fund

There was a discussion around if Kirkland's unforeseen fund will withstand the allowable legislative process. The unforeseen fund currently operates on a rolling basis but is open to anyone to apply. The concern is that it may need to become a more wide-based announcement and application process instead of a decision based on a single applicant. Jac asked if in the formal process you could specify an undesignated amount that is approved by Council and allowed to be awarded at the TDC's digression.

Ellen will further speak with AWC on Kirkland's unforeseen fund and the parameters in which we can operate outside of the formal funding process.

The question of if the rest of the tourism budget was under the same scrutiny as the event funding was raised and Ellen mentioned her conversations with other cities and that the intention of this legislation is for outside agency funding.

Philly summarized the research that she conducted on other municipality's LTAC funding and mentioned that our application is very similar and many of the applications included more clarifying information including background information, definitions, detailed insurance and eligibility requirements.

Philly also described the timeline of finalizing the application. The state will not have the reporting information that needs to be included on the application until July 1st. Philly will update application and send to TDC for review shortly after so TDC can review before July 11 meeting,

Dan reiterated the fact that since we are given out fairly small grants we need to be conscious of the amount of hoops we make people jump through. A lot of people don't have a lot of capacity to track these items. Jac expressed his interest in the money being used as seed money for new events to invest in the new ideas and events.

Toby mentioned on the webinar that they did have some slides regarding what would be audited.

Updates

Event Policy Status

Ellen mentioned event policy status and that Parks is taking the lead. The TDC will have ability to talk about the recommendation to Council before it is taken to council.

Photography RFP

Ellen mentioned that staff is interviewing photographer over the next two weeks. Budget is \$5-7k and will cover 2 days of shooting and organization of the photos. Artists will maintain the copyright but city can use as needed without having to use a photo credit.

Toby asks if we have staff and unfortunately, we have tried to do this for so many years with staff and volunteers with no results.

Ellen mentioned desire to ask for photos in LTAC application. Dan suggested not requiring it up front but strongly recommending it as part of the reporting.

Due to the budget not being able to cover a comprehensive shot list, staff will develop a strategy to obtain needed photos to acquire a comprehensive collection of photos to use in promotional collateral, website and social media promotions, media inquiries, print advertising and other applications.

Photo outreach may include asking events and businesses for photos and staff volunteering weekends to cover events and activities.

Tourism Networking Meeting, June 20th

The next tourism networking meeting is June 20th and will take place on the Argosy cruise boat parked at Marina Park.

LTAC Funded Event Review

KAST

Penny thought event was great. It felt more professional this year.

Strong effort to increase coordination between run and KAST but unsure of if at the end of day not so much overlap but it was a great awareness about each event.

SIFF

Gala was great! More well-organized than it has been in the past. Dan mentioned that SIFF will likely bring in about 4200 people total. 1-5 movies that will sell out. Volterra did a great job of the opening. SIFF also did a community free movie and a special event at Volterra.

Philly mentioned frustration of not getting film schedule until 2 days before the opening. Penny mentioned that she has heard from Renton that they also have trouble getting information from SIFF early and that they need to be chased down.

Toby mentioned he has heard on the radio directors mentioning films in Kirkland.

Dan mentioned that neither KAST or SIFF really draw people from 50miles or more away. The events raise the exposure of the community but we need to determine ways to quantify the tourism ROI.

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 am.

Minutes prepared by Philly Hoshko

Future Meeting Dates:

Thursday, July 11th (moved to second Thursday because 1st Thursday is 4th of July)

Thursday, August 1st

Thursday, September 5th

Thursday, October 3rd
Thursday, November 7th
Thursday, December 12th