



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

**MINUTES OF THE
TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING
HELD APRIL 19, 2023 AT 8:00 AM
OKANAGAN ROOM (COUNCIL CHAMBER)**

PRESENT: VOTING:

Councillor Durning, Council Appointed
Richard Rolke, Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider
Bobby Bissessar, Accommodation Provider
Dauna Kennedy, Arts & Culture
Peter Kaz, Downtown Vernon Association
Bradley Callihoo, Okanagan Indian Band
Mike Van Horne, Golf
Kat Boloten, Accommodation Provider
Janine Collard, Accommodation Provider
Troy Hudson, Ski
Clara Snedden, Accommodation Provider
Brett Woods, Biking

NON-VOTING:

Ian Jenkins, Silverstar

GUESTS:

Kris Fuller, Vernon Winter Carnival
Josh Welter, SCSNO
Ben Suranko, NOCS
Cassandra Zerebeski, Silverstar
Shawna Patenaude, Arts Council of the North Okanagan

ABSENT: Gale Woodhouse, Arts & Culture

STAFF: Hannah Lucich, Tourism Marketing Coordinator
Hilary Irvine, Tourism Marketing Coordinator
Jennifer Pounder, Committee Clerk
Karen Savill, Visitor Services Coordinator
Torrie Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism

ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

**LAND
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

As Chair of the City of Vernon's Tourism Commission, and in the spirit of this gathering, I recognize the City of Vernon is located in the traditional territory of the Syilx people of the Okanagan Nation.

Before the adoption of the Agenda, T. Silverthorn reminded all guests they are only allowed to speak during a meeting if specifically addressed.

**ADOPTION OF THE
AGENDA**

Moved by M. Van Horne, seconded by Councillor Durning:

THAT the agenda of the Tourism Commission meeting for April 19, 2023 be adopted:

CARRIED

**ADOPTION OF THE
MINUTES**

Moved by D. Kennedy, seconded by R. Rolke:

THAT the minutes for the Tourism Commission meeting of March 15, 2023 be adopted.

CARRIED

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

**EVENT
SUBCOMMITTEE
UPDATE**

Moved to the May, 2023 Tourism Commission meeting.

**COMMISSION
MEMBER UPDATE**

T. Silverthorn updated the Commission on vacant, and up-coming vacant member positions:

- Food & beverage - Vacant
- Events / sports – Vacant
- B. Woods will be leaving the Tourism Commission in July, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS:

MANAGER UPDATE

T. Silverthorn provided the following update:

- E. Gorman has left the City of Vernon. They are actively working on filling the position of Administrative Assistant.

- The Trails Capital of BC group is continuing to meet. A reminder that the RDNO is the owner of the "Trails Capital" title and Tourism Vernon owns the logo. We are currently working on guidelines for a shareable logo.
- Tourism Vernon has become the title sponsor of the Sundog Arts & Entertainment Festival in the fall. There will be a kick-off event in Polson park. Keep your eyes and ears open!
- MRDT & Telus data update:
 - 2022 welcomed just under 1.5 million visitors to Vernon.
 - 2022 MRDT was approximately \$1.5 million; works out to roughly \$1.00 per tourist.
 - Duration of stay during the shoulder season is our biggest challenge.
 - Silverstar data will be available sometime this year as they just started collecting MRDT.
- H. Lucich informed the Commission that Telus now has an online dashboard for the MRDT data. It is interactive and provides monthly updates. Telus pulls out commuter information from the visitor numbers.
- We will be asking all hoteliers to report their occupancy numbers. There are only three hotels currently reporting making the data we have incorrect.

J. Welter provided the following update on events he is currently working on:

- Everest Canadian Seniors Curling Championship being held in Vernon in December, 2023.
- Site visit with Quidditch Canada booked during the May 20th weekend; will share a link with information regarding Quidditch. The event will be held during the second week in November, 2023.
- Vernon is one of six applicants to host the 2024 U18 Female Hockey National Championships. The host will be announced at the end of May, 2023.

**ROUNDTABLE
DISCUSSION**

A roundtable discussion ensued asking for members thoughts on the Tourism Vernon Industry Conference (TVIC):

- **C. Larsen** thanked the Commission for the event.
- **Councillor Durning** – The event was amazing. Thank you to the Commission.
- **M. Van Horne** – Fantastic event. Open dialogue. Good information.
- **C. Snedden** – I enjoyed the day. It was great.
- **R. Rolke** – Well done. Great information. Suggest a chance for people in the audience to ask questions of presenters on stage.
- **P. Kaz** – Suggested having a pad of paper on the table for idea suggestions or questions.
- **T. Silverthorn** said Destination BC uses the Slido app for audience questions. Great idea for next year.
- **Mayor Cumming** – Good conference. The Trail BC website is active, easy and very helpful. Over time, as these pieces get built, it will come to the Commission.
- **T. Silverthorn** – We will be sending “Trail Capital of BC” logo information to all Commission members on suggestion they post it on their websites.
- **B. Bissessar** – Last year was great, this year was even better. This is the only conference that has a spotlight on youth activity; they are the future of tourism.
- **J. Collard** – The conference was a different level of sophistication this year; it has gone up. She is glad it is a full day now.
- **H. Lucich** – It was a good day. She agrees with using a cell phone application to have questions answered.
- **K. Savill** – Catering did an amazing job. The AV team was super helpful. Had feedback for next year to have an Arts & Culture panel and an afternoon cookie break.
- **D. Kennedy** – The conference was great. The moderated sessions opened the flexibility of topics. In Arts & Culture right

now, a lot of things are on the verge of happening. The Culture Centre and cultural branding, RDNO has the overarching brand logo and website. It will help with branding and advertising. Economic impact study completed, will bring information to the Commission soon. Coming up in 2025 there will be a Provincial conference for the Museums Association which will bring 300 delegates to town during the shoulder season for three to five days.

- **C. Zerebeski** – It was a fun day. Encouraging more audience participation is always a good thing.
- **T. Hudson** – Everything was exceptional.
- **J. Welter** – It was great. I enjoyed it. It was a good event where you know most people and get to meet a few as well.
- **C. Larsen** – Suggests having a panel of five or six Tourism Commission members at the conference. Good to hear what the Commission does and why we do it. Great recruitment opportunity.

Commission members were asked to comment on summer pacing:

- **M. Van Horne** – The season has started out fantastic. Numbers are up. We are looking more public oriented with a ratio of 75% public attendance vs. 25% members.
- **C. Snedden** – Summer 2023 is looking busy. There are conferences and summer sporting events coming up. Beginning of May, 2023, the atrium and restaurant will hopefully be opening.
- **R. Rolke** – There is a Community Expo this Saturday, April 22 from 9:00am until 4:00pm at KalTire Place.
- **B. Callihoo** – The Okanagan Indian Band has been very busy. We recently had Council elections. New members are transitioning into their new roles. We have been working with partners to help become an asset to the region.
- **K. Boloten** – 2023 is looking good. Completed some renovations in January 2023. Virtual tours available starting the end of May 2023.
- **P. Kaz** – Downtown Days went well. Next Downtown Days is during Comic Con on May 6. Sunshine Festival is coming back on June 17. July and August, we will be at the 2900 Plaza. There will

be entertainers in the evening and lots of exciting events, including a market on Saturday and line dancing on Wednesday.

- **I. Jenkins** – Sunday, April 15 was the last day for skiing. Early days to predict summer. BC cup coming back and Crankworks on August long weekend. Lots of events coming up as long as the snow melts. Still over two meter base of snow.
- **B. Bissessar** – on par for same as last year.
- **J. Collard** – On par to be the same to last year. 200 groups booked.
- **B. Suranko** – Social rides and virtual rides start in May. Lots of sponsorship opportunities for food. Virtual series is looking for gift sponsors. May 26-28, BikeFest in Polson Park. More community dig days for trail maintenance; always looking for volunteers. Confirmed that NOCS maintains well over 100 kms of trails. Midsummer is back for this year on July 19. A lot of tourists come for this event. We are looking for sponsors for the live auction. Riot on The Roof event will be held in August.
- **D. Kennedy** – Midsummer's Eve of the Art's fundraiser happening on July 19. Riot of the Roof event on August 26.
- **S. Patenaude** – May 27 fundraiser dinner "Murder in Peachville". Rail Trail Plein Air event on June 11; teaming up with NOCS. Cycling, running, the rail trail, art; great combination.
- **C. Zerebeski** – Cultural Community kick-off on June 24-25. Wine Fest from August 10-13 and a Craft Beer & Cider Fest on September 10.
- **T. Hudson** – Spring Fling happening May 4-7. June 1 the Super Early Bird passes go on sale. Events happening in 2023 will bring approximately 1200 people to town.
- **P. Kaz** wanted to remind the Commission that the 2900 Plaza is a venue for everyone to use. If anyone wants to do a class or run an event, let him know.
- **Mayor Cumming** – Thanked the Commission. Everyone here and all the staff behind you are amazing.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Tourism Commission is set for **May 17, 2023** at **8:00 a.m.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Tourism Commission adjourned at 9:00 a.m. by call of the Chair.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:


Chair