



## THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

### MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING HELD JULY 19, 2023 AT 8:00 AM OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM, CITY HALL

**PRESENT:** VOTING:

Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider, Chair  
Richard Rolke, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce  
Gale Woodhouse, Arts & Culture  
Clara Snedden, Accommodation Provider (8:03 am)  
Mike Van Horne, Golf  
Councillor Durning, Council Appointed  
Kris Fuller, Sports & Events  
Gerran Thorhaug, Restaurant  
Janine Collard, Attractions

NON-VOTING:

Ian Jenkins, Ski

**ABSENT:** Mayor Cumming

Kat Boloten, Accommodation Provider  
Dauna Kennedy, Arts & Culture  
Peter Kaz, Marketing & Events, Downtown Vernon Association  
Bradley Callihoo, Okanagan Indian Band  
Bobby Bissessar, Accommodation Provider

**STAFF:** John Perrott, Manager, Economic Development and Tourism

Karen Savill, Visitor Services Coordinator  
Hanna Lucich, Tourism Marketing Coordinator  
Hilary Irvine, Tourism Marketing Coordinator  
Jordan Shannon, Tourism Summer Student  
Jade Adams-Longworth, Secretary I – Corporate Services

**ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 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.*

**ADOPTION OF THE  
AGENDA**

Moved by Gale Woodhouse, seconded by Kris Fuller:

THAT the agenda of the July 19, 2023 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

**CARRIED.**

**ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

Moved by Gale Woodhouse, seconded by Kris Fuller:

THAT the minutes of the June 21, 2023 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

**CARRIED.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

*Kris Fuller and Mike Van Horne declared a conflict of interest and left the meeting at 8:03 am.*

*Clara Snedden entered the meeting at 8:03 am.*

**CO-OP MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Visitor Services Coordinator and the Tourism Marketing Coordinator provided Co-operation Marketing Recommendations and the following points were noted:

- Each year Tourism Vernon has a budget for the Co-op Marketing Program, where the funds go directly back into helping local tourism businesses.
  - Each year there are two intakes; one in the spring another in the summer.
  - This year's budget was \$100,000.00 broken into two sums of \$50,000.00 per intake.
- This intake there were 11 applications in total.
- The Sub-committee met and, based on the guidelines of the 50/50 Co-Op Marketing Program, have made the recommendation to allocate funds to the organizations below:

The Outback Lakeside Vacation Homes – \$10,000

Creative Chaos – \$3,870 \*

The Rise Golf Course – \$5,000

Okanagan Spirits Craft Distillery – \$10,000

Canadian Wildlife Museum – \$3,500

Okanagan Skydive – \$6,630 \*

O'Keefe Ranch – \$2,500 \*

Sparkling Hill Resort – \$3,000

Vernon & District Funtastic Sports Society – \$5,000 \*

Total: \$49,500

\* When reviewing the applications there were four applications that submitted a request for funding for advertising that are not covered because of the guidelines (i.e. local print distribution, local radio ads, content creation, local signage) – these organizations \* received funding only to cover the costs that fall within the guidelines.

- When the Sub-Committee met, two of the applications stood out as Events and the Sub-committee recommends using the Sponsorship Budget for these applications:
  - Bush Babes & Bros Trail Running – \$2,700
  - Vernon Winter Carnival – \$10,000
  - Total: \$12,700
- Insight was given on a plan to re-vamp the guidelines and application for the 50/50 Co-op Marketing Program in 2024.

Moved by Claus Larsen, seconded by Councillor Durning:

THAT the Tourism Commission supports the funding allocation for Tourism Vernon's Co-op Marketing Program, Intake Period 2, as presented.

**CARRIED.**

*Kris Fuller and Mike Van Horne re-entered the meeting at 8:19 am.*

**MANAGERS UPDATE**

The Manager of Tourism provided an update and the following points were noted:

**Tourism Vernon Project Updates**

Website Rebuild

- Currently in the creation process of the new website.
- Looking to bring in a better mobile site experience, simplify information, decrease long loading page time, and promote ease of use.
- Went through the RFP (Request for Proposal) process and ended up going with a company called MMGY Origin. A preview of the website was given, and the following was noted:
  - The new colour scheme was shown.
    - Still in alliance with the City of Vernon's branding, and the City of Vernon Logo will still be in use.
    - The colours chosen are more natural tones, and are colours that you will see in the natural surroundings and landscape in Vernon.
  - Draft layouts for the new pages for the website were displayed. A rough idea was given on how it may look on a mobile device vs a desktop.
    - Looking to create an exceptional scrolling appearance, with ease of use.
    - Wanting to rely on the imagery of our region to shine.
    - Making sure to put in little whimsical details.

Brand Refresh

- Just started in the re-branding process. The main goals are to:
  - Develop a brand strategy, brand positioning and align Tourism’s new web creative with an overarching brand expression for Tourism Vernon.
  - Build a brand that unites Vernon’s experiences, places and people with a vision and purpose that will sustain them for years to come.
- Glad to be working with MMGY Origin throughout this process.
- The Primary Market for the brand refresh is the Active Explorer, 35-55 years of age. Trying to bring in more vibrancy.
- Tourism’s Brand Refresh Strategy



- Clarification was given that this will be a refresh for Tourism Vernon and its website, and the City’s website will remain unchanged at this point in time.
- Looking to elevate the Tourism Vernon brand and website to establish independence visually, while maintaining cohesive ties to the City.
  - Marketing is all about the audiences – Tourism Audience vs. Municipal Audience.
  - Speaks to the difference between the programs and services provided to those two entities.
- The website is to soft launch in October, before the big release of the brand refresh.
  - The question was posed whether the brand launch can be pushed up or if the website launch could be delayed so they can be launched together.
    - This option is being considered by staff
- Clarification was given on whether or not the general public will be consulted before the website goes live – MMGY Origin does do development testing with focus groups, and bases the creation and alterations on supplementary data.

The Manager of Economic Development and Tourism, and the Manager of Tourism provided information on the 2024 Budget and the following points were noted:

- Clarification was given on the budget process and timelines as a whole – how each is formulated, questioned and then endorsed by Council near the end of the year.
- Economic factors that are contributing to the budget for the next year are:

**Tailwinds**

- Resilient travel sentiment
- Pent-up demand
- Lifting of COVID-19 measures
- Resilient domestic destination

**Headwinds**

- Surging Inflation
  - Slowed growth, and possible recession
  - Travel disruptions, and labour shortages
  - Russia-Ukraine conflict continues
- Tourism Vernon's Goals in the next year are to:
    - Increase year-round visitation
    - Increased visitor satisfaction
    - Increased stakeholder engagement
    - Increased community support for tourism
  - With the 2024 Budget planning commencing, the Commission was asked for professional insight on how it would be best to divide resources on the following budget points:
    1. Travel Trade
    2. Meetings and Business Events
    3. Sport and Event Tourism
    4. Travel Media, Journalists and Influencers

The Committee discussed the four Budget Points and the following was noted:

- Prioritizing these items will be helpful for assigning staff resources.
- Sport and Event Tourism, and Travel Media have been most resilient sectors recently.
- Meetings and Business Events are struggling to recover, even at the Provincial and Federal levels.
- Changes have been made in the way Business is done post COVID, connecting via zoom or skype is a more common practice now. It is more convenient to attend a regional meeting virtually then to arrange travel.
- Historically, the budget was roughly broken down to:
  - 75% Travel Media
  - 25% Sport and Event Tourism
- Insight into what sectors are currently driving tourism right now would be useful from hoteliers.
- Information and policies from other Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO's), in regards to budgetary distribution, could be a useful comparison.

**ADDITIONAL  
MEETING – AUGUST  
2023**

Moved by Claus Larsen, seconded by Richard Rolke:

THAT the Tourism Commission schedule an additional meeting to be held in August 2023.

**CARRIED.**

**INFORMATION ITEMS:**

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting for the Tourism Commission is tentatively scheduled for **August 16, 2023**.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting of the Tourism Commission adjourned at 9:21 am by call of the Chair.

**CERTIFIED CORRECT:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chair