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MINUTES

Economic Development, Tourism & Film Commission (EDTFC) Regular Meeting via Teleconference* Tuesday, April 27, 2021 – 10:00 A.M.

***As authorized by Governor Newsome’s Executive Order N-25-20, dated March 17, 2020, this meeting will be held via teleconferencing with members of the Commission attending from separate locations. There will not be a physical location of the meeting open to the public. This altered format is in observance of recent recommendations by local officials that certain precautions be taken, including social distancing, to address the threat of COVID-19.**

Commissioners present: Michael Vanderhurst, Sarah Walsh, Scott Burkard, Erinn Wells

Commissioners absent: Geoff McQuilkin, Steve Morrison, Wendy Schneider

Staff: Alicia Vennos, Jeff Simpson, Liz Grans, Morgan Terrell

Guests: Supervisor Rhonda Duggan, Bryan Wheeler, Ralph Lockhart

1. Call to order. Vice Chair Michael Vanderhurst called the meeting to order at 10:07 am.
2. Introductions and announcements. Round-table introductions were made.
3. Opportunity for the Public to address the Commission.
Mr. Wheeler gave an update on COVID-19 vaccinations and cases. He reported the positivity rate is improving, and Public Health is primarily focused on vaccinations. Mono County has an excellent vaccination percentage, and vaccine clinics are now open to 16-to-18-year old’s, potentially opening to 12-to-15-year old very soon. Second homeowners in Mono County are also welcome to get vaccinated.
4. Approval of the Minutes of the January 26, 2021 and March 30, 2021 meetings.
Sarah Walsh motioned to approve both sets of Minutes. Erin Wells seconded. All in favor, no abstentions; Minutes for January 26, 2021 and March 30, 2021 both approved 4-0.
5. Monthly Financial/Budget report.
 - a. FY 21-22 Budget – Department budgets were submitted to Finance on April 9; meeting with Finance Director Dutcher and CAO Lawton is scheduled for April 29. Ms. Vennos reported that FY 21-22 tourism marketing budget, based on conservative TOT projections, increased from \$182,000 to \$276,000 (2017 level). This allows reimplementations of marketing strategies that were put on hold due to the pandemic. Economic Development manages five budget units; the primary focus is on supporting sustainable tourism, responsible recreation, public health protocols, and aiding with business recovery.
Mr. Vanderhurst gave a brief update on the EU, its process for reopening and identifying countries that are safer or “green” for travel which includes the US. As California has a high vaccination rate, there is optimism that our local tourism economy will bounce back more quickly than projected because of the potential return of European visitors.

6. Economic Development and Tourism report.

- a. Tier status; Events and gatherings restrictions: Ms. Vennos mentioned that the promising move for the County into Yellow Tier will help with planning and success of events and gatherings this summer/fall.
- b. Collateral Update -2021 Visitor Guide; Backroads Guide; Fall Color Guide; Fishing Map; Community Maps: Ms. Vennos reported the 2021 Visitor Guide was printed and distributed countywide prior to Fishing Opener. The revised Mono County Fishing Map will be here within the week. Staff is working on revisions to the Backroads Guide and, with partners, on revisions to the Eastern Sierra Fall Color Guide. The June Lake Community Map has also been printed and was well-received by June Lake businesses.
- c. Dispersed Camping Summit Update: Ms. Vennos reported that a large multi-agency group from across Mono and Inyo counties is working on managing the dispersed camping issues. Ms. Vennos is heading up the Education Subcommittee and materials are in process of being designed, in conjunction with the Map Subcommittee, to help develop a one-stop-shop website for Eastern Sierra camping info.
- d. Local, State, Federal business assistance programs: Mr. Simpson provided an overview of all federal and state assistance programs, including the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, EIDL, California Relief Program (Rounds 5 and 6), and Shuttered Venues Grant program.
- e. Update regarding application for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) CARES Act – CV1, 2, 3 for Microenterprise Financial Assistance Program for small businesses: Mr. Simpson reported the County's CV1 application was submitted in September 2020; approval is still pending. CV2/CV3 application has also been submitted.

7. Mono County Fish & Wildlife Commission update -Jeff Simpson

Mr. Simpson reported he has scheduled a workshop with Board of Supervisors on May 11 to discuss the Fish & Wildlife Commission bylaws, resolutions, structure, purpose, and challenges. He also reported that accessible front-country lakes were stocked with trout prior to opening day. Staff is doing their best to communicate and educate anglers on the new CDFW fishing regulations, and the new fishing map with detailed regs by body of water is at the printer and will be distributed next week.

8. Film Commission update – Alicia Vennos

Ms. Vennos reported she was invited to tour the NBC Olympian interview set at Canyon Lodge and it was impressive. Subaru filmed and stayed in Bridgeport and Mammoth Lakes, filming at various locations - Buckeye Road, Nicely's in Lee Vining, Blacks Pond, etc. Ms. Vennos is also working on verbiage for the FilmMonoCounty.com website that advises commercial productions of their responsibility to portray responsible outdoor recreation, off-roading, and sustainable tourism practices.

9. Project Status Update, including public relations, advertising/social media, websites, and tradeshow/conferences.

Ms. Grans reported that reimbursements will be processed shortly for the Historical Society Grant Fund recipients and the Performance and Visual Arts Grant recipients. Ms. Grans also gave an update on adding BookDirect.com to the website, so visitors will be able to connect to all individual lodging reservation systems from MonoCounty.org website. In addition, she and Ms. Terrell are working on updating existing content and adding new content to the website. A press release for the fishing opener and E Newsletter are being prepared.

10. Commissioner Reports.

- Mr. Burkard reported all businesses in Walker & Coleville are now open, and Antelope Valley had a busy fishing opener despite the weather. The Lions Club Cow Pasture Golf Tournament will be happening on May 1st, and the Lions Club is also working on organizing a Citizens Day sometime in mid-June. He also reported that the Eastern Sierra ATV/UTV Jamboree will be held early September – registration opened two weeks ago; already have 100 people signed up. Goal is 200 participants.

- Ms. Wells reported business levels in Bridgeport are very good. Everything is currently open, and \$28,000 was raised for Bridgeport Old-fashioned 4th of July celebrations. There is also a new business opening called Bloomtown Flowers.
- Ms. Walsh reported that fishing opener in June Lake was successful. There was a positive buzz in town, and it was feeling a bit more 'normal.' Alpine Deli is currently under remodel, and there are more food options popping up in town including La Parilla food truck at JLB, Balanced Rock Grill, and Epic Café. Ms. Walsh added that June Lake Loop Chamber of Commerce is working with a marketing company on rebranding with the "Expect the UNexpected" campaign, new logo, and merchandise.
- Mr. Vanderhurst mentioned that Community Coffee is scheduled for Thursday April 29th, and Mammoth Lakes Tourism and Town Council workshop will be taking place Wednesday April 28th at 6:40pm to discuss FY 21/22 MLT deliverables. He also reported that MLT is contributing \$100,000 to the Mammoth Host Program, which is a program where ambassadors interact with and educate visitors around town.

11. Call for agenda items for next regular meeting.

12. Adjourn the meeting and reconvene in regular session at 10:00 a.m. on May 25, 2021 via teleconference.
Mr. Vanderhurst adjourned the meeting at 11:43 am.