

Lodging Tax Advisory Meeting
August 29, 2014
Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Erik Erichsen, Shelli Robb-Kahler, Toni Skinner, Marcella Stachurski, Barbara Hanna. Attending by phone: Marsha Massey

June 13, 2014 Meeting Minutes – Shelli moved and Marcella second that the minutes from the June 13, 2014 meeting be approved as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

YTD Lodging Tax – YTD Lodging Tax was reviewed. The City of Sequim Lodging Tax numbers are down .3 % YTD from the budget, which represents a difference of \$301. The year got off to a slow start, but the numbers have been consistently above budget since June, and all indicators are that we have had a very good summer season, so the budget looks to be on target.

2015 Proposed Budget – Barbara presented the proposed 2015 budget. The budget reflects balanced revenues and expenses, with the exception of the \$95k that was approved in 2013 for improvements to the Guy Cole Center. The key changes reflected in the budget are slightly higher staff salary due to a larger percentage of time anticipated being spent on tourism marketing as opposed to general communications projects. This is primarily due to several large projects that have been or will be completed in 2015 that have required a lot of communications efforts, such as the Centennial, Civic Center, and Comprehensive Plan update. The primary focus of the additional available time will be spent on developing a monthly digital newsletter for potential visitors, industry partners, and travel writers. In addition, staff will spend more time enhancing Sequim's presence on social media and with travel writers. Other new programs include targeted marketing to the outdoor adventure audience and on-line advertising through NW Travel magazine. The City will continue to promote to the wedding market and advertise with visitseattle.org, Seattle Met and Portland Monthly magazines.

Shelli moved and Marsha seconded that the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee recommend to the Sequim City Council that the budget be approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Marketing Tools:

- **Pad Maps** – Jodi Minker at the Chamber has been helping Barb with lodging updates. The map is currently under review and should go out for printing next week.

- **Tourism Video** – the “How do you say Sequim?” video is out and has had 5487 hits on YouTube and 1968 views on the tourism website. Feedback has been very favorable. An email was recently sent to key personnel in Port Angeles and then circulated to members of the Clallam County Economic Development Council of the Sequim video as a good use of Lodging Tax funds.
- **Advertising** – ads are currently running in the following places:
 - www.visitseattle.org, these will continue to run through the end of the year
 - Seattle Met and Portland Monthly magazines, the last ad of the year will run in the October issues
 - New ad in Sept/Oct issue of Outdoors NW Magazine as a companion to an article on the Olympic Discovery Trail. An additional digital ad was purchased that will be imbedded into the article on-line with a click through to the visitsunnysequim.com website.
- **Articles** – Barbara circulated a number of recent articles that featured Sequim or Sequim businesses. The articles ran in:
 - Yam Magazine – Vancouver Island
 - Examiner.com
 - Heraldnet.com
 - Huffingtonpost.com
 - Fox News
 - Good Housekeeping
 - Journey Magazine

Travel writer Nancy Zaffaro spent three days in Sequim in August and will be writing a series of articles for realfoodtraveler.com, a website focused on culinary travelers. The website gets over 15,000 visitors each month.
- **Website** – Barbara reported that the visitsunnysequim.com website has been very active. YTD the site has had 73,064 visitors. They are staying on the site for an average of 3.57 minutes. There have been 284,377 page views. So it appears that visitors and potential visitors are staying on the site and looking up information as intended.

Wedding Shows

The City is scheduled to participate in the Tulalip Wedding Show on January 17 & 18, 2015. Barbara will be out of town that weekend. The Bouchers from That Takes the Cake will help to staff the booth, but Barbara will also be looking for other volunteers to help cover the weekend.

Seattle Concierge Show

The OPVB will be hosting 10 concierges from the Seattle area on October 1. They will be in Sequim for approximately one hour. Barbara will work with the Chamber on the best locations to take them in their limited time.

Tourism Summit

The OPTC Tourism Summit is scheduled for Wednesday, October 22 at Fort Worden in Port Townsend.

2014 Meeting Schedule- All meetings are at 10:00 a.m. in the Sequim Transit Center
Conference Room
Friday, December 12

Meeting adjourned.