



Lodging Tax Advisory Meeting
August 23, 2013
Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Erik Erichsen, Shelli Robb-Kahler, Toni Skinner, Diane Schostak, Marcella Stachurski, Barbara Hanna.

Guests: Christy Rookard

March 8 and June 14, 2013 Meeting Minutes –Shelli moved and Toni second that the minutes from the March 8 and June 14 meeting be approved as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

YTD Lodging Tax – YTD Lodging Tax was reviewed. The City of Sequim Lodging Tax numbers look very positive for the year. As of the July report, which reflects numbers for the month of May, Sequim Lodging Tax is 18% over 2012 and over the 2013 budget. The unofficial numbers for August, reflecting June lodging tax, are \$22,420. This is approximately \$2500 over the numbers for last June, but less than the budgeted amount for the month.

2014 Budget – The proposed 2014 budget was reviewed. The overall theme for the City 2014 budget is status quo. The City is not projecting an increase in revenue and is budgeting expenses similar to 2013. The lodging tax budget reflect that with a request of a small amount of expenses over projected revenue to cover some special projects, specifically seed money for Sequim Out of Doors, slated for April 2015, and the one-time expense for downtown street banners. The budget also accounts for the website hosting expense and Smarsh services that were not accounted for in the 2013 budget, but ended up getting covered out of opportunity money. The two outside funding requests from the Chamber of Commerce were reviewed. The request for the Visitor Information Center remained the same as 2013 at \$71,000 although it was noted that actual expenses to run the VIC were over that amount by approximately \$1400. The Chamber also requested \$2500 for event support for the Merchants Group. Diane moved and Marcella second that the 2014 budget be approved for recommendation to the City Council as presented. During discussion, it was recommended that the funding request for the VIC be amended to reflect the actual cost of operation of \$72,400. Diane made an amendment to her original motion to increase the amount of funding for the VIC to \$72,400 increasing the bottom line expenses by \$1400. Marcella second the amendment. The amendment was passed with 4 affirmative votes and one abstention. The motion to recommend the 2014 budget to the City Council passed unanimously.

Events Updates

- **Sequim Lavender Weekend** – went much more smoothly this year and there seems to be an increased willingness for all involved to present a unified message to the visitors. The event map was an effective tool to communicate everything going on over the weekend.
- **Dungeness Cup** – was very successful with 47 teams this year. The event more than doubled in size from the first year and is positioned to continue to grow. Shelli reported that many restaurants said they were really busy during that weekend, reinforcing that the event is beneficial to the entire community.
- **Air Affaire** – will take place at the Sequim Valley Airport over Labor Day Weekend.

Marcella mentioned that the Sequim Lavender Farmers Association is planning a Holiday Faire the Saturday after Thanksgiving and will be announcing the location soon.

Wedding Promotion –The City of Sequim is scheduled to participate in the Seattle Wedding Show on September 7 & 8. Barbara will set up the show on Friday, September 6. Toni Skinner and Monica Quevedo are scheduled to staff the booth on Saturday, September 7. Andee Clancy and Jordan Schiefen are scheduled to staff and take down the booth on Sunday, September 8. The committee will evaluate the effectiveness of the wedding promotion after the event. Toni said the Holiday Inn Express was full the entire month of August with wedding guests.

Olympic Peninsula Tourism Commission Annual Report – The OPTC annual report and strategic plan was passed out the committee members. This information will also be shared with the Sequim City Council.

Advertising and Promotional Materials

- **Print Ads** – we are running an ad in the Visit Seattle visitor’s guides, and running on-line ads on visitseattle.org. We are also participating in the Seattle Met and Portland Monthly Destination Washington pages in October. Barbara also brought a sample of the new Coho magazine, and the two Washington State travel guides where the City participated in a co-op ad with other OP partners.
- **Articles** –Barbara brought in recent articles in Sunset Magazine, Pacific Horticulture, AAA Journey, 425 and South Sound Magazines.
- **Visitors Guide** – Barbara brought copies of the new Sequim Visitor Guide, which are now available at the VIC.
- **Pad Map**- the new pad maps are also available at the VIC
- **Video** –John Gussman has been filming at events throughout the summer. Barbara will be working with John in September to do more orchestrated shots. The video will be framed under the theme of “How Do You Say Sequim?”

2013 Meeting Schedule-

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 13
Meeting adjourned.