



**Auburn Tourism Board Meeting
APRIL 19, 2018 – 10:00 AM
Auburn City Hall, Council Chambers
MINUTES**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00am by Vice Chairwoman Mohoric.

Board Members present: Vice Chair Ashley Mohoric; Board Members Kacie Bray, Ting Phonsanam, Julie Krueger, Tonia Jones; Ronnie Roberts.

Excused absence: Chair Rebecca Frisch; , Rachael McAlister; Jim Wilson.

Staff Present: Lorraine Chachere, Tourism Coordinator; Doug Lein, Economic Development Manager.

II. APPROVE MARCH MEETING MINUTES

Board Member Roberts motioned to approve the March meeting minutes.

Board Member Phonsanam seconded the motion.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY 6-0.

III. OLD BUSINESS

1) Tourism Updates

▪ **Tourism Map**

Coordinator Chachere spoke of the possibility of adding content on the back of the Tourism Map and asked Board Members of the possibility of a Downtown insert to boost exposure for the businesses there. Board Member Bray indicated there was no reason we couldn't request funding to finance the design and printing of the Tourism Map. Coordinator Chachere will approach the BIA Rate Payer Board and ADA to request funding assistance.

▪ **POS Tourism Development Grant Programs**

Coordinator Chachere showed photos of the Auburn's heavily subsidized ad at Sea-Tac Airport (through the Port's Spotlight program) which was well received. Unfortunately, Auburn was not selected as a recipient for the Port of Seattle's Tourism Marketing Grant.

- **SHCA Hospitality Tradeshow**
Coordinator Chachere showed photos of the booth set up at the Tradeshow. The Tourism Wheel of Fortune showcased a visual sampling of many unique and fun experiences for visitors and locals alike to have in Auburn. It proved to be a great tool to engage attendees to generate awareness of Auburn. Not only were hospitality professionals excited to learn more about options to recommend to their hotel guests, but people who previously or currently lived in Auburn were excited to see us there.

- **Overview of 2019 Lodging Tax Grant Timeline and feedback on recipient selection**
Coordinator Chachere indicated that while the selection of recipients of the lodging tax grants rests with the LTAC as stated in the RCW, there is opportunity for the ATB to weigh in on the 2019 applicants and provide that feedback at the November LTAC meeting. A timeline of the process was offered as well as the updated application and After Event Report that is required of all grant recipients to receive their reimbursable grant. That data is then reported back to the State. Additionally, an evaluation form was created with a set of criteria for applicants to be measured during the review stage. The ATB could review the applications at their October meeting and make their recommendations to the LTAC. At the recent LTAC meeting, the Committee suggested that the ATB could conduct in person interviews with any applicants the LTAC finds they would need more information from.

- **Budget Update**
An updated 2019 – 2020 Budget was provided with some suggestions by the LTAC which met the week before. The financials through February 2018 was presented. BA#5 was approved which puts an additional \$96,000 into the 2018 Budget Marketing line item.

IV. **NEW BUSINESS**

SMARTHOUSE CREATIVE – Marketing Plan Discussion and Decision

Brad Wilke and Ryan Davis presented a detailed overview of the Marketing Campaign proposal previously presented to the Board.

Marketing Proposal Feedback and Requested Changes:

Board Member Kruger requested that the reference to the City of Auburn in their strategy implied the municipality and Board Member Bray commented that the campaign should be for marketing Tourism, not the City. Hence all references moving forward should be Auburn Tourism.

Coordinator Chachere suggested that the meeting planners should be the focus for luring business travelers and mid-sized conferences and that the target business publications were hyperlocal. Ms. Davis responded that the goal was to get a soundbite that could be used with meeting planners. The target market for meeting planners would be Washington, Oregon, Idaho, BC Canada.

For luring leisure travelers, Coordinator Chachere suggested expanding the reach from the Pacific Northwest region to new markets, especially from different terrains of which a visit to the Puget Sound, a 2-3 hour flight as ideal. And to capitalize on high occupancy and room rates of Seattle, Bellevue, and uncover potential new market of leisure travelers. Board Member Roberts asked Smarthouse Creative if the hotels were asked about potential new markets to target as they might have a better idea. Board Member Phonsanam identified the East Coast, North Carolina, Florida, and China as potential markets. Board Member Bray suggested Asia, China and Canada. Mr. Wilke will suggest other possibilities depending on budget. Board Member Phonsanam suggested adjusting the timeline so that in July – August could be the time to entice visitors to return to Auburn in the shoulder season, and Board Member Jones suggested that the testing could be done in May to get ready to go beginning in June.

Board Member Phonsanam motioned to approve and move forward with Smarthouse Creative's Marketing proposal as presented with included modifications from Board Member feedback. Board Member Krueger seconded the motion.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY 6-0.

With regards to the Tourism Logo, Coordinator Chachere asked Manager Lein if the City contract with Smarthouse included the creative fees for the design of a redesign of the Tourism Logo. Manager Lein inquired if that is what the Tourism Board really wants. Board Member Bray said it has been discussed several times over the year, it needs to be updated and it looks too much like the City logo. Manager Lein said because the City is far from working on a logo, that Smarthouse could go ahead and work on one for Auburn Tourism that would be part of the City contract.

V. IMPORTANT DATES

- Board Mixer at White River Valley Museum – Tuesday, May 15th 5:30PM. Coordinator Chachere inquired if everyone received the invitation via Punchbowl as RSVPs have been minimal.
- The Next ATB Meeting: Thursday, May 17th at 10AM in Council Chambers
- Tourism Summit – November 7th, Auburn Community and Event Center, 9AM

Coordinator Chachere indicated the goal for the Tourism Forum is to bring everyone together to share information, our progress of the year, and provide a

glimpse of what to anticipate for 2019. It's all part of bringing the people and business together who share common goals as it pertains to marketing Auburn and its businesses, so everyone knows what the ATB and the LTAC is doing. The reason it is in November and not in December is that the BIA has voted to not meet in December because it is a very busy time for their businesses, so as to increase the likelihood of more business owners attending, it will take place in early November ahead of the holidays and busy retail season. More details to come.

VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no more business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:06PM.