

ROSEBURG VISITORS AND CONVENTION COMMISSION
May 20, 2008

Chair Steve Tuchscherer called the meeting of the Visitors and Convention Commission to order at 4:00 p.m. on May 20, 2008, in the City Hall Conference Room.

Present: Commission members Paul Zegers, Roger Brandt, Gary Leif, Dotty Randall-Stapleton and Toni Walrod. Jane Green arrived at 4:08 p.m. Others present: City Manager Eric Swanson, Human Resources Director Barbara Gershon, Management Technician Debi Davidson and Bureau Director Jean Kurtz.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Leif moved to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2008 meeting. Motion was seconded by Brandt and carried unanimously.

CHAMBER SERVICES CONTRACT

Swanson reported Chamber visitor services operations contract expires June 30th. The Chamber has given notice of their desire to renew for an additional five years. Approval is scheduled for the June 9th City Council meeting. Leif moved to recommend Council approve the contract renewal. Motion was seconded by Zegers and carried unanimously.

AIR MUSEUM CONCEPT

Swanson reported that operators of the Air and Space Museum at the Eugene Airport have expressed interest in moving to Roseburg, primarily due to its convenient location near I-5. . An ad-hoc committee, consisting of airport, tourism and Chamber representatives, has been formed to investigate the potential of the project. Swanson believed this could be a great opportunity to have the museum as a tourist destination and to serve as an umbrella organization to provide the Air Fair and a satellite visitor service. The facility could likely be constructed with profits from sale of the existing Eugene property. However, operational costs would need to be addressed. A potential source is to increase the hotel/motel tax by 1% to 9% which would place Roseburg on a par with other cities. The City Council has the ability to adjust the rate, but would only do so with support from the hotel/motel industry. The Ad-Hoc Committee will meet next week, and may return to the Commission to request financial assistance in hiring a consultant to study the museum concept and financial options.

GRANT APPLICATION - Jazz in Jacoby, UCC Fine and Performing Arts - \$5,000

Umpqua Community College requested \$5,000 for a statewide vocal jazz ensemble festival on February 12, 2009. At the Commission's request, Dr. Jason Heald was present to share more information about the event. This began as an instructional event in 2000 for all age levels and to help Southern Oregon groups that have to travel to such events. National artists and clinicians are brought in for day long event and evening performance. Although advertising has remained local, ensembles from other cities (Klamath Falls, Brookings and Ontario) attend. Heald estimated that each ensemble represents approximately 30 people or a total of up to 180 people that stay one or two nights. Additional widespread advertising could increase those numbers. With Jacoby Auditorium and Center Stage, there is a finite number of people that could attend the singular event, but participant attendance could double with 15-20 additional groups. He spoke to the college's larger direction to create a cultural impact and create awareness of our community.

In the past, visiting artists have been funded through sponsorships, and most costs were covered by registration fees. Discussion was held on increasing the event to two days which would fit into the Commission's charge of bringing overnight visitors and potential refund to the Commission if a profit was realized. Heald was supportive of expanding the event, but was unsure of UCC's ability to return funds. Any excess funds, however, could be retained for seed money for the ensuing year event. Brandt announced that his wife is an administrator with UCC. Leif moved to grant \$5,000 for Jazz in Jacoby and to encourage UCC to increase the event to two days. Motion was seconded by Randall-Stapleton and carried with Brandt abstaining.

COMMISSION PROJECT

Tuchscherer reviewed commission responsibilities which include evaluating and overseeing use of city funds for purposes of providing events for locals and visitors. Specific duties are to 1) conduct ongoing evaluation of Bureau programs; 2) review funding requests for transient taxes to promote tourism and increase visitor stay/spending; 3) receive comments and suggestions from those affected by tourism regarding events and tourism promotion; 4) promote existing events and programs to achieve major event status by helping with planning and advertising. Gershon noted Budget Committee recommended a budget for 2008-2009 with estimated receipts of \$490,000 for the Chamber and \$45,000 for the Commission.

Kurtz stated the Oregon Travel Information Council has proposed installation of regional historical information signs at locations to be determined. Cost would be approximately \$15,000. The project spokesperson will be scheduled to meet with the Commission.

HARVEST FESTIVAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

Zegers reported the Committee is meeting bi-weekly. With Jan Taylor coordinating the Committee's efforts – all is "under control."

VISITORS & CONVENTION BUREAU UPDATE

Kurtz is working with Creative Images on the 4th edition of Umpqua magazine. Copies will be provided at the next meeting. The magazine will have expanded pages and larger quantities will be printed. Kurtz will be attending the Sunset Travel Show in Menlo Park with Travel Oregon and Central and Southern Oregon Bureaus the first week in June. The Show will tie in with a promotion in the Bay Area. All are invited to the tourism reception at the Bureau on May 22nd at 5:15; tourism awards will be presented. Counts are down at the Visitor Center and the Museum – likely due to economic concerns and gas prices.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Zegers asked about the \$5,000 provided for the fireworks display despite the Commission's decision to not support that donation. Gershon explained that the City Manager has authority to spend up to \$50,000 for any purpose from any fund without Commission or City Council approval. He chose to make the contribution from the "old money" to help the volunteer organization get started in their fundraising efforts. The Commission's concern about this action has been shared with the Manager. Tuchscherer suggested, and Commissioners agreed, that the Commission should develop a long-term plan for use of their funds.

Meeting adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

Debi Davidson, Management Technician