

ROSEBURG VISITORS AND CONVENTION COMMISSION

March 17, 2009

Chair Ken Averett called the meeting of the Visitors and Convention Commission to order at 4:10 p.m. on March 17, 2009, in the City Hall Conference Room. Present: Commission members Roger Brandt, Paul Zegers and Jane Green. Gary Leif arrived at 4:14 p.m. Absent: Commission member Dotty Randall-Stapleton. Others present: Human Resources Director Barbara Gershon and Management Technician Debi Davidson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Green moved to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2009 meeting. Motion was seconded by Zegers and carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONER RESIGNATION

Gloria Campbell resigned due to her relocation to California. Applications are being solicited for a hotel/motel representative. If multiple applications are received, Averett asked that the Commission review the applications at the April meeting and recommend appointment.

AIRPORT MUSEUM FEASIBILITY STUDY

A joint meeting is scheduled with the Airport Commission for 4:00 p.m. on March 31st to review the airport museum feasibility study. We expect to receive the study from the consultant any day, and it will be forwarded to the Commission. (Leif arrived at 4:14 p.m.) If the study is not complete in sufficient time, the joint meeting will be rescheduled.

GRANT REPORT – JAZZ IN JACOBY 2009

UCC Music Director Jason Heald provided a report on Jazz in Jacoby which was held in February. He estimated 140 people from Klamath Falls, Nevada and Washington stayed overnight for the event. Gershon heard event was very successful and enjoyed by all participants. Zegers noted the event has a lot of future potential.

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Sande Dixon informed Staff that the Harvest Festival is combining efforts with a fall program at UCC celebrating viticulture. Dixon will return unexpended grant funds from last year of approximately \$7,000. Zegers stated the Harvest Festival will meet this week to officially disband. The UCC event will incorporate the Oakland Wine event and the Blackhawk concert encompassing a Friday evening through Sunday. As this new event has a different focus and mission, some Harvest Festival Committee members may choose to not participate in the new joint effort. However, the original purpose of the Harvest Festival was to have a fall event; the UCC event will serve that purpose.

FOURTH OF JULY

Gershon reported the Fourth of July Committee has been reconstituted, is getting non-profit status and will function separately from the City as a stand-alone community group. The City will support their efforts as members. Fundraising has begun with donation information included on the City's website. Depending on availability of volunteers, some Harvest Festival events such as the Dachshund races may be incorporated into the day's events. Zegers stated the Chalk Walk has been turned back over to the Art Center and will likely become part of the June Art Festival. On a side note, the Center is discussing a banner project for the Oregon 150 Sesquicentennial. Leif shared information about Tacoma street banners that promote local

restaurants. Communities need to support restaurants so they survive as a tourist attraction when the economy recovers.

2009/2010 BUDGET

Staff is working on the proposed 2009/2010 budget. Although revenues are down, the Chamber receives a guaranteed amount. If revenues, however, fall below a base figure established in 2004, the Chamber and this Commission shared the difference equally. We are budgeting for \$30,000 in unrestricted fund expenditures and \$45,000 in restricted funds. If the Commission needs to expend more than that during the fiscal year, funds can be made available through the supplemental budget process.

VISITORS BUREAU REPORT

It was explained that 100% of the Visitor Bureau funding comes from the hotel/motel tax. Expenditures from those funds include a portion for building space, utilities and maintenance. The Chamber does not contribute financially to the tourism program. They do have a Tourism Committee of which Gershon and Zegers are members.

COMMISSION GOALS

With the current economy, Zegers believed the Commission should focus on sustaining events that have been going on for years and ensure they survive the economic crisis rather than focusing on a big project. Leif agreed, but believed those events should be prioritized based upon generation of overnight visitors rather than local participants. As an example, Graffiti Week brings many non-resident visitors who stay in the motels. It is unknown how many non-resident visitors stay the night when attending Music on the Half Shell concerns.

Gershon will e-mail to the members a Senate Bill which would amend the hotel/motel tax apportionment to not require 70% of any new taxes to be spent solely on tourism. This would apply only to any new tax percentage and provides the option to do things not as restrictive as capital and advertising; opens door for more local events.

Leif questioned whether the City had a grant writer that could use tourism funds as leverage for additional funds. While the City doesn't have a grant writer on Staff, we have a contract with the Lane Council of Governments to provide those services and investigate all potential grant opportunities. Typically, a project needs to be identified first – then LCOG seeks out potential sources that meet that specific project.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Brandt reported the Abecela Winery received very prestigious recognition in the wine industry which puts Umpqua wines in a higher level in the market of trade magazines. Through a gift basket program, a contingent of visitors will be traveling from the Bellevue/Issaquah region to attend the Greatest of the Grape event at Seven Feathers. Hopefully, this will garner good "word of mouth" for our area.

Language for the commemorative marker was distributed. Commissioners were asked to share any amendments with Gershon.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Debi Davidson
Management Technician