



TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

April 13, 2023

2:00 p.m.

Hybrid

Approved: May 11, 2023

Call to Order

Vice Chair Peggy Burris called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present: Sharon Konopa, Pam Silbernagel, Steve Reynolds, Peggy Burris

Members absent: Cyndi Wiggins, Bob Moore (excused), Kim McAloney (excused)

Election of Officers

2:01 p.m.

Nomination: Member Steve Reynolds nominated Member Peggy Burris for the position of chair. Member Burris declined the nomination. Member Burris nominated Member Reynolds for the position of chair. Member Reynolds declined the nomination. Member Reynolds nominated Member Sharon Konopa for the position of chair. Member Konopa declined the nomination. Member Burris nominated Member Pam Silbernagel for the position of chair. Member Silbernagel accepted the nomination and was elected to the position of chair unanimously.

Nomination: Member Burris nominated Member Reynolds for the position of vice chair. Member Reynolds accepted the nomination and was elected to the position of vice chair unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

2:04 p.m.

Member Burris inquired about a motion made at the November 10, 2022, meeting regarding the committee support funding the Tourism Promotion related line items and if this had happened. Economic Development Coordinator Sophie Adams confirmed that this had been brought to the supplemental budget meeting, and that the council approved the recommendation as presented.

Motion: Member Burris moved to approve the November 10, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. Member Reynolds seconded the motion which passed 4-0.

Business from the Public

2:06 p.m.

Albany Downtown Association Executive Director Lise Grato addressed the commission giving a quick downtown update. Upcoming events include restaurant week, Mother's Day flowers, musical Something Rotten, kids spots and shops, Kentucky Derby at the Carousel, volunteer appreciation, as well as others.

Member Burris asked about Mother's Day flowers and if a list is kept on where flowers are kept, to which Grato responded that there is not.

Albany Visitors Association (AVA) Executive Director Rebecca Bond highlighted the Kentucky Derby event at the Carousel which she said that there were still tickets available. Bond next spoke of a grant opportunity available from Travel Oregon for the AVA to conduct a strategic planning process, which will be facilitated with the destination strategy consulting team Whereabout. Bond explained that a survey will be distributed to key members of the Albany tourism industry, with the aim of obtaining good feedback to help update their strategic plan. Bond discussed some specific target questions and noted that the survey questions

were not finalized and welcomed any suggestions from the Tourism Advisory Commission (TAC). Bond shared additional information regarding the grant and the company used to facilitate the project.

Scheduled Business

2:12 p.m.

- Marketing and Tourism Promotion Request for Proposal (RFP) Discussion

Chair Silbernagel gave an overview of the materials provided in the agenda packet for the discussion, and shared that she had asked Rebecca Bond to do some research on what other entities are doing regarding Marketing and Tourism Promotion services.

Bond briefly shared the processes that Corvallis, McMinnville, Salem, and Eugene use regarding contracts for marketing and tourism promotion services. Bond shared information about the 10-year contract process that Salem uses, and that there is a stipulation that organizations applying to provide services must be a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO). Member Silbernagel provided additional clarifications.

Contracts and Procurement Officer Diane Murzynski provided additional information about RFQs which are a request for quotes, which are based on price alone, and that a request for qualifications (RFQU) is only applicable for engineering and architecture.

Member Silbernagel shared things needed to move ahead with an RFP process and noted that the suggested timeline of having the RFP published at the end of May, RFP due mid-July, and early August Council award of contract, would limit who can respond to this proposal, and suggested lengthening the timeline so others have an ample opportunity to participate.

Murzynski explained the typical RFP timeline process and noted that if extra time is needed that the period can be lengthened. Additional member and staff discussions ensued regarding timelines, operating timelines, and concerns with the new RFP and competitive process.

In response to member concerns Adams shared that regardless of which type of procurement process or contract is used that there is always a statement of work listing the services and reviews, and while an RFP process is a shift from previous process that does not significantly increase workload for outside agencies.

Member Silbernagel shared that she feels the information provided for background and timing, RFPs, and outline of what we are receiving under the Albany Visitors Association are good starting points and that information should be consolidated and simplified into one easy package.

Member Silbernagel provided her own proposal* and discussed the proposed criteria and scope of work. Additional discussions followed and Silbernagel inquired if there was anything additional on her list that the committee wanted to see added. Member Burris confirmed that she agreed with the proposed draft.

Murzynski added that typically optional interviews are incorporated in the RFP process, and that references are requested to ensure that information given by applicants is accurate.

Member Reynolds shared his concerns with holes in knowledge base regarding Tourism Lodging Tax (TLT) expectation from staff, defined objective, and if TLT is supposed to be generating heads in beds, or other general marketing. Member Silbernagel offered explanations and additional discussions followed.

Adams shared that the first step is determining what services the city needs and starting there, and that it is a combination of things that makes Albany a good place to visit.

Economics Development Manager Seth Sherry provided that tourism is not just about outside visitors, and that the charge of this group is to think about and advise on the most effective uses of transient lodging tax (TLT) dollars, and what elements need to make sure are being promoted through the legal use of TLT dollars to promote tourism.

Next, committee members discussed approaches to the RFP process, and member Silbernagel inquired if the proposal that she had come up with was ok with other members or if there were suggested amendments or additions. Member Burriss added that she liked the simplified version and explained the reasoning.

Murzynski responded there would need to be more detail and added that a lot of what Silbernagel had proposed could be incorporated into the evaluation criteria. Member Silbernagel replied that there are other things in the criteria that the City would need to add, but wanting to keep things simple so committee and staff would not have to have a whole lot of background to evaluate applicants.

Next, member Silbernagel came back to timelines and shared she would be more comfortable if the timeline lined up with the fiscal year.

Sherry clarified that one of the purposes for doing RFPs is about having transparency and public expenditures for the taxpayer and provided additional information. Member Silbernagel addressed and differing opinions shared.

Member Konopa added that she did not feel that delaying the timeline for proposals would be to the committee's best benefit, and shared additional thoughts. Committee members accepted adhering to staff presented timelines.

Members and staff discussed the tentative date for the next Tourism Advisory Committee meeting to discuss the scope of work.

In response to a question from member Silbernagel, Murzynski shared that when they advertise for a request for proposal it is included in the Daily Journal of Commerce, as well as the Albany Democrat-Herald newspaper and additionally the solicitation document is posted on the City of Albany website. Murzynski also added that she will email known perspective proposers directly as well.

RFP selection process discussed, and specifics will be addressed at the next meeting in May.

Staff Updates and Issues

3:18 p.m.

Adams shared a thank you note and signed picture from the West Albany Bulldog Wrestling Team, who had received Collaborative Tourism Promotion (CTP) grant funds awarded by the committee.

Member Silbernagel inquired about other CTP grant awardees expenditures meeting timeline requirements, which Adams answered that they still have until the end of June and that a couple had completed their reimbursements and others are working towards them.

Business from the Committee

3:20 p.m.

Member Konopa shared that she is happy to be part of the process and noted that heads in beds is a major piece of the TLT funds, and that it is critical to keep CTP program to pay for events to bring in the heads to beds. Member Konopa also stressed the importance of spending the correct amount of TLT funds required by state law on tourism.

Member Reynolds inquired about funding for tourism-related activities and how other pieces receive funding allocations. City Manager Peter Troedsson clarified that this committee's responsibility is to advise on tourism. Additional budget clarifications discussed. Adams provided a city supported tourism activities list * to the committee.

Member Silbernagel suggested looking at the City's proposed budget at the next meeting in more detail.

Member Konopa inquired if council is still receiving each of the line items under the proposed budget, and questioned if budget was available online, which member Silbernagel responded that she had received confirmation from city staff that it would be posted by 5:00 p.m.

In response to a question from member Reynolds, Adams shared that per recommendation from the committee, prior to the supplemental budget meeting the council had approved the additional funds which were granted to the original CTP awardees to satisfy the full request amounts.

Members and staff discussed the anticipated CTP fund if approved in the next budget, tentative timelines for advertising and awarding funds considered.

Member Silbernagel asked staff for an update at the next meeting on the vacation home taxation.

Member Silbernagel also suggested that the committee have a non-voting hotel liaison and requested that staff look into and have an answer at the following meeting.

Member Silbernagel also requested an update of current CTP recipients and where they are at for the next meeting.

Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting is in May, the exact date to be determined.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Chair Silbernagel adjourned the meeting at 3:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Kaitlin Martin
Administrative Assistant I

Reviewed by,

Signature on file

Sophie Adams
Economic Development Coordinator

**Documents discussed at the meeting that are not in the agenda packet are archived in the record. The documents are available by emailing cityclerk@cityofalbany.net.*