
Minutes of Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) Meeting

Dated September 7, 2021

Members

Present: Council Member Stephanie Wright – LTAC Member, Chair
Shawn Walker – LTAC Member, Lodging
Debbie Copple – LTAC Member, Tourism
Adrienne Hall – LTAC Member, Tourism
Georgia Borg-Leon – LTAC Member, Lodging
(All present through Zoom conferencing)

Staff: Tom Teigen – Parks, Rec & Tourism, Department Head
Bridgid Smith – Parks, Rec & Tourism, Division Manager
Neepaporn Bounjaktha – Executive Office, Sr. Executive Management Analyst
Trudy Soriano – Parks, Rec & Tourism, Tourism Promotion Fund Coordinator

Documents:

- Meeting agenda
- Draft Minutes from 05/12/2021
- DVA Marketing Update Slides
- 2022 Hotel-Motel Grant Application Review Slides

Opening:

Meeting called to order at 1:05 p.m.

Introductions: Chair Wright welcomed new LTAC member Georgia Borg-Leon.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Destination Development and Marketing Updates– Mary Angelo and Christian Folk, from DVA Advertising & PR, the County DMO's contracted marketing firm, gave an update on recent recovery marketing campaigns. Over the last several years, the County DMO has focused on tracking and measuring visitation to Snohomish County. As a result, the County DMO has developed a series of data sets, which are used directly for targeted marketing investments. DVA provided an update on how those targeted efforts performed throughout the summer months of 2021.

DVA Staff reported on trends seen through the county big data partner, SeeSource. July 2021 visitation data, from SeeSource, showed positive recovery trends, when compared to 2020 and 2019. 2019 numbers are used as reference for a baseline 'normal' travel year. Hotel occupancy rates in Snohomish County are also trending in a positive direction. Overall, 2021 occupancy rates have been 14 percent behind those seen in 2019, with greater overnight stays from leisure markets trending in 2021. For vacation rentals, VRBO and Airbnb revenue is 3 percent over 2019. DVA staff outlined details on current visitor profiles including where they came from, average length of stay, age, gender, size of household, and average income. DVA staff also reviewed their methodology for choosing target markets to focus on during different periods of the recovery effort.

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DVA staff reported on web trends and marketing stats as well as hotel attribution seen in Snohomish County in response to recent recovery marketing. DVA staff gave an update on recent notable Public Relations outreach for editorial coverage featuring Seattle NorthCountry. Lastly, DVA staff gave an update on city and regional microsite development.

Large Fund Status Update – County staff provided a brief overview of the Large Fund 5-Year Plan for new LTAC members. Staff explained that revisiting the plan later in the year would give LTAC members a better sense of how the Large-Fund was performing overall.

Grant Reviewer Housekeeping -- County staff reiterate that the Hotel-Motel Grant program is driven by the County Strategic Tourism Plan asked committee members to refer to Appendix 1 in the grant packet while reviewing grant applications. Staff outlined the grant review schedule and process for LTAC members.

ACTION ITEMS:

Approval of Meeting Minutes (Motion #1): Shawn Walker made motion, Debbie Copple seconded, to approve minutes of the May 12, 2021 meeting. Approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

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