

**MASON COUNTY LODGING TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Commissioners' Chambers**  
**411 North 5<sup>TH</sup> Street, Shelton, WA 98584**  
**Tuesday June 30, 2015 10:00 a.m.**

Members in Attendance: Chair Terri Jeffreys, Bonnie Knight, Kelly Bergh, Darin Barry, Angela Robelas, Duane Wilson, Shaun Tucker, Arnold Hampton, Heidi McCutcheon and Mason County Staff, Diane Zoren Guests: Blue Collar Agency

1. Call to Order – 10:05 a.m. Chair Jeffreys introduced new member Arnold Hampton and the rest of the group introduced themselves.
2. The March 20, 2015 meeting minutes were approved as written.
3. Tourism Promotion Quarterly Update - Blue Collar Agency (BCA)  

Brian, BCA, explained the analytics and stated that 2% is the highest the County can charge for Lodging Tax.

Shaun Tucker asked about "Wild Side" and how it translates to the content.

John, BCA, said they are coming back in August for another photo shoot for more web content.

Darin spoke about a "pay for content" approach.

John said they need a bank of content. They need high quality images that showcase the area.

Angela asked about only showing lodging facilities that pay Lodging Tax.

Cmmr. Jeffreys said it's important to discuss and it can be placed on a future agenda.

Brian spoke about sweepstakes. He said it helps build up an email database. He hopes participants will also promote at their end.

Angela said she doesn't like that the casino doesn't pay lodging tax.

John said they have 60,000 followers on their site so the thought was that it could have been big. Pay to play is fine although the group should decide how they would like to proceed with such things.

Brian spoke about remarketing. It can be an effective use in promotions.

Darin said he thinks the remarketing program should be turned on to create a database. He also asked about "music" as a search.

John stressed content again. He can put the content in front of the right people although they need to receive the content.

Jenna said music is on "things to do/music" and on the events page.

Brian spoke about social media. In March the "likes" really started bumping up and posts are engaging people. They can send out a "call to action" and receive photos. He also spoke about the social platforms of Instagram and Twitter and Pinterest.

Promotions: John spoke about promotions. He would like to do coasters and distribute around Mason County.

Cmmr. Neatherlin said Blue Collar has done a phenomenal job with this.

Angela asked about a "live weather" cam on the website.

Cmmr. Jeffreys said the public also needs to be advised on beach closures etc.

John said they could have "events training". There are simple things to do at events that will provide a database to remarket to. He estimated a monthly budget of \$3,000 to \$5,000 that could be used for boosting.

4. Visitor Information Center Quarterly Update – Shelton Chamber of Commerce & North Mason Chamber of Commerce

Shelton Chamber VIC - Heidi McCutcheon: Heidi said it is the busy season and revenues have increased. Shelton Chamber runs the Hoodsport and Shelton VIC's.

Shaun Tucker asked how the visitors are tracked. He is asking about the money spent on VIC's and how to justify spending \$90,000 on VIC's.

Cmmr. Jeffreys said she would want the same information from North Mason.

North Mason Chamber VIC - Stephanie Rowland: Stephanie reported that they now have a roll-out outdoor KIOSK. She wants both VIC's to have access to the same things. She also rolled out "charm farm" which is open to the public. This is customer service training. July 7, 2015 at 11:00 a.m. is the next charm farm.

5. Financial Report – Frank Pinter gave an update on the financial status of the lodging tax fund. Collected \$108,264 in revenues which is approximately 36 percent of what was budgeted. He said the fund is at an additional \$17,000 above where we were last year.

Angela said the list of those who pay lodging tax should have been sent to Blue Collar. She said they need to make contact with each business that doesn't pay lodging tax and ask them if they would like to continue to be listed on the website.

Cmmr. Jeffreys said it is next on the agenda.

6. Lodging Tax Payer Report – Diane Zoren said there are 39 lodging establishments listed on the website. There are nine that could not be identified but could be paying the tax under a different name than the business name.

Heidi said that possibly a phone call could clarify what name they are paying under. She also said it would be a shame to kick Little Creek off the list if they are not

paying. She reminded the group that they do also sponsor events. She said they should still stay on the activities page no matter what they do.

Angela suggested checking on the Airbnb's and VRBO's and if they have not paid the lodging tax, they can be taken off the website. If they decide they want to be on the website, they can make the request. Angela said they could also check to see if the tribal casinos pay for visitor and convention bureau membership.

Diane said the amount each business pays in taxes cannot be divulged.

Kelly Bergh said they could send a letter if people don't pay the lodging tax in order to give them the opportunity to pay to participate.

Heidi asked if a letter is necessary and stated that possibly a phone call is a better idea and she will make the six phone calls after getting the names from Diane.

The group agrees that this is a good approach to verify who is paying Lodging tax.

Discussion of including Tribal lodging on the website:

Heidi said typically tribes are supportive of tourism efforts.

Angela said they need to be given the opportunity to pay.

Darin said a room based tax is the most fair.

Heidi said this needs a proposition and not just stating that they need to give money.

Cmmr. Jeffreys said we lose if we take them off the website and asked what type of proposition we could offer them.

Darin reiterated it should be based on rooms.

Diane said money from tribe would not be official lodging tax, therefore the question is, where would the money be deposited and managed. She said the County needs to be careful with that. Diane reminded the group that tribes are not obligated to pay lodging tax because they are a sovereign nation.

Angela suggested they call Washington State Department of Tourism for best practices to seek advice on how to deal with this type of situation.

The group agreed that Cmmr. Jeffreys will contact both tribes.

Diane will send out an email to determine the best time and date for the next LTAC meeting.

7. Next Meeting: Review 2016 Small Festival Application & Determine Funding Level
8. Other Business: none
9. Public Comment: none
10. Adjourned at 1:01 p.m.

LODGING TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MASON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

ATTEST:

  
LTAC Clerk

  
Cmmr. Terri Jeffrey, Chair