

MASON COUNTY LODGING TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Commissioners' Chambers
411 North 5TH Street, Shelton, WA 98584
Tuesday October 15, 2015 9:30 a.m.

Members in Attendance: Chair Terri Jeffreys, Bonnie Knight, Duane Wilson, Shaun Tucker, Arnold Hampton, Heidi McCutcheon and Mason County Staff, Diane Zoren Absent: Kelly Bergh

1. Chair Jeffreys called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. Chair Jeffreys reminded the committee that there are two positions still available; one generator and one spender.

2. Approval of the July 28, 2015 meeting minutes. **Bonnie Knight/Duane Wilson moved and seconded to approve the minutes as revised.**

3. Tourism Promotion Quarterly Update - Blue Collar Agency gave updates on the following.

Analytics Review: July, August & September

April Donovan explained the services Blue Collar provided.

Heidi asked if everyone on the website is paying lodging tax.

John Mitchell answered that they are utilizing all aspects of lodging for tourism at this time and they may or may not be paying. He said diverse lodging options will help tourism.

Duane said this should be revisited to try to encourage people to pay lodging tax.

Diane Zoren said we could put a link to Department of Revenue on the County website.

Brian explained the re-marketing test. People are responding higher than the average rate. In January they will kick it up.

Shaun Tucker explained the advantage of advertising consistently to change the perception of Mason County. He said the campaign is very impressive.

Brian explained the lodging tax revenue numbers.

The group discussed possible reasons for the fluctuation in the lodging tax revenue numbers. Possible reasons may be weather, fires and lack of inventory, etc.

Cmmr. Jeffreys said they should possibly track sales tax on food and beverage.

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

Heidi McCutcheon presented the third quarter report on tourism. Heidi said July was very busy.

Stephanie Rowland gave the quarterly report behalf of the North Mason Chamber of Commerce. She said they launched Charm Farm and are also passing out coasters.

Heidi asked about Stephanie's dual roles and said she finds it a bit confusing.

Stephanie said she promotes everyone and all chambers.

Heidi asked if what she provides is enough or would the group like more.

Bonnie said if it relates to tourism she would like some information.

5. Review of Proposal for Festival and Event Marketing:

John Mitchell explained his ideas and thoughts on festival and event marketing. He said there needs to be great assets. He said events and tourism go hand in hand and they need content to drive engagement. They will get in touch with organizers of each of the twenty or so existing events so they can better understand the events, plans and challenges. He spoke about geo targeting as well.

Heidi said some people are moving away from apps so she is wondering what Blue Collar's opinion is on that and asked if they know of any success stories using apps.

John said apps would be pretty inexpensive and he said the target groups use a lot of apps. He senses this will be a slow growth but they will encourage people to download the app and he feels this is advertising money well spent. He said there are success stories such as Coachella so for events it's a good tool.

Heidi asked for examples of "giveaways" and wanted to make sure giveaways don't interfere with the event's retail merchandise.

John said they can give away cozies and rain ponchos etc. They need to be inexpensive and of value. Their approach is the same for the events although they need to seek information from the event organizers. He added that they will need to get to know each event and have a plan with moving forward. Blue Collar Agency suggests a logo to promote Mason County events.

Bonnie Knight said she assumes the advertising and marketing will get spread around wherever it's needed including any new events.

John stated they are going to send out an event interview to each organizer to gain information. They will find out what the organizer needs and explain their strategy and tools and what they can do. John confirmed that they can purchase promotional items.

Heidi asked about signage.

John answered it's about pushing and promoting "event apps". John said they think it will add value but it's not mandatory. He said it's a foundational piece they believe will drive web traffic. The majority of the money will go into boosts and social media

advertising. John said the foundation is now in place now so there will be more money to drive tourism next year.

The LTAC and Blue Collar Agency had a Q & A session.

Shaun said he is comfortable with the plan but needs more information on some of the line items.

Chair Jeffreys would prefer a generic proposal with a scope of work.

Heidi suggests putting off the app creation at this time and put more money into buy-ins. Heidi added that an industry trend is that people are moving away from apps.

Duane said they should go along with Blue Collar's proposal.

Bonnie likes the app.

The group had a discussion and tried to come to consensus.

Bonnie Knight/Duane Wilson moved and seconded to accept the proposal based on the total amounts for \$65,000. Motion carried.

6. Other Business – Chair Jeffreys explained the RCW regarding the ins & outs of who is eligible to receive lodging tax money and how it can be paid.
7. Public Comment – There was no public comment.
Next meeting date proposed for mid-January.
8. Adjourn at 12:59 p.m.

LODGING TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MASON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

ATTEST:

LTAC Clerk

Cmmr. Terri Jeffreys, Chair