

Visit McMinnville
Board of Directors Meeting
November 16, 2016

Board Attendees: Erin Stephenson, Emily Howard, Maria Stuart, Candace Haines, Scott Hill, Courtney Cunningham, Ty Rollins, Cindy Lorenzen, Jennifer Feero, Ellen Brittan

Absent: Carmen Peirano

Staff Attendees: Jeff Knapp & Kitri McGuire

Guests: Steven Rupp, Joel Kiff, Jessica Binkerd, Laura Davis

Knapp called the meeting to order at 9:32am.

Attending members of the public introduced themselves.

Minutes from the October 2016 meeting were reviewed. Cunningham moved to approve the minutes. Howard seconded. Minutes were accepted unanimously.

Jessica Binkerd presented her project McMinnville Love Locks. The project will be a large metal sign with LOVE across the front, where visitors can place love locks. Location of the piece will be in the center of the Granary District, as approved by Kelly MacDonald. The intention is that a 24 hour vending machine will be located behind the amphitheater, so visitors can purchase locks to place on the sign at any time. A percentage of the funds from the purchase of the locks will benefit the McMinnville Grad Night party. Binkerd is working with other businesses in the community to creatively raise money with in-line projects. Binkerd will submit a proposal for the board to ask for funds.

Knapp welcomed Interim City Manager Candace Haines as an official member of the Visit McMinnville Board of Directors. Haines, in her role with the city, has the responsibility to appoint someone from the city as a representative on the board. Haines has appointed herself, which does not require a board vote. The board welcomed Haines.

Knapp & Brittan discussed the monthly financial report. \$162,000 from the city was received from last quarter's TL revenue. Brittan noted a variance in professional fees in the P&L document, which Knapp noted was the fees for the audit that were not planned for in the budget, but was an expense approved by the board.

Knapp mentioned the audit came back from Bernards & Associates, which found that Visit McMinnville is operating appropriately. Brittan noted that moving forward we can do reviews annually rather than audits, but that the board will need to decide how many years they want to go between audits. 3 year and 5 year spans were discussed.

Knapp noted that Visit McMinnville is experiencing difficulties with steady cash flow, as revenue is accrued 5 months in arrears, which was not accounted for in our budget. Knapp presented two options for the board to consider:

- Reduce/push forward marketing efforts by \$170,000
- Explore a line of credit through private banking to cover the months of revenue lag

Brittan's recommendation was to pursue a line of credit while also modestly reducing monthly spending. Knapp noted that currently, nearly all of Visit McMinnville's marketing spending is discretionary and could be shut off or slowed immediately if needed. Hill noted that if pursuing a line of credit, there are costs for interest and fees (under \$200 annually for fees). Stephenson noted that Visit McMinnville has not yet received an official offer of a line of credit. Feero moved to appoint the executive committee to pursue a line of credit, working with Scott Hill and Jeff Knapp. Howard seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The board excused staff and guests for an executive session.

Knapp reviewed occupancy data from STR and TLT data. Rollins noted that most hotels do not like to run any higher than 70% occupancy, and often provide weighted numbers to reflect that. Knapp noted that for Q3 (July-Sept), occupancy in hotels is down slightly, but occupancy in vacation rentals and B&Bs are up. Overall, revenue collections are up in total about 2%. Knapp drew the conclusion that McMinnville is reaching a ceiling for hotel availability in the summer months.

Hill noted that the upcoming Steve's Hotel project on the Evergreen Campus will be 90 rooms and will be completed in November 2017.

McGuire gave an update on PR, Website, and Social Media. Social media is seeing on-target growth and engagement. New social media marketing tactics include the use of social media takeovers with influencers, and guest blogs from Emily Grosvenor. Unique website visitors are below target. McGuire did research with other similar sized Oregon DMOs to discover that total visits are far above what is expected of a new DMO, and that all other DMOs experience a lag in visitors during the winter. Visit McMinnville will be hosting writers in the coming months from Eater.com, Forbes.com, and Bon Appetit.

Knapp gave an update on the Ad-Hoc Wayfinding Committee progress. Sea Reach was engaged to provide a proposal for a strategic plan (~\$30,000); the committee is now gathering financial support for that plan from other city organizations that would benefit from wayfinding. The plan would be used to submit for a grant through Travel Oregon. Knapp proposed that the board consider \$10,000 in December to help fund the plan. MURAC has committed \$8,000 for the plan.

Knapp gave the following updates:

- Knapp attended a Travel Oregon cycling summit in Bend to gather information for infrastructure and support for cycling in McMinnville.
- Knapp attended the Economic Vitality Summit with board member Scott Hill to discuss county-wide opportunities for economic development.
- Knapp and McGuire attended a WVVA/OWB marketing & PR meeting. The meeting was valuable because it brought all major wine industry partners, including DMOs, to the table.
- Knapp will be meeting with the WVVA at the end of November.

- Knapp reported the projects that Travel Salem will be completing projects with our region's wine license plate funds.
- Knapp reported on Truffle Festival projects, including area dinners and happy hour event in Historic McMinnville.
- The board retreat for strategic planning will be January 9, 2017.
 - o Brittan requested that the board send Knapp potential topics for the retreat.
- Visit McMinnville should have a wrap up of summer survey data by early December; Knapp will report on findings at the December board meeting.

Knapp noted that the board meeting for December will be held on December 14, NOT December 21, to accommodate holiday schedules.

Rupp noted that the executive committee should consider a minimum/maximum for credit funding.

Rupp noted the Public Arts committee voted 6 of 6 to support the Love Locks project, but did not approve it.

Knapp shared VM's recently created 3rd Street video for Sunset Magazine's Show Us Your Main Street contest. Winners should be announced soon.

Knapp closed the meeting at 11:39am.

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Minutes respectfully submitted by Kitri McGuire, Marketing Manager for Visit McMinnville.