

**TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING  
CO-CHAIRS LARRY WILLIAMS AND KIM BENNETT  
WA STATE COMMUNITY TRADE & ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

**September 26, 2008 – SeaTac Conference Center/International A Room  
Seattle, Washington**

**FINAL – November 21, 2008  
SUMMARY MINUTES**

**Meeting attendees**

**Members Present:** *Co-Chairs Larry Williams and Kim Bennett*, Clint Campbell, Michael Campbell, Dennis Clark, Senator Mike Hewitt, Senator Ken Jacobsen, Chad Mackay, Richard Meadows, George Schweitzer, Brad Walker, Sandra Ward and Kris Watkins

**Members Absent:** Representative Barbara Bailey, Frank Finneran, Leonard Forsman, Representative Patricia Lantz and Duane Wollmuth

**Staff:** Sandra Adix, Betsy Gabel, Tammy Guill, Alexander Harper, Kristin Jacobsen, Marsha Massey, Gail Mitchell and Cheryl Rasch

**Guests:** John Christison, Washington State Convention & Trade Center

**Call to Order / Roll Call / Approval of 9/26/08 Agenda / Approval of 6/16/08**

**Minutes:**

1. Larry Williams called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. Larry welcomed George Schweitzer as the newest Tourism Commission member.
2. Roll Call:  
A roll call of the Tourism Commission members was taken, and the presence of a quorum was established. See above for the members that are present or absent.
3. Approval of 9-26-08 Agenda:  
**ACTION:** Chad Mackay made a motion to approve the meeting agenda with no changes. Brad Walker seconded. **MOTION PASSED**
4. Approval of 6-16-08 Meeting Minutes:  
Larry Williams called for the approval of the meeting minutes from the June 16, 2008 Tourism Commission meeting.  
**ACTION:** Sandra Ward made a motion to accept the June 16, 2008 meeting minutes with no changes. Kris Watkins seconded. **MOTION PASSED**

5. Public Comment Period:

Katherine Kertzman, President of the Washington Convention and Visitors Bureau thanked the Tourism Commission for all the hard work the Commission accomplished last year.

Katherine would like to be on record for supporting the expansion of the Washington State Convention and Trade Center.

Harry Sladich, President of Spokane CVB thanked the Tourism Office for all the hard work they have been doing on the ExperienceWa Web site. He shared a suggestion regarding the “Local Expert’s section”. The appropriate “local expert” should be the tourism expert, usually the CVB, not the Chamber of Commerce. He cited Spokane as an example. He also offered CVB assistance in reviewing and gathering correct data for the state’s tourism Web site.

Larry Williams welcomed the Commission members, staff and audience to the Tourism Commission meeting. He introduced Tammy Guill, International Travel Trade Manager, as the most recent addition to the Washington State Tourism Office.

6. Election of Co-Chair:

Kris Watkins requested not to be nominated for another term as co-chair, due to her upcoming workload for the coming year.

**ACTION:** Kris Watkins made a motion to elect Kim Bennett to the open Co-Chair seat. Senator Hewitt seconded. **MOTION PASSED unanimously with 13 yes’ and 0 no’s.**

Brad Walker thanked Kris Watkins for her leadership and work on the Tourism Commission during her Co-Chair role.

7. Tourism Office Update:

Marsha Massey gave an update to the Commission members on the Tourism Office activities and accomplishments since the June 2008 meeting. Following are the highlights:

- Annual Report completed and submitted
- Strategic Plan completed and submitted
- Three re-appointments to the Tourism Commission
  1. Kris Watkins – Tri Cities Visitor Convention Bureau
  2. Duane Wollmuth – Three Rivers Winery
  3. Leonard Forsman – Suquamish Tribe
- One new appointment to the Tourism Commission
  1. George Schweitzer – Red Lion Spokane
- One opening on the Tourism Commission, left vacant by Don Welsh’s departure
- Launched Competitive Grant Program
- Launched the new 2009 Travel Planner

- Ad Agency contract began – Hadley Green Creates
- Media FAM tours
- Crisis Communication Plan
- New Web site launched/in beta
- Tammy Guill – Travel Trade Manager
- 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Watchable Wildlife Conference
- Central Cascades Geotourism mapguide
- Competitive Grant Program received 35 applications for its first time around

8. Marketing/Advertising Update:

Betsy Gabel updated the Commission on the following:

- 2008 Ad Campaign
- Co-Op ads
- Banner ads
- Pay per click

What's next for Tourism Marketing:

- Brand strategy refinement
- Additional Longwoods studies on ROI on advertising
- County Impact report (See Tourism web site for the report)
- 2009 Travel Planner

Betsy Gabel introduced John Rubino from Hadley Green Creates, who gave a presentation on the Brand repositioning work, and the rationale behind it.

- Brand Insight: True Northwest

Brad Walker requested to be put on record that the Tourism Commission Marketing Committee gave full support and recommendation of the brand repositioning.

**ACTION:** Chad Mackay made a motion to approve the brand repositioning presented by Hadley Green Creates. Kris Watkins seconded. **MOTION PASSED**

Sandra Ward joined the Tourism Marketing Committee. The Committee now consists of the following Tourism Commission members:

- Brad Walker – Chair
- Duane Wollmuth
- Kim Bennett
- Brad Walker
- Richard Meadows
- Kris Watkins
- Sandra Ward
- Frank Finneran

Kim Bennett expressed concern for the many deadlines coming up in order to stay on schedule for the 2009 advertising campaign. She suggested there might be a need for another Tourism Commission meeting prior to the November 21, 2008 meeting.

To accommodate the 2009 advertising deadlines the Commission asked the Marketing Committee to review and approve media and creative for the 2009 Spring/Summer advertising campaign. Further discussion was tabled until the end of the meeting.

#### 9. PR Update

Kristin updated the Commission on the following:

- PR Recap
- Future reports
- Crisis Communication plan
- Adventures in Travel Expo
- Washington “Crush” Fam tour

Kristin requested from the Commission what they would like to see forward as to what kind of reports to share with the members.

- Track pro-active media
- Top 3 items that worked once a month
- 1-page standard top line metrics

#### 10. Web Site Update

During the month of September we conducted five commission, stakeholder and media webinars previewing the new [experiencewa.com](http://experiencewa.com) web site. On September 15 we launched the beta version of the new site along with a beta submission form for users to report bugs and errors in design functionality as well as content. The beta program for the web site is scheduled to run for an 8-10 week period which will allow us to have flexibility to make adjustments to the site. Alexander expressed thanks to all that participated in the recent webinars. If anyone has feedback to share, please log in and send to us through the web site.

Alexander introduced Maryann Sweeney from Ascentium to give a presentation on the Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and Search Engine Marketing (SEM).

Cheryl Rasch gave a quick update on the Web site content. As follows are some highlights:

- New Photos
- Copy written for 90 cities
- Update Scenic Byways copy and photos
- Working with shareholders to update copy and photos

#### 11. International Sales/Marketing update

Tammy Guill updated the Commission Members on the activities in International Travel Trade area as follows:

- 4-Fam tours (China, United Kingdom, France and Germany)
- Trade Shows (JATA, ITB Berlin and POW WOW)
- Europe Sales Mission

#### 12. Product Development update

Betsy Gabel presented for Michelle Campbell. Michelle just completed the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Watchable Wildlife conference held at the Sleeping Lady in Leavenworth. The Conference was a success with approximately 75 people attending.

Currently Michelle is working on the Central Cascades Geotourism Pilot program. Washington State is the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> state that has been involved in this type of project. With this Geotourism kick off, a tool kit is also being created and can be found on-line.

Northwest Tribal Tourism is planning a 2009 conference and Washington State Tourism will be a sponsor.

#### 13. Competitive Grant Committee Update

Kim Bennett presented an update to the members on the Competitive Grant. 35 applications were received for the grants. CTED staff did the first initial scrub of the applications.

The Competitive Grant Committee consists of the following folks:

- Kim Bennett
- Kris Watkins
- Leonard Forsman
- Duane Wollmuth
- Michael Campbell
- Clint Campbell
- Chad Mackay

By the November 21, 2008 Tourism Commission meeting the Grant Committee will have completed the review and scoring of the applications. They will come back to the Commission on November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting with a report on the apparent successful applicants.

January 1, 2009 will start the new cycle of the next set of grants to be offered.

#### 14. Expansion of Washington State Convention and Trade Center

John Christison gave a presentation to the Tourism Commission members on the plans for an expansion of the Washington State Convention and Trade Center.

**ACTION:** Michael Campbell made a motion to support the expansion of the Washington State Convention and Trade Center and produce a letter of support on behalf of the Tourism Commission. Brad Walker seconded. **MOTION PASSED**

15. Education and Public Affairs Committee

At the June 2008 Tourism Commission meeting, Kris Watkins suggested organizing an Education and Public Affairs Committee. This committee would be responsible for getting our story to the legislature and stakeholders.

We are asking for volunteers to join this committee. This committee will entail more conference calling than in-person meetings.

The following members have joined the Education and Public Affairs Committee:

- Kris Watkins
- Chad Mackay
- Brad Walker

The Committee will bring their first project idea to the November 21, 2008 Tourism Commission meeting.

Larry Williams emphasized that the upcoming legislative session is going to be challenging. With that said it is important that this committee communicates the importance of tourism to Washington state. We need to get our story out.

Larry reminded the group that our Commission is 1-year old. He also stated in that years time the Commission was able to meet every deadline and has done a lot to be proud of.

16. Wrap up and Adjourn

Michael Campbell requested a budget update at the next meeting, including our progress to date with raising required match.

Brad Walker asked to go back and further discuss the marketing committee's role in the 2009 Ad Campaign. He asked if the marketing committee can make the decision on the direction of the campaign and bring back the results to the Commission or should the Commission do some of the leg work and be involved in the decision? After some discussion the following motion was made:

**ACTION:** Brad Walker made a motion to delegate authority to the Marketing Committee to review and approve the advertising and marketing campaign, and direct staff to implement the campaign as approved by the Committee. Chad Mackay seconded. **MOTION PASSED**

**Meeting Adjourned at 2:45p.m.**