

AGENDA
Clallam County Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
March 8, 2018
Clallam County Courthouse
Rm. 160 Commissioners' Board Room
2:30 pm

- I. **CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL**

- II. **REQUEST FOR MODIFICATIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF**
 January 11, 2018
 February 8, 2018

- IV. **PERSPECTIVE ON EFFECTIVELY RAMPING UP REGIONAL MARKETING**
 AND COORDINATION
 Presentation by Marsha Massey of the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau

- V. **CONVERSATION**
 Investing in marketing vs. infrastructure vs. events

- V. **NEXT MEETING**
 Friday, April 20 at 2:30 pm

- VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

Clallam County LTAC – Hotel/Motel Tax Advisory Committee

Minutes ... January 11, 2018 2:30 p.m.

Room 160 ... Commissioners' Board Room

Committee Members present: Chair Mark Ozias (Clallam County Commissioner and Chair of LTAC), Vanessa Fuller (Dungeness River Audubon Center), Linda Keen (Quillayute River Resort), Lorrie Mittman (Peninsula Adventure Sports) Absent: Jay Vincent (Aramark Sol Duc).

Also present: Marsha Massey (Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau, and Olympic Peninsula Tourism Commission), Randy Johnson (Clallam County Commissioner), Ryan Malane (Black Ball Ferry Line, and Port Angeles Lodging Tax Committee), Barbara Hanna (City of Sequim and staff liaison to the Sequim Lodging Tax Committee), Shelli Robb-Kahler (Sequim-Dungeness Valley Chamber of Commerce and Sequim Lodging Tax Committee), Bill Peach (Clallam County Commissioner)

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chair Ozias at 2:30 p.m.

Other Business:

Chair Ozias noted that this was a joint meeting of Lodging Tax Advisory Committees from within Clallam County and introduced Marsha Massey from the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau to provide an overview of lodging tax and what the funds provide. Massey provided a presentation (attached) beginning with a look back at 2017 that included primary attraction, lodging tax revenues and visitor spending trends. The 2018 look ahead included global, national, and local influences and trends, travel trends, and advertising.

Barbara Hanna reported for the Sequim Lodging Tax Advisory Committee as Chair Candace Pratt, was unable to attend this meeting. The committee is comprised of five members, one city representative, two representatives from tax collecting entity, and two representatives from funded entities. In addition, Hanna serves as the staff liaison for the city of Sequim. The committee prepares an annual budget that is approved by city council and includes funding for standing events such as the Lavender Festival, Irrigation Festival, and the Dungeness Cup, including infrastructure and overtime for police and public works. The budget also includes the committee marketing plan and funding to the Olympic Peninsula Tourism Commission. The committee sets aside a pocket of money for grants, and meets on a quarterly basis to review and approve applications. Hanna reported that they are focusing on possible winter event opportunities.

Ryan Malane reported on the Port Angeles Lodging Tax Advisory Committee. Commissioner Ozias noted that there was a snafu in getting invitations to the Port Angeles LTAC for this joint meeting and thanked Ryan Malane for being present. The Port Angeles LTAC chair for 2018 is Mayor Sissi Bruch and the committee also has representatives who serve on behalf of activities funded by the lodging excise tax and those who collect the lodging excise tax. Malane reported the committee budgets a portion of funds for capital projects including the Civic Field, Fine Arts Center, and the BMX track, and also the Olympic Peninsula Tourism Commission. Funds are used for maintenance to keep the facilities in shape to attract tournaments and events. Other parts of the budget are allocated for

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special events, marketing, a standing agreement with the Olympic Peninsula Tourism Commission, and ongoing expenses such as infrastructure and operations. The committee utilizes a matrix of 5 criteria to determine which event applicants receive funds. Funding of events vary depending on applications. The committee consistently works on attracting grant applicants for new special events.

The Chair of Clallam County LTAC is County Commissioner Mark Ozias, and the committee has two representatives from tax collecting entity, and two representatives from funded entities for a total of five members. The committee does not have a long history of grant making, rather focuses on coordinated marketing efforts and typically considers funding for events larger than \$5k. Committee bylaws dictate that the Chamber of Commerce gets a specific allocation each year, as well as the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau to help fund tourist related marketing and events. The committee decided just last year to develop a grant process for the fund balance. In discussion of how the fund balance may be utilized most efficiently, the committee thought that engaging other LTACs more broadly in the discussion would be a great approach.

The group held open discussion regarding the committees keeping communication open and working together on marketing. Partnerships with agencies such as Olympic Peninsula Tourism Commission (a funding partnership of 8 entities) and Visit Seattle are good relationships to foster. With a core group of people, these agencies encourage businesses to participate in meetings with. Co-op marketing is utilized and provides printed and digital advertising widely throughout the area. Discussion of the partnerships across various entities was discussed, possible gaps or missed opportunities. Hanna reported that it is a very effective organization and has been held up as a model for other regions and that the last five years a lot of progress has been made with co-ops. Massey reported that there is good structure, but there is always more that can be done. Port of Seattle, Cities of Seattle and Portland, can help with international marketing, this is a high demand destination for international visitors and opportunity is there. The flip side of enticing visitors to the area is making sure that there are amenities available once they are here and the committees need to address both sides of the equation. Various ideas regarding off season marketing were discussed.

A potential gap in the current process is information available to potential fund recipients. To be most effective with funding spent, there was discussion of establishing a system of checks and balances to measure what works and what doesn't work in terms of marketing. Destination marketing is very difficult to measure, surveys of visitors, studies, etc, online marketing is easy to track, but does not work for all. A good measure is the lodging tax funds balance.

Suggestions for continued conversation included education for users of LTAC funds, and grant applications; coordination between committees with grant applications, and developing more uniform applications; funding committees continuing to work together, developing ideas and concepts to move to the next level. Massey noted OPTC meetings are 1st Thursdays of each month excluding July and all are welcome to attend.

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Bob Schroeter spoke on behalf of the Economic Development Council, whose role is to recruit businesses. He suggested transparency would be helpful, also tagging Google searches and assisting small businesses with technology.

Next meeting date February 8, 2018.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

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Committee Members present: Chair Mark Ozias (Clallam County Commissioner and Chair of LTAC), Vanessa Fuller (Dungeness River Audubon Center), Linda Keen (Quillayute River Resort), Lorrie Mittman (Peninsula Adventure Sports), and Jay Vincent (Aramark Sol Duc). Also present was Commissioner Randy Johnson.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark Ozias at 2:31 p.m.

Agenda: The agenda was accepted as presented.

Minutes: The minutes of the November 29, 2017 meeting were approved. L. Mittman moved to approve, V. Fuller seconded, motion carried.

Other Business:

Introduction to Cultural Tourism in Clallam County

Commissioner Ozias introduced speaker Michael Peters, Enterprise CEO for the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. He reported on his work with the Tribe and the new hotel to be built in Port Angeles. The plan is to have an occupancy tax that includes money for the tribe as well as the community. He reported that they are looking at charging 10% tax, using 4% for the city and the tribe will administrate the balance. He recommended the committee ask other tribes if they are paying tax to the communities they operate in to help promote tourism.

Peters spoke on committee partnerships with the chamber and other organizations and asked how tourism is viewed as a whole in this community as it is a large part of the area economy. He recommended that agencies come together to agree on a core message or identity to use for marketing. As the economy grows, there is a greater need to have a core identity. Peters worked in Klamath, CA with a Native American Tribe and other businesses to create their core identity. They changed street, directional signage and web pages to include the identity message and made links that led to a central point. He believes marketing needs to be defined and measurable, evaluated, tweaked and tried again.

Peters recommended that applicants for grants or RFPs to LTAC monies should be required to explain how they define success, and provide a post mortem to the Board after the event. Being consistent with how things are measured is important and another part is collecting the data and using it, making it available to partners in a centralized data base. With this method everyone can see where the successes are and agree on what the measurement should be to maximize the return on investment. He suggested that the city and county lodging tax committees invest in a data base. Visit Oregon website would be a good model.

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Mittman and Fuller both spoke of a forms and websites for events that require information that Peters recommended. He also commented that post event/conference surveys need to include area lodging and tourism information. Some surveys may not have a lot to do with the event or conference, but focus on tourism as a whole.

Ozias noted that we are just starting on this project and it is helpful to have specific examples to review and also great to know that the Klallam Tribe will be a partner in the efforts.

Mittman asked if Peters is involved in the Olympic Peninsula Tourism Commission, as the information that he spoke on is included in the goals of this committee. They have discussed a survey of visitors that arrive in seasons other than summer. Peters again mentioned the importance that all surveys are the same. Peters has some involvement with the Olympic Peninsula Tourism Commission and recommend that as a group they need to discuss their true mission.

Peters spoke on cultural tourism and admits that native activities may be a narrow approach, but it is an extremely powerful part of tourism. He contends that international travelers are looking for the experience of uniqueness of a place and will go out of their way to seek out a unique experience to learn about the people and the place. Return of investment is in the created memories and will drive more visitors back. This is why the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is working with the performing arts group, building next to them and working together with a focus on the history, culture, dance, and storytelling of the native people of the Peninsula. This will drive visitors to the area because of the uniqueness.

Keen asked if Peters was working only with the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe in this area. Peters noted that he is, but partnering with the performing arts group is a focus and while the hotel will have board rooms for meetings the arts group will be involved in providing larger meeting spaces for conferences, etc.

Fuller asked if tourism to the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribal property was included in their plans. Peters spoke on the Elwha river dam removals and how the delta is changing a lot. He reported that the Tribe has discussed building a business plan for an eco-guided tour package on the dam removals and the environmental recovery of the delta. Other restoration efforts are ongoing and the management of the land will most likely be turned over to the tribe. Fuller mentioned that the Audubon Birding Festival is working with Tribes in the other areas of the Peninsula and would like to work with the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. Peters suggested that the land is still in recovery and eventually may be available for tourism, right now the delta is a very sensitive area with many species working on re-habitation. He noted that there is a balance between tourism and preservation that is important to find. The Tribe is looking for a process such as permitting to attempt control. There is debate that tribal members have

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special access, but they are working to find guidelines and set requirements that will help the delta heal.

Ozias asked if the Olympic Peninsula Tribes coordinate in terms of marketing and also if LTAC made an investment in terms of cultural tourism what would Peters suggest most effective. Peters reported that tribes have a cautious approach to group marketing, but there are joint efforts i.e. Canoe Journey event that does have cross marketing efforts and community impacts. He thinks there will more Tribal coordination with the new hotel and performing arts center. He suggested that in one of the cycles of funding LTAC solicit the public for events relating to cultural tourism. Ozias stated that would be an interesting way to get an idea from the community of their willingness to participate. Peters reported that the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe has 17 acres next to the fuel and food station they are considering for some type of development to feed off of the Hwy 101 traffic.

Ozias asked about the tribal canoe journey and how much non-tribal tourist traffic or interest is there in the event is that might be a good LTAC investment? Peters encouraged support of this multi-million dollar event and recommended approaching Francis Charles with Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. He mentioned that Pillar Point is a location in the journey that would be an easy start and may possibly work into additional involvement in the event.

Ozias asked if there were any cautions or recommendations in working with tribes. Peters said most Tribes are open to working with supporters, however are finicky about protocol. Seek an introduction first, ask how the LTAC can help in terms of cultural tourism and let them know what is available in terms of help.

The Committee, Ozias, and Johnson thanked Peters for his presentation and information. Peters welcomed future conversation and opportunities to work together.

Topics for Future Discussion:

Ozias noted that the March LTAC meeting will have Marsha Massey back to discuss future investments in marketing and recommended that the Committee discuss and define structural parameters of funds investment. For the April meeting there will be a budget update and discussion on what investments to make.

The Committee discussed working on a unified marketing message for the whole Peninsula, data gathering and tracking to measure what works and what doesn't work, long term planning versus short term, and looking to other Counties LTAC practices. The Committee discussed issues with the Peninsula Tourism Commission issues and difficulties; while it isn't broken it is not being maximized and possibly needs a champion to help with goals, guidelines, and extended partnerships. There was discussion

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regarding the limited availability of housing and lodging and the possibility that LTAC could look at investments.

Comment from the Audience:

Chris Enges with PAPA TV, as a recipient of LTAC funds asked when funds would become available. Ozias said that if all goes well decisions for funding will be made in May. Enges mentioned the films that they are working on and shared a vision for the future. They are working with the Makah Tribe on fishing excursions and staying in vacation rentals or Bed and Breakfasts. With films complete on the east end and central parts of the County they hope to produce a film on the west end of the County. Enges mentioned the window for optimal fishing videos is April through June.

Next meeting: Thursday, March 8, 2018 at 2:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.

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