

**Clallam County LTAC – Hotel/Motel Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
Minutes ... Monday, October 23, 2012... 1 p.m.
Clallam County Commissioners Conference Room**

Committee Members present: Chair Mike Doherty (Clallam County Commissioner), Vice Chair/Secretary Sande Balch (Juan de Fuca Scenic Byway Association), Laurel Black (Laurel Black Design), Bobbi Fuller (Elwha Dam RV Park). Absent: Diane McGann (Rainbow's End RV Park).

Also present: Jim Jones (Clallam County Administrator), Diane Schostak (Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau), Joel Winborn and Bruce Giddens (Clallam County Parks, Fairs and Facilities) and Washington State Patrol Troopers Galin Hester and Keith Trobridge.

Call to Order ...

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Doherty at 1:10 p.m. The agenda was approved as printed. The minutes were accepted as presented. (Bobbi/Laurel)

Reports ...

There were no reports from the Clallam Bay-Sekiu Chamber or the Juan de Fuca Scenic Byway Association at this meeting.

Washington State Patrol ... Troopers Hester and Trobridge

Funding Request: \$3,600 Traffic Control on Hwy 101/Lavender Festival

Trooper Galin Hester reported that there has been a traffic choke point on Hwy 101 during the Lavender Festival with cars driving west trying to turn left off Hwy 101 into the Sunshine Herb and Lavender Farm at mp 274, east of Giles Road. Funds are being requested for 2013 to provide WSP support in managing traffic by moving water-filled jersey barriers (provided by WSDOT) to block left turns when there is heavy traffic in an effort to keep traffic moving safely. Before this support was in place there were 3-4 crashes in this area. A electronic board provided by WSDOT is also used to show a detour route ... drive west to Simdars Road and coming back to the farm heading east.

The City of Sequim is not amenable to paying for this service as the farm is outside the city limits/in the county. Other places contract with the WSP to pay for these services. A guarantee of payment must be made in advance to have these services available ... requires 4 troopers, 3 days for 4-6 hour shifts.

Traffic at this spot and on Hwy 101 was counted ...

At Giles Road area ... Wed 300/Thurs 400/Fri 1338/Sat 1858/Sun 1214/Mon 346

Hwy 101 ... 4 days 44,000 vehicles ... 4 days of festival 63,400 vehicles

Traffic at one point was backed up 10 miles.

In discussion the problem was seen as bigger than just getting to one lavender farm. It affects all farms, the festival, lodging, eateries and all communities beyond ... not only for

visitors but local community and for sure the emergency vehicles. Perhaps a map could be included in the festival brochure/web site to show the double-back detour or suggest that the farm be visited when traveling east only. If the traffic cannot be managed, it will discourage people from attending the festival/visiting the area in the future. It was also suggested that there should be some agreement worked out with the festival to handle this cost.

Clallam County Parks ... Joel Winborn and Bruce Giddens

Funding Request: \$24,500 ... \$17,000 Advertising/Maintenance + \$7,500 Clallam Bay County Park Seasonal Operation/Maintenance

Joel Winborn reported for the Clallam County Parks. Since 2006 Clallam County Parks has received \$17,000 per year to fund an additional seasonal worker to do seasonal clean-up and maintenance that cannot be accomplished by regular staff alone. Clallam County Parks has also used these funds to market the parks to travelers as well as local resident awareness. Clallam County Parks requests that LTAC continue this support through lodging tax funds in the amount of \$17,000 in 2013.

Due to severe budget cuts, Washington State Parks will no longer partner with Clallam County Parks in costs for maintenance and operation of the Clallam Bay County Park. This will take \$7,500 from the funds for this park. Joel reported that the park is currently seasonally staffed, rather than year round, with the community monitoring the facility and restrooms for maintenance and supply needs during the rest of the year. A day-use ranger attends to cleaning and stocking needs weekly. Clallam County Parks is seeking an additional \$7,500 in 2013 for maintenance and operations of Clallam Bay County Park to make up this deficit.

Visitation numbers comparing 2011 and 2012 ...

Salt Creek 2011 .. 9470 visitors

Salt Creek 2012 through September ... 9460 visitors ... all-time record high for Aug/Sept

Salt Creek pays for itself.

Dungeness 2011 ... 6007

Dungeness 2012 through September ... 5856 ... Record high for Sept since 1994

Dungeness closes in October for hunting.

Clallam County Fairgrounds off season events 2011 ... 56

Clallam County Fairgrounds off season events 2012 ... 58

Clallam County Fair paid attendance 2011 ... 29,205

Clallam County Fair paid attendance 2012 ... 27,159

First two days 80% of previous year, Saturday better, Sunday big attendance

In marketing, Clallam County Parks would like to get more information out about the parks and use of Camp David. Diane Schostak suggested that they work with the OPVB in marketing and promotion efforts and take advantage of the many mailing lists/contacts to get more for their advertising budget.

Clallam County Tourism Summit/Networking suggested ...

It was also suggested and discussed that a "tourism summit" be held each year (maybe in the spring) to bring together the Clallam County entities with marketing goals and share information and plans for upcoming marketing campaigns/efforts. This may be for information only, or there may be some partnerships formed to extend marketing budgets. The OPVB would be a good leader in setting up such an event.

Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau ... Diane Schostak

Funding Request: \$320,000 Clallam County/Olympic Peninsula Marketing

The OPVB fosters partnerships with local and regional stakeholders, thoughtfully plans marketing programs, and pays attention to current visitor trends enabling them to work in concert to inspire travel to the Olympic Peninsula.

We reviewed the partner and stakeholder relationships, marketing/promotional/outreach activities of the OPVB. Year to date all this resulted in over \$11.5 million in media coverage value, over 80,000 travel planners distributed, nearly 8,000 travel planner downloads, over 220,000 visits to regional websites, over 41,000 mobile visits to the websites, and \$27,200 has been awarded in Tourism Enhancement Grants. There were 118 attendees at the 2012 Tourism Summit.

With 2013 funding, the OPVB will continue the current programs with adjustments and improvements, including partnerships, advertising campaigns, and media relations. Mentoring to smaller and newer entities to help them develop their products and refine and grow their marketing efforts would be continued. They would also continue to define, package and promote new products and events as appropriate, including the Elwha Restoration, Discovery Trail expansion, culinary and agri-tourism assets, and waterfall exploration. New promotional tools including geo-caching and mobile applications will be explored.

The OPVB is asking that the formula of 85% of the gross lodging tax receipts be directed to the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau in the amount of \$320,000 for 2013.

Elwha Restoration Trail to View Points ...

Bobbi mentioned that there are still people hiking the trail out to the dam/restoration view points. The sani-cans in the parking area have, however, been removed. This may be a seasonal process by ONP. Commissioner Doherty will check into this to see if the facilities can be reinstated.

