



CALIFORNIA'S EASTERN SIERRA

MONO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM & FILM COMMISSION

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MINUTES

Economic Development, Tourism & Film Commission (EDTFC)

Regular Meeting via Teleconference*

Wednesday, November 17, 2021 – 10:00 A.M.

***As authorized by Governor Newsome's Executive Order N-25-20, dated March 17, 2020, this meeting will be held via teleconferencing with members of the Commission attending from separate locations. There will not be a physical location of the meeting open to the public. This altered format is in observance of recent recommendations by local officials that certain precautions be taken, including social distancing, to address the threat of COVID-19.**

Commissioners present: Geoff McQuilkin, Michael Vanderhurst, Steve Morrison, Sarah Walsh, Scott Burkard, Erin Wells, Wendy Schneider

Commissioners absent: None absent

Staff: Alicia Vennos, Jeff Simpson, Liz Grans, Morgan Terrell

Guests: Rhonda Duggan, John Peters

1. Call to order. Commissioner McQuilkin called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.
2. Introductions and announcements. No Introductions made. Ms. Grans announced that correspondence was received from the Benton Historical Society regarding the grant funds it was awarded last year through the Historical Societies Grant Fund. They designed and produced professional interpretive signs describing the history of Benton.
3. Opportunity for the Public to address the Commission. No comments made.
4. Approval of the Minutes of the October 26, 2021, meeting.
Steve Morrison moved to approve October 26, 2021, meeting minutes. Erin Wells seconded the motion. Verbal Roll Call for the vote: Commissioner McQuilkin – yay; Commissioner Morrison – yay; Commissioner Wells – yay; Commissioner Vanderhurst – yay; Commissioner Burkard – yay; Commissioner Walsh – yay; Commissioner Schneider – yay. All in favor, no abstentions; minutes approved 7-0.
5. Continuation of remote teleconferencing meetings for the Economic Development, Tourism & Film Commission, per AB 361:
ACTION: Review and approve Resolution of the Mono County Economic Development, Tourism & Film Commission authorizing remote teleconferencing meetings for the period of November 17, 2021, through December 15, 2021, pursuant to AB 361.
Michael Vanderhurst moved to approve continuation of remote teleconferencing meetings. Erin Wells seconded. Verbal Roll Call for the vote: Commissioner McQuilkin – yay; Commissioner Vanderhurst – yay; Commissioner Morrison – yay; Commissioner Wells – yay; Commissioner Burkard – yay; Commissioner Walsh – yay; Commissioner Schneider – yay. All in favor, no abstentions; action approved 7-0.
6. Approval of the 2022 regular meeting schedule.
Michael Vanderhurst moved to approve the 2022 meeting schedule with correction from 2021 to 2022. Erin Wells seconded. Verbal Roll Call for the vote: Commissioner McQuilkin – yay; Commissioner Walsh – yay; Commissioner Morrison – yay; Commissioner Wells – yay; Commissioner Burkard – yay; Commissioner Vanderhurst – yay;

Commissioner Schneider – yay. All in favor, no abstentions; action approved 7-0.

7. Monthly Financial/Budget report.

- a. FY 21-22 Budget- Quarterly Report. Ms. Vennos provided a detailed description of all Economic Development budget units, including amounts spent to date and commitments for the remainder of the fiscal year. All budget units are on track for both revenues and expenditures.
- b. Transient Occupancy Tax reports, and other fiscal metric, as available. TOT receipts for Quarter 2 are still being collected.

8. Community Support Grants.

ACTION: Receive update regarding grant application process/evaluation system; approve allocation of funds and/or determine next steps in the process. Ms. Grans provided a report of the non-profit organizations that applied for the 2022 grant programs including Community Event Marketing Fund, Historical Societies Grant Fund, Performing and Visual Arts Grant, details on the programs/projects to be funded, and grant funds allocated.

Michael Vanderhurst moved to approve staff decision on allocation of funds for all Community Support grants as presented. Scott Burkard seconds. Verbal Roll Call for the vote: Commissioner McQuilkin – yay; Commissioner Vanderhurst – yay; Commissioner Morrison – yay; Commissioner Walsh – yay; Commissioner Burkard – yay; Commissioner Wells – yay; Commissioner Schneider – yay. All in favor, no abstentions; action approved 7-0.

9. Economic Development and Tourism report – information on current or emerging issues, including but not limited to:

- a. Report on the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) program, the assigned economic regions for the CERF grant program and other parameters. Ms. Vennos provided information on the [CERF program](#), which is a state-funded \$600 million grant to help bolster regional economies with funding available on a competitive basis to 13 different established regions within the state. The assigned Eastern Sierra economic region includes Mono, Inyo, Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa. Each assigned region will receive a \$5 million planning grant that will be coordinated and administered by a convening nonprofit fiscal agency. The regional assignments are open for public comment until November 19th and Ms. Vennos worked with the Board to express concern regarding disparities between the eastside and westside counties assigned to the Eastern Sierra region.
- b. Update regarding Local, State, Federal business assistance programs. Mr. Simpson reported there are no new programs out at the Federal level. The CA Rebuild funds and SBA disaster loans are still available, as well as the Employee Retention tax credit in which up to 80% of employee taxes are reimbursable.
- c. Update regarding application for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) CARES Act – CV1, 2, 3 for Microenterprise Financial Assistance Program for small businesses. Mr. Simpson reported that CV1, CV2 & CV3 have all been approved, and staff is currently working with Community Development Services (CDS) consultant to get the application process finalized to be circulated to the business community by the end of January. There are two separate funding sources. CV-1 involves a \$5,000 microbusiness grant; CV 2-3 provides forgivable loans up to \$35,000 with varying criteria.
- d. Collateral Update: 2022 Visitor Guide; Backroads Guide; Fall Color Guide; Fishing Map; Community Maps, 2022 Events Calendar. Ms. Vennos reported that staff is working with graphic designer Laura Patterson on the 2022 Visitor Guide, which is coming along nicely. The Eastern Sierra Fall Color guide was on press last week, so it will be shipped soon. Ms. Vennos will follow up with BLM regarding the Backroads guide. Finally, the 2022 events Calendar will be fast-tracked for the ISE show in January.

10. Film Commission update. Ms. Vennos reported that the Inyo National Forest proposed plans to increase its film application time frame for review and authorization of completed film permits from the current 15 business days to 30 calendar days prior to filming and 45 days for more complex proposals. This is due to significant staff vacancies on the Forest. As this extended timeframe would virtually eliminate local filming, Ms. Vennos proposed a solution whereby Economic Development staff would provide “intake” services for proposed applications on the Forest, help screen the applications to ensure they are as complete as possible before Forest staff reviews for authorization. Inyo NF staff agreed to this plan on a trial basis, and they will join Ms. Vennos to present the proposal to the Board of Supervisors on December 7, 2021.

Mr. Morrison reported that there were two large film shoots in November, one for Netflix and another for a clothing company that filmed at the top of Mammoth Mountain. Mr. Morrison and Ms. Vennos are currently working with Toyota for a 60-person production on Mammoth Mountain, the motocross track, Lee Vining and Bridgeport. A commercial shoot for a brand-name beverage will entail 100 people a day for 4 to 5 days. Lack of snow is presenting some challenges. Ms. Vennos added that the BBC will be shooting at Mono Lake.

11. Project Status Update, including public relations, advertising/social media, websites, and tradeshow/conferences.

Mr. Simpson shared that staff is tracking website usage, and traffic continues to increase. The Fall Color page continues to be the most visited, with hot springs and web cam pages also popular. Social media is going well with over 180,000 followers on Facebook and about 65,000 on Instagram. Mr. Simpson is continuing to put out light messaging for only places with infrastructure to support visitation. The first consumer travel trade show is the International Sportsmen's Expo in January in Sacramento. Regarding public relations, Ms. Grans continues to work with Caporusso Communications on the winter outreach plan, editorial calendar and Cision, the media outreach data base platform. In addition, the first draft of the redesigned Mono County Film website has been received and will be reviewed by staff. All websites will be ready to share in January.

12. Commissioner Reports.

- Ms. Wells reported that November in Bridgeport is very quiet. Lodging reservations are coming in from the European community for next season and several weddings have been booked so summer 2022 season is looking very good for the area.
- Mr. Burkard reported that the Northern Mono Chamber voted to hold the ATV Jamboree a week later, so the new dates are September 13-17th, 2022. The community is currently working through the one-year anniversary of the Mountain View Fire. A Thanksgiving celebration will be held in Topaz the Friday before Thanksgiving. On December 4th the Chamber is also holding a Christmas Tree lighting and holiday parade in Walker. The community is also seeing an uptick in international reservations.
- Mr. Morrison reported that the Night of Lights on Mammoth Mountain is still moving forward. After that, the U.S. Grand Prix will be the next huge event, hoping for snow.
- Ms. Walsh reported that June Lake is quiet, but weekends are stronger than expected. Visitors seem to be understanding that some businesses are closed this time of year. June Lake Brewing completed the Employee Retention Tax Credit, which was very worthwhile, she highly recommends that businesses go through the process.
- Mr. Vanderhurst reported that the early opening of Mammoth Mountain created a big boom for the town, bringing in high weekend numbers. Scheduled flight service starts next week, November 24th, 2021, with Advanced Airlines running the charter flight into MMH. Commercial service with United starts December 19th, 2021, with flights into BIH. Everyone is looking forward to a strong winter.
- Ms. Schneider reported that Friends of the Inyo is still planning events to bring in visitors to support the recreation tourism economy. Currently she is very focused on the Kore mining exploration that will commence in Long Valley, concerned about the negative impacts on the environment.
- Mr. McQuilkin reported that most businesses in Lee Vining are closed. The Mono Lake Committee Bookstore is open with a local discount available. He has been spending time with the new district ranger for the Mono Basin, and there is a lot of positive interaction.

13. Call for agenda items for next regular meeting. An informational presentation regarding the Kore mining project was requested by Mr. Vanderhurst.

14. Adjourn the meeting and reconvene in regular session at 10:00 a.m. on January 25, 2022, via teleconference. Mr. McQuilkin adjourned the meeting at 11:54 am.