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MINUTES

Economic Development, Tourism & Film Commission (EDTFC)

Special Meeting via Teleconference*

Wednesday, January 26, 2022 – 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, Sarah Walsh, Erin Wells

Commissioners absent: Scott Burkard, Steve Morrison

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

Guests: Stacey Corless

1. Call to order. Commissioner McQuilkin called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.
2. Introductions and announcements. Ms. Vennos announced that Commissioner Wendy Schneider was not requesting reappointment by the Board for an additional 4-year term. Her insights and contribution to the Commission will be very missed. A vacancy notice for the appointment has been posted.
3. Opportunity for the Public to address the Commission. No comments made.
4. Approval of the Minutes of the November 17, 2021, December 15, 2021, and January 12, 2022, meeting.
ACTION: Michael Vanderhurst moved to approve November 17, 2021, December 15, 2021, and January 12, 2022, meeting minutes. Erin Wells seconded the motion. Verbal Roll Call for the vote: Commissioner McQuilkin – yay; Commissioner Wells – yay; Commissioner Vanderhurst – yay; Commissioner Walsh – yay. All in favor, no abstentions; minutes approved 4-0.
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 January 26, 2022, through February 25, 2022, 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 Wells – yay; Commissioner Walsh – yay. All in favor, no abstentions; action approved 4-0.
6. Commissioner Chair and Vice Chair Elections.
ACTION: Commissioners to nominate and vote for the Mono County Economic Development, Tourism & Film Commission chairperson and vice-chairperson for 2022, a one-year term. Erin Wells made the motion to re-elect Geoff McQuilkin as chairperson and Michael Vanderhurst as vice-chairperson for 2022. Sarah Walsh seconded. Verbal Roll Call for the vote: Commissioner Walsh – yay; Commissioner Wells – yay; Commissioner Vanderhurst – yay; Commissioner McQuilkin -- yay. All in favor, no abstentions; action approved 4-0.

7. Monthly Financial/Budget report.

- a. FY 21-22 Budget- Quarterly Report. Ms. Vennos reported that mid-year budget review is underway. The Board of Supervisors will be reviewing any requests for additional funding by County departments on February 22, 2022. She added the Economic Development budget is on track with spending at approximately 50 percent expended by the mid-year mark.
- b. Transient Occupancy Tax reports, and other fiscal metrics, as available. TOT receipts for Quarter 2 are still pending.

8. 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. Staff provided a recap 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. Next steps will be determined by the State administrative agencies to select the planning agent from a RFP process for our region.
- b. Update regarding Local, State, Federal business assistance programs. Mr. Simpson shared information on the California Dream Fund Program, a \$35 million fund that will provide micro grants up to \$10,000, focusing on businesses for childcare, retail and manufacturing. The Employee Retention tax credit program is still rolling, 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 grant programs were made available to local businesses in unincorporated Mono County, and one business has applied for a \$35,000 forgivable loan. Others are in the process of applying. 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. Total funding is approximately \$300,000 and will be distributed on a first come, first served basis.
- d. Collateral Update: 2022 Visitor Guide; Backroads Guide; Fall Color Guide; Fishing Map; Community Maps, 2022 Events Calendar. Staff completed the 2022 Visitor Guide, fully advertising free for the first time. As well, the 2022 Scenic Events Calendar was designed and produced prior to the ISE show and distribution is county-wide and the 395 Corridor.

9. Film Commission update. Ms. Vennos indicated that she has followed up with the Inyo National Forest and the proposed plan to allow Economic Development staff to handle intake of film permits. This is due to significant administrative vacancies on the Forest and thus its lack of capacity for film permit processing. In December, the Board of Supervisors approved ED staff to begin the intake role on a trial basis. However, Ms. Vennos reported that filming has been very quiet and the Forest Service staff may not need the assistance immediately.

10. Project Status Update, including public relations, advertising/social media, websites, and tradeshow/conferences. Mr. Simpson shared that staff continues to develop the brand refresh for the websites, and continuing to push as much winter recreation as possible. Mr. Simpson reported that he just returned from International Sportsmen's Expo in Sacramento and distributed 30 boxes of collateral – about 70% of pre-pandemic attendance.

11. Commissioner Reports.

- Ms. Wells reported that Bridgeport is very quiet as usual for winter season. A lot of reservations are being made, so summer projections are good. The only concern is not knowing what's happening on the restaurant front. Mr. Simpson added that the sale of Rhino's will close escrow on February 1st, 2022, and the new owner hopes to open a few weeks after the purchase is final.

- Mr. Vanderhurst reported that Mammoth Mountain is having record skier visits so far this winter, and the Town of Mammoth Lakes is recording November and December record TOT and TBID months. The Grand Prix was a very successful event, and six Mammoth athletes made the Olympic team. The new airport in Bishop is a success, with very few cancelled flights and with multiple options for shuttle service.
- Mr. McQuilkin reported that Lee Vining is still very quiet but seems like everything will be up and running in time for the return of spring visitors. Mono Lake Committee is getting ready to continue with all their education and tours. June Mountain has been open and seems to be getting solid visits. The wild horses have been wandering around South Tufa, resulting in a new set of resource concerns. Mono Lake water levels are 10-12 ft lower than projected by this time of year.

12. Call for agenda items for next regular meeting. Staff was unable to get a representative from Kore Mining to provide information at the Commission meeting but will try again for next meeting.

13. Adjourn the meeting and reconvene in regular session at 10:00 a.m. on March 30, 2022, via teleconference. Mr. McQuilkin adjourned the meeting at 11:18 am.