

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

October 16, 2017
5:30 pm
City Council Chamber
313 Court Street, The Dalles, Oregon

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. DISCUSSION REGARDING TOURISM AND USE OF TRANSIENT ROOM TAX REVENUES FOR THE CITY OF THE DALLES
 - A. Infrastructure
 - B. Marketing
 - C. Tourism Program for the Future
3. ADJOURNMENT

Prepared by/
Izetta Grossman
City Clerk



AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Tourism Work Session

MEETING DATE: October 16, 2017

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Julie Krueger, City Manager

ISSUE: Discussion regarding tourism and the use of transient room tax revenues.

BACKGROUND: The City Council conducted a meeting on September 18, 2017 to gather information and opinions regarding tourism programs and use of transient room tax revenue. Approximately 30 people offered a variety of ideas, suggestions, and opinions regarding the future of tourism in The Dalles. The two primary areas covered were tourism infrastructure and marketing.

Infrastructure:

- Maintenance of attractions (murals, facilities)
- Hospitality training
- Good image; improve community attitude; tell a positive story
- Reduce homeless impact
- Lack of public transportation
- Need for an RV park
- Retailers need to be open for business early
- Tourism Advisory Committee
- Clean, attractive downtown (wash sidewalks, flowers, planters, entry arch, murals, public art)

In addition to the items listed above, infrastructure needs could include street improvements, maintenance of the commercial dock, Lewis and Clark Festival Park, Rock Fort, NEAT Officer position, City's small grants program, support of local events, assisting with technology such as video, interactive kiosk at the visitor's center, paying for items such as a bike hub, helping to fund public transportation, etc.

Marketing

- Stronger focus on The Dalles (not entire region)
- Targeted marketing for groups; provide incentives for collaborate advertising (museums; history/culture; agriculture; entertainment; outdoor recreation, restaurants and lodging; breweries)
- Marketing funds for local events
- Advertise in Hood River
- Stronger digital presence
- Promote shoulder seasons
- Cross market the Airport
- Partner with college for senior opportunities for lodging, meals and interesting educational opportunities

Other Items Mentioned at Work Session

- Participate in Trade Shows related to history/culture; outdoor recreation, etc.
- Concern that retail space rent is too costly
- Separate tourism from Chamber of Commerce
- Image of the Visitor's Center
- Take care of volunteers

Tourism Program for the Future

The Council should discuss whether the current program should be adjusted. Is the current structure serving the needs of the community? Should more focus be placed on tourism infrastructure funding? Should more focus be placed on funding for marketing and developing new marketing criteria?

The City Council should discuss whether there is a desire to investigate alternative programs. Should the City consider staffing a tourism department? Should the City advertise a Request for Proposals in 2018 to provide tourism services? Should the City extend the existing agreement with the Chamber of Commerce for an additional five year period?

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS: None at this time.

COUNCIL ALTERNATIVES:

1. Staff recommendation: Provide direction to staff to continue the current tourism agreement; or develop a Request for Proposals for 2018; or investigate "in house" tourism services; investigate possibility of creating a tourism advisory committee.

Once the City Council has decided on a structure, staff will continue to develop that option and make additional recommendations for improvements that will meet the needs of the community.