



# CALIFORNIA'S EASTERN SIERRA

MONO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM & FILM COMMISSION

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## MINUTES

Regular Meeting of Tuesday, September 24, 2019 - 10:00 AM

June Lake Community Center  
90 W. Granite Ave., June Lake, CA 93529

1. Call to order.

Chairperson Geoff McQuilkin called the meeting to order at 10:08am.

2. Introductions and announcements.

Commissioners: Geoff McQuilkin, Sarah Walsh, Steve Morrison, Wendy Schneider (Absent: Chris Long, Erinn Wells, Michael Vanderhurst)

Staff: Alicia Vennos (Absent: Liz Grans, Jeff Simpson)

Guests: April Sall, Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership; Ralph Lockhart, Double Eagle Resort/June Lake Loop Chamber of Commerce

3. Opportunity for the Public to Address the Commission.

April Sall announced that in honor of National Public Lands Day, the Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership, Friends of the Inyo, and BLM are co-hosting a volunteer fence rehabilitation and stewardship day in the Bodie Hills on Sept. 28, 2019. Meet 8:30am at the Aurora ball field. All are welcome.

Ralph Lockhart spoke about the frustration and challenges for local businesses regarding recent Public Safety Power Outages, communication issues and Southern California Edison (SCE) policy and procedures. Community meetings are being conducted by SCE, and the Board of Supervisors is engaged in discussions with SCE about the process and the impact on local businesses and residents.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the June 25, 2019 meeting.

MOTION: Sarah Walsh, SECOND: Steve Morrison. APPROVED: 4/0, no abstentions.

5. Monthly Financial/Budget Report.

Quarter 1 Transient Occupancy receipts will not be available until mid-November. In the meantime, Ms. Vennos shared the annual Transient Occupancy Report for FY18-19 compared to the year prior, FY17-18. In spite of challenges of continuous wildfire smoke during summer 2018 and the extremely late opening of the passes in spring 2019, the strong fall and winter quarters essentially offset the losses, and the year-over-year impact was only -1.8% (excluding late fees). As well, the Tourism Marketing Reserve Fund policy was discussed. Ms. Vennos will research the next steps regarding the format in which to put the policy recommendations forward.

6. Economic Development and Tourism Report.

a. Update on research projects, including Economic Impact of Tourism and Visitor Profile Study, Business Retention and Expansion Survey, and Advertising Conversion Study. Ms. Vennos gave a brief report – marketing expenditures need to be submitted for the completion of the Advertising Conversion Study, and highlights for the Visitor Profile Study are being organized.

b. Report on Rural Infrastructure Financing Grant, sponsored by California Association for Local Economic Development (CALED). Ms. Vennos reported that this project is near completion; infrastructure constraints for workforce/affordable housing is the topic of research for Mono County and the consultant is reviewing potential housing developments. The Tioga Inn project was discussed.

c. The Commission reviewed some new tourism marketing branding concepts and provided feedback and direction..

- d. Community Support Grant Program application deadline is October 11<sup>th</sup>
- e. Access to Capital seminar for local small businesses is scheduled for October 18<sup>th</sup> – hosted by our regional UC Bakersfield Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the event is free and will provide detailed information about financial resources available for new and expanding businesses in Mono County.
- f. Sustainable Recreation and Tourism Initiative – Liz Grans attended the initial meeting in Bishop on Sept. 26 and staff will actively participate in the multi-year planning process which aims to identify sustainable recreation and tourism projects in the Eastern Sierra region.
- h. Staff has contracted with Site Location Partnership to identify 600 businesses within the Outdoor Recreation and Tech space in California/Nevada with potential to relocate or open businesses in Mono County.
- g. Staff is working with Visit USA on a road trips video promotion which will feature Bodie, Mono Lake, Tioga Pass and June Lake and be distributed through Visit USA and Visit California channels, and pushed out specifically to the UK market.

7. Mono County Fish & Wildlife Commission Update – Jeff Simpson  
Tabled until next meeting.
8. Film Commission Update – Alicia Vennos  
Ms. Vennos and Mr. Morrison gave a brief report on filming activity which has been steady with commercials, a music video, television pilot, and Visit USA Imax project.
9. Project Status Update: Ms. Vennos provided a recap on the following projects -
  - a. Collateral: Advertising sales are well underway; Ms. Vennos extended appreciation to all our loyal advertisers.
  - b. Public Relations: Several FAMS scheduled with media, travel trade
  - c. Advertising/Social Media/E-Newsletter. September ENewsletter will go out this week to over 24,000 subscribers
  - d. Website: Traffic to the Fall Color Reports page on the website is already building rapidly
  - e. Tradeshows & Conferences: Ms. Vennos was unable
10. Commissioner Reports: Time permitting, Commissioners may share EDTFC-related information, community items, etc.  
Tabled until next meeting due to lack of time.
11. Call for agenda items for next regular meeting. None.
12. Adjourn the meeting. Reconvene in regular session at 10am on Tuesday, October 29th at the Antelope Valley Community Center, Walker, CA.