



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* Tuesday, May 25, 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, Sarah Walsh, Scott Burkard, Erinn Wells, Wendy Schneider

Commissioners absent: Steve Morrison, Michael Vanderhurst

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

Guests: Supervisor Rhonda Duggan, Supervisor John Peters, Ken Harrison (KIBS)

1. Call to order.

Mr. McQuilkin called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

2. Introductions and announcements.

Introductions were made. Ms. Vennos informed of the Dispersed Camping town hall meeting being held this evening, 5-7pm.

3. Opportunity for the Public to address the Commission.

Mr. Harrison reported that KIBS has secured Berkley Fishing as a major sponsor for three of local tackle shops, Rick's Sport Center, Convict Lake and Ernie's Tackle Shop to broadcast fishing reports in real time through the end of fishing season this year.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the April 27, 2021, meeting.

Sarah Walsh motions to approve the April 27, 2021 meeting minutes. Erin Wells seconds. All in favor, no abstentions; minutes approved 4-0.

5. Monthly Financial/Budget report.

- a. FY 21-22 Budget. Ms. Vennos reported the April 9th department budget meeting went well, and FY2021-22 Economic Development budget units were all reviewed and approved by Finance Director Dutcher and CAO Lawton. An increase to the Tourism marketing base budget was approved. The Community Support grant program funding will be included in the budget without requiring a Policy application. Budget hearings with the Board of Supervisors will follow in the next several weeks and Board adoption of the county budget is scheduled to take place in June. Ms. Vennos also reported that Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) receipts for Q3 came in at \$378,762, up by 14.8% over Q3 in 2020 (\$329,939). For Q1, 2, 3 total to date, TOT is down 7.8% compared to Q1, 2, 3 in 2019-20. Compared to the fiscal year before the pandemic (2018-19), we are down almost 10% for the first three quarters.

6. Economic Development and Tourism report.

- a. Central Sierra Economic Development District (CSEDD) – Update on Mono County joining CSEDD. Mr. Simpson reported that Mono County requested to join CSEDD as there are numerous shared advantages and collaborative opportunities, particularly with respect to EDA grants that requires a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). The CSEDD is comprised of the counties of Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, Tuolumne and the cities of Sonora and Angels Camp. On May 20th, the CSEDD Board approved Mono County’s request but there are several other steps in the process. The cost to join would be approximately \$3,300.
 - b. Collateral Update: 2021 Visitor Guide; Backroads Guide; Fall Color Guide; Fishing Map; Community Maps. Ms. Vennos reported that the 2021 Visitor Guide and new Fishing Map have been distributed countywide. Working on revisions to the Eastern Sierra Backroads Guide and with regional partners on revisions to the Eastern Sierra Fall Color Map. Pandemic has delayed this process.
 - c. Dispersed Camping Summit Update. Ms. Vennos reported that she is leading the 20-person Education Subcommittee for the Dispersed Camping initiative. Messaging has been approved, as well as final versions of a 4x9” rack card, 8.5x11” one-sheet, sticker, and poster. The call to action is through a QR code and essrp.org/camping website that features an interactive camping map that shows where camping is permitted. Fire regulations are highlighted.
 - d. Local, State, Federal business assistance programs. Mr. Simpson provided an update on all state and federal assistance programs, most of which are in the process of wrapping up.
 - e. 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 application has been approved, and once signed, the county will begin work on the business grant application for Mono County businesses. CV2 & CV3 application requires some revisions; awaiting notice of approval.
7. Mono County Fish & Wildlife Commission update. Mr. Simpson reported that he provided a presentation to the Board of Supervisors at its regular meeting of June 8th regarding issues concerning the Fish & Wildlife Commission. The Board voted to suspend Commission activities with direction to staff to conduct research into other Commission structures, alternative advisory groups or resources and return to the Board at a future date with a report and recommendations.
 8. Film Commission update. Ms. Vennos reported filming activity and inquiries have increased due to the pent-up demand. Staff is working on reconstructing a new county film website. Portrayal of “Leave No Trace” and responsible recreation/travel will be featured on the new website.
 9. Project Status Update, including public relations, advertising/social media, websites, and tradeshow/conferences. Ms. Vennos stated they have registration fee being held for the Bay Area Travel Show this year. Mr. Simpson mentioned that format, booth spacing, and attendance are still question marks for in-person tradeshow. Ms. Grans reported she is currently working on a press release for the opening of Tioga Pass, Yosemite, waterfalls, flowers, etc. The Enews will be coming out tomorrow. She reported that the Tourism website will receive a brand refresh, and that the Economic Development website and Film website are being overhauled.
10. Commissioner Reports.
 - Ms. Wells stated they are looking forward to a busy summer; reservations are up and restaurants are slowly reopening. Bridgeport Coffee Roasters will be selling product at the bakery, and there is also new massage business opening behind the Jolly Cone. The July 4th activity schedule is finalized, and the rodeo will be happening this year.
 - Mr. Burkard reported that the restaurant adjacent to the KOA was sold. The Jamboree has already received many registrations so far but will boost advertising social media. Fishing on the West Walker appears to be gaining momentum.
 - Ms. Walsh reported June Lake’s summer season is moving along well so far. The Lift and Hermitage are now open, and all events are moving forward. A June Mountain party is being planned, and weddings will be happening as well. June Lake Triathlon is moving forward, and everyone is just waiting to see what happens

in terms of COVID public health and safety protocols on June 15th when the State is expected to announce a return to normal business operations.

- Ms. Schneider reported that Friends of the Inyo is awaiting approval from the Forest Service on a few events and projects, in particular the June Lake clean-up event. They are still planning to operate clean-up events in Northern Mono County and are hosting interpretive walks once a month. In addition, they are interviewing for new head of communications. She also mentioned Crowley Lake General Store is for sale. Mosquito Flat trailhead is now open. They are having trainings for Trail Ambassadors and are focusing on “Leave No Trace” and fire safety prominently in all communications. Supervisor Duggan reported they are working on getting McGee Creek Pack Station open.
- Mr. McQuilkin reported that Lee Vining is all open at this point. A section of the boardwalk at South Tufa has been repaired; Mono Lake Committee will be doing daily walking tours this summer, most programs (some virtual) will be available, and they have a new reservation system in place. It is very much a drought year, and Mono Lake will be going down at least a 1ft making everyone concerned it will be like 2012 when it dropped 7ft, creating the land bridge to the island. The Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center is still closed, but they have volunteers outside to direct people and provide visitor information. Most businesses at this point are open, and they are working to fill the space of Epic Café. The Mono Inn property sold; restaurant has closed and will be missed. He sadly reported Tioga Lodge owner, Gloria Ma, passed away, and the property is for sale. Yosemite still will require advanced reservations.

11. Call for agenda items for next regular meeting. None.

12. Adjourn the meeting and reconvene in regular session at 10:00 a.m. on May 25, 2021, via teleconference.
Mr. McQuilkin adjourned the meeting at 11:42 pm.