



Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

2nd quarter Virtual Tourism Commission Meeting

Dec 17, 2020 2:30 PM MST – GoToMeeting Teleconference

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7072184545558630156>

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 2:37 p.m. by Jennifer Kimball.

Roll Call:

Commissioners Present:		Commissioners not present: N/A
Jennifer L. Kimball (Chair)	Scott Hutton	
Belia Alvarez	Jay Chris Stagg	
Tania Armenta	Emerson R. Vallo	
George Brooks		

Approval of Agenda: The motion was made by Commissioner Brooks to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Stagg, and passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from September 10, 2020: The motion was made by Commissioner Armenta with changes to be made from "Downtown" to "Oldtown" in her section update and to approve the minutes as amended from the September 10, 2020 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Alvarez, and passed unanimously.

NM Department of Health- Vaccine Rollout: A video update was shared from the Department of Health.

NM Finance Authority - Small Business Continuity Grant - Marquita Russel: Ms. Russel provided a description of the program administered by New Mexico Finance Authority. Program funds have been designated for tourism businesses, including hotels and restaurants.

National Federation of Independent Business, NFIB-Economic Recovery Proposals - Jason Espinoza: Mr. Espinoza provided a description of NFIB efforts to advocate for small and independent businesses. He updated commissioners on the COVID-related efforts to assist small businesses, including surveys of small business owners regarding Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) benefits and other relief efforts nationwide.

Governor's Economic Recovery Council - Daniel Schlegel, Allan Affeldt and Carri Phillis: Mr. Schlegel, Mr. Affeldt, and Ms. Phillis provided summaries of the recent efforts of the Recovery Council.

NM Tourism Department Update - Secretary Jen Schroer: Sec. Schroer thanked the commissioners and all attendees for joining the meeting. She highlighted the great work that SBDC has been doing to assist the tourism industry during this difficult time. Sec. Schroer then asked Victoria Gregg, NMTD Research Director, to share the results of a survey conducted by the department. The survey revealed that New Mexicans are eager to welcome tourists back into their communities as they understand the importance tourism has on local economies. Then Sec. Schroer discussed the marketing plans pre-COVID vs. post-COVID, as well as upcoming budget requests and other strategic plans.

Commissioner Chris Stagg: Commissioner Stagg thanked the members who made a sincere effort to create safety protocols for the industry. The hard work was successful. He also spoke of the goal to slowly open Taos and avoid large problems through April.

Commissioner George Brooks: Commissioner Brooks commended Sec. Schroer for the fantastic job she has done. He then introduced Axie Nava from the Outdoor Recreation Division of EDD who spoke about outdoor recreation businesses that fall under the umbrella of hospitality and offered statistics on growth. She also described how her division has outlined goals that align with NMTD goals.

Commissioner Tania Armenta: Commissioner Armenta discussed efforts in the Albuquerque area to support small local businesses. She also discussed the New Mexico Bowl and plans for the future. In closing, Commissioner Armenta thanked the recovery council and Secretary Schroer and her team for their leadership, tenacity and collaborative spirit.

Commissioner Scott Hutton: No report.

Chairwoman Jennifer L. Kimball: Chairwoman Kimball invited Kathy Komal from NM Hospitality Association to brief the commission on the developing plans of the legislative agenda for the session in January, including tax relief packages and supporting NMTD's budget requests. In closing, Chairwoman Kimball thanked the Recovery Council, the tourism department and the Governor's office for their responsiveness. Commissioner Kimball reminded everyone about the televised New Year's Eve firework show on the Santa Fe Plaza.

Commissioner Emerson Vallo: Commissioner Vallo reported they began giving vaccine shots to the elderly and are attempting to get everyone vaccinated. There is limited access to the reservation as they are trying to keep the numbers down as much as possible. Once COVID goes away and marketing begins to increase, they would like to see Native destinations be showcased in advertisements. Many artisans are beginning to market themselves on social media outlets. The American Indian Tourism Conference was virtual in September with over 800 participants, which was a great success. Some tourism enterprises have been opened, but others are waiting until COVID goes away to open back up.

Commissioner Belia Alvarez: Commissioner Alvarez shared updates on the Virgin Galactic test flight. Everyone is optimistic the spaceport will be an attractive feature that will draw tourism to the state. Las Cruces wrapped up the Hiking for Hospitality program, which was designed to showcase the hiking opportunities in the area. NMSU Conference Services visited two trade shows and allowed Visit Las Cruces to co-represent at their booths. Looking back on the difficult year, it allowed reflection time to forge ahead in a new era with new opportunities and challenges.

Adjourn: The motion was made by Commissioner Stagg to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Armenta, and passed unanimously. Chairwoman Kimball adjourned the meeting at 4:38 pm.

Approved by Commission vote at public meeting held on May 4, 2021.


Commission Chair