



New Mexico Tourism Commission Meeting
Farmington Civic Center, Room 4
200 W. Arrington St., Farmington, NM 87401
Wednesday, September 4, 2019, at 3:00 pm - 5:00 p.m.

Called to order at 3:11pm by Interim Chairman, Chris Stagg.

Commissioners Present:

Interim Chairman Chris Stagg
Commissioner George Brooks
Commissioner Tania Armenta (via phone)
Commissioner Scott Hutton (late arrival)
Commissioner Belia Alvarez (late arrival)

Commissioners not present:

Commissioner Jennifer L. Kimball
Commissioner Emerson R. Vallo

Approval of Agenda:

Chairman Stagg said that since they do not have a quorum at the moment (he, Commissioner Brooks, and Commissioner Armenta, who is attending via phone), they will vote only on approval of the agenda. The motion was made by Commissioner Brooks to approve the agenda as presented, was seconded by Chairman Stagg, and Commissioner Armenta concurred.

Approval of Minutes from May 1, 2019:

Chairman Stagg and Commissioners Brooks and Armenta agreed to postpone voting on approval of the May minutes until they have a quorum. (Commissioners Hutton & Alvarez were in transit at this time.) After Commissioners Hutton & Alvarez arrived, Commissioner Brooks made a motion to approve the Minutes from May 1st; Chairman Stagg seconded, and they were unanimously approved.

Recognition of New Commissioner Appointments:

Chairman Stagg asked Secretary Schroer to introduce the two newly-appointed commissioners. She said Commissioner Belia Alvarez is a repeat appointment; Belia is the VP of Hospitality for Heritage Hotels and Resorts and represents the Las Cruces area congressional district.

Commissioner Armenta, joining by phone, is our newest appointment. She has been the President and CEO of Visit Albuquerque for quite a few years and is well-respected in the industry. Tania expressed her gratitude to be a part of the Tourism Commission and provided a brief background of herself.

Northwest Region Tourism Board Update:

Newly-elected Board Chair, Bill Lee, provided the commission and audience an update regarding upcoming projects of the board such as:

- Destination Development Roadmap (DDR)
- Google DMO Partnership
- Lodgers Tax Best Practices

Mr. Lee said he's excited about the direction the program is going, and said Tourism's Cabinet Secretary, Jen Paul Schroer, is encouraging board members to get more involved in community strategic plans, and to include Tourism in those plans. Mr. Lee said McKinley County is working on enhancing outdoor recreation, as well as cultural, historic, and artistic assets in the region. Chairman Stagg said he thinks the DDR listening sessions are great for industry. Tourism isn't always involved in EDD plans, but he said he hopes this initiative will change that.

Commissioner Belia Alvarez arrived at this point.

NMTD FY19 In Review:

- Secretary Schroer reviewed and explained the FY19 Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) Brief
- Secretary Schroer also discussed the Co-Op advertising grant program that had more than \$1.3M in requests from local government agencies, but the current budget at NMTD only supported \$600K. Secretary Schroer said the large number of requests is a direct testament to how successful NMTD marketing has been. \$566K was awarded to 33 partners as those 33 partners' budgets were matched by NMTD.
- New Mexico Magazine has a monthly subscription of 300K+ and circulation of 70K.
- The Secretary discussed the Tourism Development accomplishments with the Lowrider Museum in Española and shared the video with Commissioners and the audience.
- Secretary Schroer said NMTD is partnering with EDD and the Outdoor Recreation Division.
- NMTD partners with and celebrates tribal communities; for IPW this year, the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Gallup, Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Las Cruces participated in our booth.

Question from audience (Bill Lee, Gallup): How can we help advocate for tourism budget requests? Secretary Schroer said the LFC hearings will be in October. She encouraged partners to attend and share their stories on how tourism is helping their communities.

- Secretary Schroer introduced the in-state campaign and showed chile creative (:30 commercial) by Talweg Creative, the department's agency of record. The commercial had a positive reaction from commissioners and audience.

Commissioner Scott Hutton arrived at this point.

NMTD 5-Year Strategic Plan:

- Secretary Schroer said NMTD is hiring to fill current vacancies.
- The Secretary said the mission and brand will remain the same, but the effort will be amplified to drive awareness to NM, help industry partners fill hotels, and grow NM's economy through tourism.
- \$3M budget increase this FY.
- The Secretary's goal is to double down on earned media.
- Going to RFP for a National PR Firm.
- The Secretary said that marketing is seeing a strong ROI, at 7:1.
- NMTD won an award at ESTO (Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations) for storytelling.
- NMTD has a large appropriation for the Virgin Galactic Launch, to market and sell NM.
- NMTD is launching NM Magazine's new website, including NM True Certified products.
- Revamping Rural Pathway Project.

- Work on the Visitor Centers - Suzy Lawrence explained the interactive component NMTD wants to bring to NMTD visitor centers.
- NMTD is working with NMDOT and State Parks to grow the outdoor recreation economy.
- The department's Keep New Mexico True Clean & Beautiful program is inspiring folks to recycle. Nearly \$650K in grants have gone to 38 local governments statewide who demonstrate pride in their outdoor resources, devotion to environmental stewardship, and their commitment to Keep New Mexico True.
- *#NewMexicoTrue* hit one million posts on Instagram and want to continue that trend.

Secretary Schroer proceeded to go over the remainder of the 5-year strategic plan overview.

Policy Discussions – discussions regarding upcoming changes to the lodgers' tax, as well as questions from the industry regarding the number of liquor licenses issued by the RLD.

Commissioner Updates:

Brooks: Ski areas are talking about e-bikes. Snowmaking (in case winter is not like it was last year). The new restaurant, Ten3, at the top of the Sandia Tram, opened August 17th.

Hutton: Sting Concert in Taos (8K people); Hotels sold out; Opera concerts; Zozobra had a record-breaking year (64K people); Wine + Chile Fest in Santa Fe coming up; 7 flights a day at SF Airport; 7K short term rentals

Alvarez: Virgin Galactic equals more space industry commerce coming. The “mother ship,” White Knight, has arrived at Spaceport, a huge milestone. Testing in/around Spaceport America in October, with travelers coming from 52 countries. Country Music Festival; Las Cruces hailed as the 50th nicest place in America by Readers Digest; ranked #3 on the list of 20 Best Places to Visit, by Money Magazine; ranked #2 on Best Places to Live in the El Paso area, by Niche.com; and #6 on list of Best Run City / Best Run in NM, by Wallet.com

Stagg: Vortex in Taos; Barn Dance (3 days); Ski Valley construction; Looking at climate change; Biking Trails; Rock climbing; Ropes course; Events in mountain environment; Lift open in summer for scenic rides; Open Thanksgiving Day

Adjourn (5:14pm): Commissioner Hutton motioned to adjourn; Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Approved by Commission vote at public meeting held on November 7, 2019.



Commission Chair

_____ November 21, 2019 _____