

Minutes
NEW MEXICO TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING
Santa Fe Community Convention Center, Kearny Room
201 W. Marcy Street, Santa Fe, NM 87501
Wednesday, May 1, 2019 – 8:00 a.m.

Chairman Stagg welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

➤ **Roll Call**

Commissioners present:

Interim Chairman Chris Stagg
Commissioner George A. Brooks
Commissioner Scott Hutton
Commissioner Emerson R. Vallo
Commissioner Jennifer Kimball

Commissioners not present:

None; appointments pending for 2 seats

➤ **Approval of Minutes:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Brooks to approve the January 29, 2019 meeting minutes. It was seconded by Commissioner Hutton and passed unanimously.

➤ **Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Stagg asked for a motion to approve the agenda; Commissioner Brooks moved to accept the agenda, and Commissioner Hutton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

➤ **Open Meetings Act Resolution**

Chairman Stagg opened discussion of the resolution and said it's required of all public bodies. Commissioner Kimball moved to pass the resolution, and Commissioner Hutton seconded. After brief discussion, the commissioners voted unanimously to accept the resolution.

➤ **Legislative Session Update**

○ ***NMTD, Cabinet Secretary Jen Paul Schroer***

Tourism was provided a \$3M increase for the general fund, recurring for marketing and promotion, primarily due to the methodology of our data-driven research, our ASD, and an effective presentation by TD's research director, Victoria Gregg. Collaborative meetings with our tourism industry partners and tourism-related organizations was key to determining tourism policy issues.

○ ***Tourism-Related Associations***

• ***Kathy Komoll, CEO, New Mexico Hospitality Association***

She said the legislature supported: removal of exemption G, so all lodging options are subject to lodgers tax; ACI and the Restaurant Association, so they created a phased-in wage increase. They worked on alignment of New Mexico with national hotel and lodging policies.

• ***Jess Griego, Brewers Guild Board***

Ms. Griego said Leah Black is their new executive director. They worked with craft beverage manufacturers and rural breweries across the state to redefine the tax structure to encourage industry growth and jobs. They hope to distribute to Colorado, Arizona, and Wyoming, bringing

revenue into NM. They can now open at 11am, and due to more clear and consistent licensing, can host and serve at private events. There's parity with distillers and cider-makers.

- **Kerrie Romero, Executive Director of the NM Council of Outfitters & Guides**
She discussed the NMCOG legislative initiatives, captured in her hand-out (see attachment).
- **Chelsea Canon, New Mexico Wine (did not attend)**
- **Jason Weaks, lobbyist for Tourism & Hospitality Industry**
He updated the Commission on his legislative efforts of this session.

➤ **NM Tourism Department Update**

- **NM Magazine – Antoinette Vigil, acting publisher**
The magazine will hire a CEO, 2 sales positions for Albuquerque and southern New Mexico, and a marketing coordinator. They are evaluating the relevance for print and creating a readership survey to determine readership expectations and demographics, to make optimal decisions on content. They plan procurement changes for the online store, will have a Christmas gift guide, and will create a new marketing plan.
- **Research – Victoria Gregg**
Research studies, ROI & others, are underway or in procurement process. Focus is on department performance indicators and looking at the state as a whole. She is working to track the movement of visitors, as we only have self-reported travel. Her tracking shows 11% of overnight travelers visit Indian lands, and she plans to work with Commissioner Vallo on tracking strategies.
- **Communications – Aimee Awonohopay**
An overhaul of the communications division, including PR and media, is in progress. They are posting 2 full-time positions: for cultural heritage and a PR coordinator. Brianna has been doing a great job with industry relations, outreach, and publications. Result of PR Summit: partners are working with the department on prioritizing strategic goals; once defined, the goals will feed into the RFP, due to go out soon.
- **Tourism Development – Suzy Lawrence**
They're planning for FY21, with 3-pronged focus: *Programs*, acting as true marketing arm for KNMT, bringing investment and cultivating annual event sponsorship; *Capacity Building*, offering technical assistance to stakeholders, especially to advocate for unconventional partners, focusing on existing and operational VIC infrastructure, and to include information kiosks and chambers as accessible points for rural areas; and *Project Management*, to focus on results of a year-long study where she hopes to see common themes to put multiple-year plans in place – a major focus is to mobilize the traveler, create public/private partnerships that spur travelers' interests and make our resources accessible.
- **Marketing – Erin Ladd**
Erin said hard work brought TD the increased budget from the legislature. She acknowledged her team's hard work, now they're fully staffed (Bryce - graphic designer; Taylor - marketing communications coordinator). Big initiatives: TD will be going to an RFP for the agency of record in two weeks; Andrea has traveled the state to help stakeholders understand media options and the application process; web upgrades have better navigation options; very successful spring and summer advertising; both airport and drive-market presentations; focus on domestic expansion; and evaluating/coordinating programs with other TD departments.

➤ **Commissioner Updates**

- Commissioner Brooks said Ski New Mexico had a 21-year high this year, with skier visitation up 91% over last year. (see attachment: Ski New Mexico, 2018-2019 Season). The winter advertising by TD was impactful, and he appreciates it. The resorts also made a big effort.

- Commissioner Kimball said St. Vincent Hospital is partnering with Mayo Clinic. The First Friday walks are starting June 7 in downtown Santa Fe, with La Fonda involved. She said Santa Fe's entire market is up 6.5%. She recognized Ed Pulsifer for his induction into NMHA Hall of Fame.
- Commissioner Hutton said Meow Wolf realized \$2M in sales for March; he said they're a blessing for our state, and are growing: opening in Las Vegas in December, expanding into Denver next year, and are planning a 22-floor hotel in Phoenix.
- Commissioner Vallo said today starts the pueblo feast days, through September, and he urged everyone to visit for these festivals. San Felipe's is today.
- Chairman Stagg said Taos had the best ski season in 20 years, with 265,000 skiers. Construction on Blake Residences (\$30M), skating rink, and underground parking, started today (complete in Nov. 2020). Carina Armejo, Taos Marketing Director, said Taos Air Service, from Taos to Dallas and Austin, has been very successful. The extended summer service (6/22-9/27) coincides with the Taos summer music festivals. Chairman Stagg said TSV is building new mountain bike trails and the "via ferrata," the *iron path*, which allows novice rock climbers to be safely tethered while climbing. He said B-Corp has been great, local charities are benefiting, they have double-digit lodgers tax growth.

➤ **Public Comment**

Emily Stovall, Tourism in Sandoval County

She said they pool funds to make granting opportunities to the rural areas in their county; they pulled together \$37K. She thanked the Tourism Department and Suzy, for her work in Cuba in the Rural Pathways Project, which has helped them immensely. One project is video shorts of pueblo dances.

Tania Armenta, President and CEO of VISIT ABQ

Three new hotels are being developed - two east of downtown and one close to Presbyterian. Actual attendance was more than double (from 2K to 5K) for an archeologist convention. The upcoming National Senior Games has registered 13,712 athletes; friends and family expected to boost figures up to 25,000-30,000 total. The railyard has done a \$7M impactful remediation, and Balloon Fiesta has a \$7.5M upgrade.

➤ **Adjournment**

Chairman Stagg will accept a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Brooks so moved, and Commissioner Hutton seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 9:44 a.m.

Interim Chairman, J. Chris Stagg