

Minutes  
LTAC  
April 25, 2013

Present: Lauren Lund, Warren Zimmerman, Mary DesMarais, Kathy Franklin,  
Jannae Mitton, Tom Drohan, Sue Braaten, Mona Sarrenson, Denny Richards  
Chair Tim Payne  
Guests: Lindsey Munson

Councilman Payne welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for tolerating him over the past few months as he worked to get up to speed as the chair.

Marketing Director Lauren Lund gave an update on first quarter report. Discussion on Paddlers Cup. Room nights were down from last year. Mary said merchants profits up and visitors in the stores.

Discussion on upcoming Little League tournament in July that is expected to bring a lot of families to town. Payne said he is working to figure out some kind of violation action to get two abandoned homes next to the field cleaned up.

Coupon book Lauren is working on for the Little League will be given to all the attendees to try to get return visitors as well as get visitors circulating through town during the tournament.

Discussion on the success of the online Northwest Travel ad with addresses being provided. All agreed there was value there and should be continued.

Chair Payne asked if everyone needed a minute to look at the minutes. Seeing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Sue Braaten made the motion and Kathy Franklin seconded. Minutes from the January meeting were approved.

Open LTAC position and the two candidates were discussed after Lindsey Munson left the room.

Chair Payne clarified the procedure – both candidates could be put forward or the committee could choose just one. Candidate recommendation goes to Boards and Commissions Committee then to Council for final approval.

Discussion followed on one candidate lack of tourism experience but overall quality of that candidate in general. Councilman Payne said if we did not choose that candidate for the LTAC there could be other places for this candidate to serve.

Mona Sarrenson was concerned that Lindsey Munson would be considered a hotelier not an at-large

Tom Drohan says Lindsey would be an at-large person not representing the hotel.

Chair Payne gave an example of the council with more than one councilman representing an area of town. Does not violate any rule.

Kathy Franklin stated the value of having someone on who is already familiar with tourism. Does the gentleman know anything about tourism? May want to get involved in the community but is he understanding the concept of tourism.

Tom Drohan made a motion to move Lindsey Munson forward. Kathy Franklin second. No further discussion.  
Motion unanimous.

Next item Marketing Dept transition. Chair Payne said when Laureen made announcement that she was retiring he saw an opportunity for the council to discuss the notion of the marketing department and its going forward. Department has done more than just LTAC duties. Chair Payne feels marketing is not a core service of the city done by a community. Chair Payne is of the opinion that promotion of the community not a function of the city. Tim has been very satisfied by Laureen's accomplishments. Look forward to looking at what destination communities are doing. Time is ticking Laureen departure is June 27<sup>th</sup>

Denny Richards announced that the job was posted internally. Karen Scott has applied and has 8 years experience.  
Karen Scott has been offered the job as Marketing Director.  
May 13<sup>th</sup> is her start date.  
Laureen will train Karen to get the transition done.

Chair Payne says council will consider the future of the department as well as the possibility of putting more general fund money towards the department as we move forward. Laureen has been asked to develop a document for the council to educate themselves on the function of the department. Chair Payne said there are many communities in the state doing it many different ways.

Warren Zimmerman asked Denny Richards why the positions are replaced internally? Denny said there was no reason to do an outside search when there was a suitable and qualified candidate internally. Guild is very easy to work with. Advantage to the city is when you already have someone internally such as Public Works and Planning they can hit the ground running .

Kathy Franklin said most people have no idea what Laureen does and should pay more attention to the success of the department. She believes we can't afford to take the time to train someone up and have down time. Mary DesMarais commended Denny for the decision as she has worked closely with Karen and thinks she will be exceptional. Laureen also credited Karen's skill and demeanor as a positive asset to the department.

Chair Payne asked the committee for thoughts for specific items to start to think about for the 2014 budget. No one had specific suggestions immediately. Laureen encouraged committee members to send her emails with any ideas as she and Karen will begin working on a draft budget soon.

Laureen said money would need to be budgeted in 2014 for upgrades to computers and server.

Lindsey Munson asked to consider putting more money aside for advertising key events such as the Race for a Soldier that bring significant room nights for the Wesley which serves as the lead hotel for that event.

Mona Sarrenson said the Beer Festival is a good room generator for the INN.

Tom Drohan suggested we need to not be an event driven community, rather have the community be the draw itself. Curb appeal, shopping, brewery, other things that are attracting visitors. Laureen agreed the core of the community still needs developing providing more to promote in the umbrella marketing efforts.

Warren says traffic at the Visitor Center says there is nothing to do, what more can we do? But there is still some missing element. People need to have something to do to hold them overnight. Not to mention so many downtown stores are not staying open.

US Open 2015 Discussion

How will this impact Gig Harbor? How would we like it to impact Gig Harbor? Should money be spent on a strategy? Rooms will already be full so do we want to focus on other things? Laureen shared her concern that the city be prepared with infrastructure, and timing on construction projects be considered. Additional work needs to be done with the Narrows Airport.

Jannae Mitton asked if we should talk with another city about what other communities have done. How do we get in front of the media?

Mary DesMarais asked what would bring the media to Gig Harbor? Filler stories such as Kyle Stanley?

Chair Payne asked do we need another meeting to think through what we need? Tom Drohan says he wants Gig Harbor on TV. We need to look at the technicalities of getting on TV.

Lindsey Munson says need to have a tagline that connects the story to our town. Kathy Franklin said if the media were staying here than that would help but it is not. Murano is the head hotel.

Chair Payne suggested another meeting to discuss US Open further.

Discussion pursued on changing the regular quarterly meeting day and time. Laureen clarified that the next meeting falls on a holiday (4<sup>th</sup> of July) so will need to be moved.

It was decided to have a May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss US Open. It was decided to leave the quarterly meetings at first Thursday in January, April, July and October but to change the upcoming July 4<sup>th</sup> meeting to June 27<sup>th</sup>.

It was decided to move all meetings to 7:30am beginning with the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Submitted by  
Laureen Lund  
Marketing Director