



**SNOHOMISH COUNTY**  
Tourism Promotion Area

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## Minutes of TPA Advisory Board Meeting, dated September 15, 2020

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Members Present : Shawn Walker, Chairperson – Lodging, At-Large  
(By ZOOM conf) Georgia Borg-Leon, Secretary – Lodging, Dist. 3  
Matthew Rosenthal, Vice Chairperson – Lodging, Dist. 1  
Julio Cortes – Member, Non-Lodging, Dist. 2  
Dale Gellner – Member, Non-Lodging, Dist. 3  
Maia Kalehua – Member, Lodging, At-Large  
Doug Hobbs – Member, Non-Lodging, Dist. 5  
Virginia Olsen – Member, Non-Lodging, Dist. 4 – left early, proxy assigned to Julio Cortes  
Jay Ohm – Member, Lodging, At-Large  
Sheldon Johnson – Member, Lodging, Dist 2

Members Absent : Reshma Singh-Chand – Member, Lodging, Dist. 4  
Veronica Verge – Member, Lodging, At-Large – proxy assigned to Matthew Rosenthal  
Adrienne Hall – Member, Non-Lodging, Dist. 1

Staff : Tom Teigen – Department Director, Parks, Recreation & Tourism  
Bridgid Smith – Administration and Tourism Division Manager, Parks, Recreation & Tourism  
Carol Peterson – Interim Tourism Promotion Coordinator  
Tammy Dunn – Executive Director, Snohomish County Sports Commission (SCSC)  
Anniqne Bennett – Tourism Development Specialist, Parks, Recreation & Tourism

Applicants : Snohomish County Sports Commission – 2021-2023 Kayak Bass Fishing Challenge  
Everett CC – NWAC Basketball Championships 2022-2024  
Snohomish County Sports Commission – Application Adjustments requested  
-Spartan Race  
-WA ST Wrestling Association

Documents:

- Meeting agenda
- Draft Minutes from TPA Advisory Board Meeting on July 21, 2020
- Snohomish County Sports Commission – Kayak Bass Fishing Challenge Application
- Everett CC – NWAC Basketball Championships Application
- Change Request Letter from WA ST Wrestling Association
- Change Request Email from Spartan Race
- Voting Tally for Zoom conferencing board members

**1. Opening:**

Meeting called to order at 3:07 p.m.

**2. Welcome and Introductions:**

Carol Peterson welcomed Board members and staff to the September 15, 2020 virtual ZOOM TPA board meeting, provided instructions on how to participate and also notified the participants that the meeting was being recorded. Jay Ohm also announced that his hotel had been sold and he was staying on as a consultant through the transition period to the end of the year. He suggested Jeff Bae from La Quinta as his replacement starting January 1, 2021.

Note: The LTAC board members (Stephanie Wright, Bryan Harmon, Debbie Copple, Shawn Walker & Adrienne Hall) were all invited to attend this meeting to listen in on the Destination Management Teams' presentation. Shawn Walker & Adrienne Hall are also TPA Board members, and Bryan Harmon and Debbie Copple both were able to join us. Stephanie Wright and Adrienne Hall were not present for this meeting.

**3. Grant Applications Reviewed:**

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Snohomish County Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, 6705 Puget Park Drive, Snohomish, WA 98296

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Justin Smith and Tyler Allen from the Snohomish County Sports Commission (SCSC) presented the Kayak Bass Fishing Challenge Application. This is a three-year application by SCSC to host the Kayak Bass Fishing Challenge for 2021-2023. They are asking for \$4,500 of financial support over the next three years (\$1,500/yr). They are expecting 45-75 participants from WA, Oregon & Idaho the first year with projected two and a half nights per angler, and then in 2022 that number to grow to 75-100 participants. The 2021 event will be hosted virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions with anglers coming in on their own with no kickoff event or celebration ceremony at the end. The SCSC is projecting that this event will bring in over 300 room nights and \$36,000 in revenue to Snohomish County over the next three years, with the hope that this becomes an annual event. The \$4,500 will cover all host fees for advertising/social media costs and tournament management. Kayak Bass Fishing will also provide SCSC with a report after the event to help understand ways to grow the event in the future, as well as use of their social media platform to market the event for Snohomish County. Kayak Bass Fishing currently has over 250,000 followers on social media through Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

Garet Studer presented his application for Everett CC for the NWAC Championships for 2022-2024 for the 36 colleges across the Pacific NW. The college had to cancel its 2020 event due to COVID, but NWAC has been developing an extensive plan over the last three months for a safe return to collegiate sports, so the 2021 tournament has a very good chance of being held. This will be Everett CC's sixth year of hosting the event. The SCSC has estimated approximately 3200 room nights for this event, over the three-year span, based on data from previous NWAC tournaments held at Everett CC. The SCSC also estimates \$2.5 million in economic impact from 15,000 visitors for this three-day event. Lots of great coverage of the events, significant former players appearing, and lots of coaching coming to the event to scout the players. It's a six-day event with 32 teams, 16 men and 16 women, with the majority of those traveling to the event.

Tammy Dunn presented two requests for changes to existing 2020 TPA grant contracts:

- 1) Spartan Race – Cherie Bortnick had applied and was granted \$115,000 of funding for her 2020 Spartan Race, which was going to be a US Championship series event in April 2020 and a Beast event in October 2020. However, the event had to be cancelled due to COVID. She is asking for guidance in whether she can carry her grant award over to 2021, or if she should submit a new application for 2021. Her 2021 event will no longer be held in April and October, it will just be one Trifecta race (Super, Beast, Sprint, and Trail Race over two day period) in September 2021, and would be at a reduced cost of \$75,000, since it would only be one event, and no production costs. The Trifecta race is a huge draw, since there are only two Trifecta races per year in the whole United States. The rains in April have caused the number of participants to drop and made the race unprofitable, so they would like to move to just one race in September. Some concerns were raised about King County hotels being used instead of Snohomish County, as well as media concerns with what was being posted, logos being used, allowed to be listed, current ARez listings not being Snohomish County, and only digital advertising being used. Tammy will be working with Cherie on future events to resolve these issues.
- 2) WA ST Wrestling Association – Justin Newby sent in a letter requesting to have the 2020 TPA Funds carried over to 2021, since his event was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID. The original application was for three years and he'd still like to host the championships in Snohomish for three years. Carrying over his 2020 funds to 2021 would allow him to host 2021 – 2023. He is asking if the TPA Board would take the original application from 2020-2022, and move it to 2021-2023. There were no costs/reimbursements for 2020 so no funding has been paid out. The original contract was for \$42,000/year but majority of costs were for facility rental costs at the fairgrounds. The Board has asked that for anything that was priced out PRE-COVID, it should be re-negotiated POST-COVID.

#### 4. Board Business:

##### a. Grant Applications – Recommendations and Votes:

- Kayak Bass Fishing Challenge -3 years (no partial): – full funding of \$4,500 11 yes, 0 no Approved
- Everett CC – NWAC Championships 2022-2024- Full Funding of \$30,000 over 3 years 11 yes, 0 no Approved
- WA ST Wrestling Associations – request for carry over to 2021-2023 11 yes, 0 no Approved
- Spartan Race Change Request:  
Board voted to request a new application be submitted

##### b. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

- Shawn Walker made motion, Georgia Borg-Leon seconded, to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2020 meeting; motion carried unanimously.

#### 5. Staff Reports:

Annique Bennett, Christian Folk, & Justin Yak presented their performance report for August as well as projections for September. Christian mentioned how his group was on hiatus for about three weeks until the contract with Snohomish County was updated in mid-August and therefore there was a slowdown of social boosts for that period. He went through their metrics with site traffic, social boosts, digital presence, referral traffic, etc. There's been a pretty drastic decline year to year but they do

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see some better recovery month over month. Seattle is typically the top geo area, and then Bellevue/Kirkland next for where our traffic is coming from. Paine Field, our top referral traffic, has significant reduction this year compared to last year which has contributed to the lower numbers. COVID has really impacted the tourism industry. DVA is not currently doing any paid advertising but are doing boosts of organic content on some pages. On other pages they have found the need to turn them off due to negative user impacts. Two good standards for measurements are Costs Per Click (CPC) and (CTR) Click Through Rate. A CTR rate of .9% is a strong benchmark as well as .63 cents for CPC. At this point Snohomish County is doing very well on both. Videos do a great job of driving impressions & engagements on Facebook, but since we did not have those assets available in July due to lack of funding (38% lower spend), you can see a reduction in interest over that month. Christian also mentioned increase interest on Twitter, which is a new marketing platform for Snohomish County. He discussed hotel occupancy, although down overall, there is an increasing trend month over month which is a good sign. August rates are up to 48% which is up 20% from June and 7 % from July. June and July Countywide visitation shows a 41% increase month over month. The majority of June was in the Urban Basecamp area, but in July it moved more to the Sky and Stilly Valley areas for outdoor recreation. Over 350,000 people came to the Urban Basecamp region in July. Top points of interest still include shopping, Mountain Loop, Seattle Premium Outlets, etc. Seeing good rebound in driver traffic, leisure travel starting to come back but not much business travel. All this information helps determine where to put our advertising dollars moving forward. Media plan for Q4 is to have advertising/marketing ads ready to deploy but will have all the right elements in place with appropriate phase advertising, prior to deploying. It appears that we will remain in Phase 2 for the remainder of 2020, so will contain a responsible messaging of you are welcome to come, but please visit responsibly. Paine Field is currently only marketing to Los Angeles and Phoenix areas for flights to Snohomish during Phase 2. These matrix figures started being taken in September 2018 with Arrivalist, which was expensive, and the Destination Management team is looking at maybe discontinuing that agreement. They have seen a stabilization of the market and will continue to use urban source tools to track data. They can still see the arrivals coming in through other sources outside of the Arrivalist dataset, so they would continue to have good data moving forward.

Bridgid Smith mentioned that starting in September, Amy Craven the Fairgrounds Marketing Specialist, has been switched over to tourism to help Annique and her team out with the social media aspect of marketing. This will be paid out of the Parks General Fund, not tourism funds. Tom Teigen mentioned all the initiatives going on currently in tourism. He also wanted to be cautious about spending large sums of money prior to knowing when the County will be opened back up to tourism and can experience economic gain from that advertising.

Tammy Dunn gave a brief update on her group's current project/workloads now that they are all back full time, thanks to the PPP loan. They are trying to bring in Phase 2 appropriate events like fishing, disc golf, cornhole and soccer tennis. There are ten events they are prospecting on currently, but venues may present an issue since none of the high schools are allowing outside use of their fields/facilities. Tammy also explained that all conferences are now being done virtually, which gives her staff an opportunity to attend some events that they may not normally have been able to. In August she had 14 meetings with event owners and are now following up with 62 leads. Connect Sports also went virtual last month and this provided 29 meetings with event owners, and will now be following up to see if they are interested in bringing their teams/events to Snohomish. She also mentioned that a lot of the national event organizers who had 2020 events are moving them to 2021, so there won't be many opportunities to reach out and host events until the 2022 season or beyond. All of the main events need to wait until Phase 4 to open up, with a few in Phase 3. She also explained that she will be presenting her 2021 budget to the TPA Board during their October meeting.

**6. Meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.**

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