

GCTT meeting March 2, 2018  
Curtis State Office Building  
1000 S Jackson St  
Topeka, KS 66612

Members Present: Bridgette Jobe, Lynda Fort, Rep. Shannon Francis, Rep. Adam Lusker, Linda Craghead, Suzan Barnes, Sen. Julia Lynn, Rep. Jan Kessinger and Sen. Bud Estes

Members Absent: Jan Stevens, Shelia Lampe, Jennifer Haugh, Susie Coleman, Ken Corbet and Sen. Tom Holland

Staff & Public Present: Andrea Etzel, Michael Pearce, Colby Terry, Logan Hildebrand, Kelli Hilliard, Jeff Bender, Sen. Maria Francisco, Kurt Young, Cree Lawson, Jake Huyett, Jennifer Anderson, Melissa White and Connie Hartford

Bridgette called the meeting to order @ 10:02AM

December's meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with a motion from Suzan Barnes to accept and a second from Lynda Fort. Motion passed. Bridgette gave the public present an opportunity to address to the council. Bridgette reported the Governor Coyle has reappointed Ken Corbet and Jennifer Haugh to this council.

Senator Estes gave an updated report on the Amusement Park bill. The small ride inspections have changed thus making things a little more even among all rides. He stated the hay rack rides and barrel train rides should be exempt. There is a different set of requirements for bouncing houses. Lynda asked if all three inspections are still going to be required for the smaller attractions. Sen. Estes advised those kinds of rides will require inspection at the lowest level – this means a local person can become certified and do local small ride inspections. This process was an action item along with a letter the tourism council sent to the legislators asking for review of this bill suggested changes in verbiage.

Agritourism legislative update – email report. From Ken Corbet

SB 331 includes the Flint Hills Nature Trail request to become a Kansas State Park. It has moved out of the House and is now in the Senate. SB 331 asks for the trail and Little Jerusalem to become state parks

Jeff Bender gave an update about the FHNT. This is the 7<sup>th</sup> longest rail trail in the US. There is 96 miles open and fully traversable now. It is continuously being worked on. This trail covers 14 cities and 6 counties. This trail is rail-banked. Rail-banking means conserving an out-of-service rail corridor under the National Trails System Act. This trail has spectacular landscape views and ever varying terrain. The trail not only connects these towns but byways and other trails. Our goal is to provide a great outdoor experience as well as educating users about the locales. Jeff showed plans for the signage on the trails; it will include incorporating local rock. Subtle lighting and innovative design are paired for needed bridge work. Parking, restrooms and kiosks are all being planned as well. There are several phases of repairing and maintaining the trail. Jeff reported over 300 people attended Rush the Trails last fall. Jeff entertained questions. Rep. Adam Lusker asked if the train rails ever needed to come back would the bridges be able to handle it. Jeff believes most would but there would be some that needed a little more stability. Linda interjected, all our bridges meet the Federal highway standards. Most cities along the trail are very involved but not all. Sen. Lynn was very positive about the trail. She believes when developing around Kansas lakes, it should be

done with private money. The management of the corridors was originally left to volunteer organizations. Unfortunately, most have not been able to keep up with the needs of the trails. With the state maintaining the trails we would be sure they were ready if the rails were ever needed again. The cities and counties along these corridors are in favor of the trails project. Jeff shared the Katy Trail is 240 miles long – about twice the length of the FHNT. Julia asked about horse manure on the trail. Linda advised mother nature is really the best ‘clean-up’ for this issue, however if the bill is passed and KDWPT is involved, we would be able to monitor those kinds of issues. Everyone agreed the trail is a fantastic project. Linda shared millennials want to know about this kind (as well as others) of outdoor experience before they decide to move, start a business, play and work in Kansas.

Tourism’s Digital Marketing/Tracking Initiatives report was given by Jake Huyett with jhP and Cree Lawson with Arrivalist. Arrivalist is a company able to obtain key performance indicators and can track data on possible visitors. The state of Kansas was the very first to utilize this technology. Jake began the presentation explaining that jhP supports tourism efforts to drive economic growth to Kansas. Our focus has changed a little in as much as we now focus on what we believe to be Kansas’ best assets instead of trying to be everything to everyone. Jake explained the difference between ads and peer recommendations. We speak to 9 key personas. We do need to educate our ‘brand ambassadors’ more to know what there is to see and do in their regions. We all track, measure and modify to increase economic increase to the state of Kansas thru tourism. Jake introduced Cree Lawson with Arrivalist from New York. Cree gave an update on what we and their company have done in the past 4-5 years. He explained insights – they come from surveys and other mediums. They can measure whether people opening an ad, on any device, come here, move on to other pages/links, share the page/link and much more. Impression – Movement – Arrival – Measurements, are all taken from where the person was when they clicked on our information and then again when they arrived in Kansas. Arrivalist can also measure people who just “show up”. They can present many meaningful graphs and charts to show the economic impact of our visitors. Arrivalist can now measure in and out of state travelers and chart what/where they visited within Kansas. Jake and Cree entertained Q & A. Discussion followed.

Lunch break @ 12:28

Meeting resumed @ 1:03

Linda gave an update on key metrics and explained the handouts. The number of hotel rooms continues to grow, that means we need to fill those rooms up with Kansas visitors. Bridgette suggested a breakdown from communities about how much AirBnB’s are generating economically. Linda advised she would reach out to the Department of Revenue. Sales of licensing and park fee funds were reported on as well. Linda explained a bill in the House now to let KDWPT modify cabin fees upon need. No state funds go to our state parks. Linda then explained how the legislators get reimbursed for attending our meeting. She shared we are willing to work with the Revisers Office to change the verbiage in the statute so the legislators could get paid. Legal council would have to work with the Revisers Office as well. Bridgette asked if there was any other verbiage that needed changes. Suzan moved we move forward with our suggested revisions so the Revisers Office can complete their work as soon as possible. Lynda seconded. Linda went over the stakeholder’s survey we intend to send out. She said she would like the survey back with suggestions by Friday, March 9, 2018.

The American Royal update was given by Secretary Jackie McClaskey. She gave a brief history of the American Royal. The 'NEW' American Royal will be more than an event space used a couple of times a year. It will be a place for agritourism, marketing, education and maybe farmer's markets. KDOC wants to move the royal and make it a super facility. She believes the educational portion of this project is extremely important and it seems no one else in Kansas educates in the same way. The Hall of Fame might merge with the American Royal. They plan to break ground within the next 3 – 4 months. It is imperative to begin very soon so the facility can be fully operational in 2019. Sec. McClaskey already has a list of potential tenants for this project. Sen. Bud Estes advised the offices that may want to come in would not be involved in the start bonds. Some of the start bonds might or could be used for infrastructure and roads etc. Discussion followed about mileage between the race track/legends and the new American Royal; hotel room availability; and all the different events that could be held there. American Royal has a BOD of more than 30 people with an advisory board. They elect officers and the committee makes most decisions. They also have an annual meeting with their Board of Governors. Sec. McClaskey advised the lack of start bonds will surely end this project. Linda shared we have lost lots of business and event opportunities because we have not had a facility able to accommodate requests. More discussion followed.

Bridgette mentioned the tourism funding strategy is talked about at each meeting. She reminded everyone to take and return the survey. Linda will set up listening sessions. Bridgette reminded us National Tourism Week is May 6-12 and the theme this year is 'travel, then and now'.

Susan Barnes reported the TIAK meeting was Feb 8 and was in conjunction with Destination Statehouse. TIAK is going back to an educational component. Suzan said the educational component will be discussed at the April 12 meeting in Salina. The 2018 Kansas Tourism Conference will be in Junction City. The following years will be Garden City then Liberal. March 22 and 23 is Destination Capitol Hill in Washington DC. Six to seven members plan on attending.

Lynda Fort just returned from Norfolk where she attended the National Association for B & B conferences. Lynda said there was talk with AirBnB's about tax collecting and other issues. B&B's and AirBnB's need to learn how to work together – they are both here to stay. Discrimination practices were discussed.

Kelli gave a report on the NY City media initiative. This event revolves around our partnership with Meredith. She said nine participants are going with us to NY. There will be a dinner event with freelance writers in attendance. She will have some desk side visits while she is there too. This trip takes place April 3 – 6.

Meeting re-cap: June 1 next meeting where the topics will AirBnB's and Ks State Historical Society. The meeting will be at the Curtis State office building @ 10:00AM.

Susan moved for the meeting to adjourn, Rep. Adam Lusker seconded, motion passed.

Respectfully submitted

Connie Hartford