



CALIFORNIA'S EASTERN SIERRA

MONO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM & FILM COMMISSION

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MINUTES

Economic Development, Tourism & Film Commission (EDTFC)

Regular Meeting via Teleconference*

Tuesday, September 28, 2021 – 10:00 A.M.

*As authorized by Governor Newsome's Executive Order N-25-20, dated March 17, 2020, this meeting will be held via teleconferencing with members of the Commission attending from separate locations. There will not be a physical location of the meeting open to the public. This altered format is in observance of recent recommendations by local officials that certain precautions be taken, including social distancing, to address the threat of COVID-19.

Commissioners present: Sarah Walsh, Steve Morrison, Scott Burkard, Erin Wells

Commissioners absent: Geoff McQuilkin, Michael Vanderhurst, Wendy Schneider

Staff: Alicia Vennos, Jeff Simpson, Liz Grans, Morgan Terrell

1. Call to order.

Ms. Walsh called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

2. Introductions and announcements.

No Introductions or announcements were made.

3. Opportunity for the Public to address the Commission.

No public comment.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the August 31, 2021, meeting.

Steve Morrison motions to approve August 31, 2021, meeting minutes. Scott Burkard seconds. Vote: Commissioner Walsh – yes; Commissioner Morrison – yes; Commissioner Burkard – yes; Commissioner Wells – yes. All in favor; no abstentions; Minutes approved 4-0.

5. Continuation of remote teleconferencing meetings for the Economic Development, Tourism & Film Commission, per AB 361:

ACTION: Review and approve Resolution of the Mono County Economic Development, Tourism & Film Commission authorizing remote teleconferencing meetings for the period of September 28, 2021, through October 26, 2021, pursuant to AB 361.

Erin Wells motions to approve the Resolution to continue remote teleconferencing meetings through October 26, 2021. Scott Burkard seconds. Vote: Commissioner Walsh – yes; Commissioner Morrison – yes; Commissioner Burkard – yes; Commissioner Wells – yes. All in favor, no abstentions; action approved 4-0.

6. Monthly Financial/Budget report.

- a. FY 21-22 Budget. Ms. Vennos reported spending is under for the 1st quarter, and she and Ms. Grans will provide a full report next month.
- b. Transient Occupancy Tax reports, and other fiscal metrics, as available. Annual TOT numbers for FY20-21 have not been finalized by Auditor/Comptroller, but preliminary Q4 numbers look to be record-breaking. Quarter 1 of the new fiscal year are projected to be down, year-over-year.

7. Economic Development and Tourism Report – information on current or emerging issues, including but not limited to:
 - a. Central Sierra Economic Development District – Update on Mono County joining CSEDD. Based on advice from the Economic Development Agency (EDA), Mr. Simpson reported that staff was seeing to either create its own CEDS or create a new Eastern Sierra Economic Development District with other Eastside jurisdictions to possibly apply for upcoming American Rescue Plan EDA grant funds. Mr. Simpson and Ms. Vennos met with representatives from the Central Sierra Economic Development District to explore joining the group, but ultimately determined that it would be best to explore alternative options for Mono County.
 - b. Eastern Sierra Small Business Resource Center Project. Ms. Vennos reported she met with the working group heading the business resource building project and that the planning continues.
 - c. Collateral Update: 2021 Visitor Guide; Backroads Guide; Fall Color Guide; Fishing Map; Community Maps. Ms. Vennos reported they are almost out of 2021 Visitor Guides so will begin working on the 2022 edition. Fall Color Guides are almost finished as well; the new edition of the Fall Color Guide is almost ready to go to print. She will work with BLM on a full edit of the Backroads Guide once fire season is over. Mr. Simpson reported the South County map is close to being completed.
 - d. Local, State, Federal business assistant programs. Mr. Simpson states there are still some assistance programs available. SBA disaster loans are available for fire and Covid-19 fall out. There is also a CA Rebuilding Fund for rural areas and small businesses with 70% tax break with retaining employees. He has communicated the information on these programs to the business community.
 - e. Update regarding application for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) CARES Act – CV1, 2, 3 for Microenterprise Financial Assistance Program for small businesses. Mr. Simpson reported CV1, CV2 & CV3 have all been approved, and staff is working with Community Development Services consultant on the application forms. Planning to have the program applications out to the business community within the next two months.

8. Community grant applications and timeline for 21-22, including a review of the grant program parameters. Ms. Grans plans on having the applications due in early November so that applications may be reviewed at the November 17th Commission meeting. She asked everyone's opinion about high season dates affecting individual's applications. Ms. Walsh stated she liked the current application point system but doesn't think points should be deducted for dates, and there was consensus.

9. Film Commission update. Mr. Morrison reported they were able to complete one film shoot but lost three shoots during the Inyo National Forest closure. Overall, both he and Ms. Vennos agree it has been very slow in filming lately with much less inquiries; the summer months were relatively busy. Mammoth Mountain is moving forward with Night of Lights pending any changes in COVID-19 public health situation, and the Mountain is also looking forward to hosting the Grand Prix this season. There will be no more reservation system on lift ticket sales.

10. Project Status Update, including public relations, advertising/social media, websites, and tradeshow/conferences. Mr. Simpson reported he will be attending the first in person B2B tradeshow, IPW, in Las Vegas where he will be meeting with the businesses selling tours to California and will help put Mono County on the map. He added that USTA has announced that foreign borders will be opening for travel on November 3rd for vaccinated visitors only, so the US is hoping to begin to see an influx of international travelers. Ms. Vennos added that the consumer travel tradeshow in the Bay Area is coming up in October, and the rest of the tradeshow in 2022 are still to be determined. Ms. Grans reported she is currently working with the IT Department on the Public Relations contact platform (Cision), and the next press release will be promoting a last-minute trip to enjoy Mono County's fall colors. Ms. Vennos added that Mono County will be featured in the Visit California E-newsletter released on September 30th. Mr. Simpson reported he will continually be sharing fall color posts on social media. Ms. Grans reported the redesign of all three websites is still underway; she continues to work with Simpleview on the BookDirect platform for MonoCounty.org.

11. Commissioner Reports.

- Ms. Wells reported that Bridgeport has not had a great August between the smoke and COVID, however, this last week has seen an improvement. Sportsmen's Bar and Mexican 395 have closed due to lack of guests and/or employees. She added that the Busters property was recently purchased.
- Mr. Burkard reported in North County that business has been flat. There is some frustration because very few attending the Jamboree booked lodging with local properties. He added there is a new restaurant called the Coach Whip Café, open Thursday thru Monday. The food is delicious, and everyone in the Walker/Coleville wishes this new business every success.
- Mr. Morrison reported they have been experiencing a very high number of weddings. He added that Abigail Peckenpaugh, June Mountain Marketing Director, is leaving June Mountain to pursue other opportunities. She will be missed.
- Ms. Walsh reported that June Lake is also seeing large numbers of weddings. The June Lake Autumn Beer Festival was an excellent success, however, the fires and smoke killed August for the June Lake business community. Certainly, everyone is hoping for a great fall season.

12. Call for agenda items for next regular meeting. Quarterly budget update for next meeting.

13. Adjourn the meeting and reconvene in regular session at 10:00 a.m. on October 26, 2021, via teleconference.
Ms. Vennos adjourned the meeting at 11:04 am.