

## **“Big Idea” Tourism Board Meeting**

Friday, October 7, 2011 ~ 2:00-4:00 pm

Port of Kalama ~ Kalama, Washington

### **Minutes**

Present: Larry Alexander, Barry Verrill, Ginny Whiffer, Howard Rogers, Karen Johnson, Taryn Nelson, Jim Misner, Maruta Haas, Mark Plotkin, Don Jensen, Chuck Blum, Vivian Mosby, Dawn Smith, Mike Moss, Tom Mulder, Claire Hauge, Mark Wilson, James Webb, Gian Paul Morelli, Pete Poulsen, Barbara Doran, Jennifer Keene

Jim Misner welcomed everyone, and everyone introduced themselves and stated why they were interested in being on this board.

Mark Plotkin, Cowlitz County Tourism Director, indicated that tourism brought in about \$127 million last year.

Mr. Misner reviewed the Interlocal Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding that was drafted by Claire Hauge of Cowlitz County. The Agreement includes Cowlitz County and the cities of Longview, Kelso, Kalama, Castle Rock and Woodland. He pointed out that businesses need to follow the guidelines as stated on the first page of the Agreement. He also explained why Mark Plotkin, Tourism Director and Tom Muldin, US Forest Service were ex-officio members, as well as Mike Moss, the Cowlitz County Conference Center director.

The question was raised that if an idea was brought up by an entity, but the committee didn't believe it would be a good idea, could the Board deny the request. The answer was that if the idea meets the criteria of the RCW then the Board cannot deny that request.

The board member terms for this first year are staggered at 2, 4 and 6 years as stated in the Agreement. Mr. Misner asked the board to vote on these terms. The board was unanimous in their vote to accept the terms as stated. After the first year, terms will be set at 6 years. There is no limit on the number of terms an individual may serve. Should someone not be able to fulfill their term, the person to replace him/her would complete that term, and not start a new 6-year term.

Bylaws will need to be established by the Board and will include the terms of the officers.

Annual contributions will come from lodging tax receipts from each entity. The amount each entity will contribute is stated in the Agreement.

It was suggested that language be added to Item No. 10 in the Agreement that any disputes between entities which pertain to this agreement need to be brought to the Board of Directors for discussion and/or resolution.

After a short break, Mr. Misner distributed a survey, explained the survey and gave members time to complete it. He will compile the results of the survey and have available for the next meeting.

Mr. Misner asked Claire Hauge to discuss the fund distribution and allocation process. Claire explained that all of the entities have signed the Interlocal Agreement. When bylaws are completed, and as soon as money is received, then the County is ready to go.

Mr. Misner then asked for nominations for the election of officers: For Chair – Ginny Whiffen and Don Jensen were nominated; Ginny respectfully declined. Motion was made and seconded that Don Jensen be Chairman of this Board. Motion carried. Nominations for Vice-Chair: Jim Webb was nominated; there being no other nominations, it was moved and seconded that Jim Webb be Vice-Chair; motion carried.

Time and location of meetings: Mr. Misner suggested that it would be great to have the meetings at different places throughout the county. He thanked Mark Wilson for offering the Port of Kalama for the first meeting. He suggested Friday afternoons for these meetings and asked the members for their thoughts. Fridays are not necessarily good for those members who operate or work at the hotels, as Friday afternoons are their busiest times. For now, and during the winter months, however, Fridays might not be bad. Meetings will be monthly as the Board begins its work, and then will go to quarterly. Meetings will be held on Fridays at 3:00 pm. November 4<sup>th</sup> was agreed upon for the next meeting. Mr. Misner asked for volunteers to host the meeting; three individuals volunteered their venues: Ginny Whiffen, Red Lion in Kelso; Barry Verrill, KLTV in Longview; and Karen Johnson, Castle Rock Exhibit Hall. Mr. Misner and Jennifer Keene will visit with these individuals and will let the board know the location for the November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Jennifer Keene and Mark Wilson discussed the upcoming Tourism Summit meeting being held October 20<sup>th</sup> at the Cowlitz Regional Conference Center from 2-4 pm. There is a blue flyer in everyone's packet with additional information. Everyone is welcome to attend. The Scope of Work for the Strategic Tourism Plan is also in the packet (see the yellow sheet) which discusses the objectives, work plan and background.

Mark Wilson explained that he will be discussing the background of this proposal and educating folks. Several tourism boards exist throughout the County and have been invited to attend. Discussion of new ideas will be held, and an action plan will be developed. Ms. Keene would like this Board to also participate – either as a whole, or as individuals – in the Tourism Summit.

Mr. Misner thanked everyone for attending. The meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm.