

**Sierra Vista Tourism Commission  
Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
March 19, 2015  
Oscar Yrun Community Center, 3020 E. Tacoma St.**

**Call to Order:** Ms. Tieman called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

**Roll Call:** Members present: Sabra Albritton, Barbara Ashley, Amanda Baillie, Diane Erwin, Bob Gent, and Mary Tieman. Absent: Glen Cobb. Also present, Council Liaison, Henrietta "Hank" Huisking and Fort Huachuca Liaison Angela Camara. Staff present: Patrice Graber.

**Acceptance of the Agenda:** Ms. Tieman offered the March 19, 2015 meeting Agenda for review and acceptance. Ms. Albritton made a motion to accept the Agenda, Ms. Ashley seconded the motion.

The motion carried, the vote was unanimous.

**Acceptance of the Minutes from the February 19, 2015 Regular Meeting:**

Ms. Tieman offered the minutes of the February 19, 2015, Regular Meeting for acceptance. Ms. Erwin made a motion to accept the minutes, Mr. Gent seconded the motion.

The motion carried, the vote was unanimous.

**Call to the Public:** Bernie Stallman, member of the Arizona Trail Association, Environmental Affairs Commission, and Sierra Vista resident, was present.

Mr. Stallman provided information on the Arizona Trail, including that it is one of the eleven National Scenic Trails, that Sierra Vista is one of 28 "gateway communities" along the Trail, and accessing the Trail at the Mexico border/Montezuma Pass.

Mr. Stallman encouraged members to consider the importance of including and promoting the Trail as one of the attractions to be included in the branding project, the importance of ecotourism and promoting outdoor activities, and encouraging people to come here.

Discussion followed, and members thanked Mr. Stallman for providing this information.

**Fort Huachuca Liaison Update:** Ms. Camara updated members on upcoming activities and events that are open to the public on Fort Huachuca including: Festival of the Southwest, the 2-10-2 Duathlon, vehicle vin etch, Days of Remembrance, Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month activities, and Month of the Military Child Celebration.

Ms. Camara updated that Garden Canyon Road will not reopen until at least the end of August. She also stressed that safety factors are very important, and that people must comply with the closure or face charges.

She also updated that hummingbird banding sessions, scheduled by the Hummingbird Monitoring Network, will conduct their first session on March 29.

**Council Liaison Update:** Ms. Huisking's updated included:

Council will be attending Strategic Planning meetings on March 27-28.

Work on the branding process continues and that on-line surveys were available for residents to provide input.

She attended the March National League of Cities, and that she invited Representative Martha McSally to talk to the Sierra Vista City Council and to residents. At the conference, she attended an economic development seminar and learned about the importance of having a good city website, learned about grants, and received compliments about the City's water conservation efforts.

The Lodging Association has applied for non-profit status, the next meeting is at Sierra Suites on April 8, and that Association members have expressed interest in Tourism Commission activities and finding out what is going on in the community.

Adam Curtis will be starting his position in the Marketing and Public Affairs Department.

**New Business:**

**Support for National Park Designation for Chiricahua National Monument:** Mr. Gent related that at the last Tourism Partners Meeting, he had the opportunity to talk to the interim Director of National Parks for Southeast Arizona about the Chiricahua National Monument and what a National Park designation means.

Mr. Gent also related that he has learned this designation would not require additional funding, staffing, or other substantial changes. He advised members that he has corresponded with the National Park of Southeast Arizona about changing the status and has received emails back that it is a great idea and that they would support those efforts.

Members discussed benefits of the Park designation including: honoring the rare geological formations, that the debate will receive a lot of attention, and the more prestigious status of a National Park.

Members unanimously agreed that the Tourism Commission will support changing the designation of Chiricahua National Monument to a National Park.

Mr. Gent asked members to consider that as a Tourism Commission, they ask the Mayor and Council to write letters, or that the Commission write letters, to state representatives and senators to request changing Chiricahua's designation to a National Park. Members discussed and agreed the first step will be to get City Council approval, and to then proceed with the letters.

Mr. Gent agreed to provide information and to write draft letters to present to Council at the Tourism Commission Presentation.

Members agreed it would be good to research whether surrounding communities and other organizations would support the designation change.

**How to Improve Tourism Commission Effectiveness:** Mr. Gent opened discussion regarding what the commission can do to promote tourism in this area, how to get the commission more engaged with the public, and how to obtain more exposure and attention.

Members agreed the Chiricahua designation will be a good step, and discussed various aspects of the commission's focus, including that their role is advisory.

Mr. Gent also expressed his support to invite astronomers from the Cananea Observatory to the Patterson Observatory for a tour. Members agreed that is a good idea, and Mr. Gent agreed to contact Ms. Hector for Cananea contacts.

**Old Business:**

**Recommendations to Council/Strategic Planning and Objectives:** Discussion included that the recommendations had been forwarded to Ms. Huisking, and that Ms. Huisking will give them to Mary Jacobs, the consultant, and to Council members.

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Members discussed that they would like to review the last year's presentation and that they may need to schedule a work session.

Ms. Huisking suggested the presentation include highlights from the past year's activities, items from their strategic planning recommendations, and ideas the commission will be working on this next year, including the Chiricahua National Park designation.

Members agreed that it would be good for all to be able to review the presentation before it is presented to Council. Ms. Tieman agreed she will check with Ms. Cobb on the status, and Ms. Baillie agreed to help with the presentation.

**Commissioner Application:** Ms. Albritton turned in an application she had received at the Health, Wealth and Lifestyle Fair to Ms. Graber, and Ms. Erwin submitted her application for another term.

Ms. Tieman requested this item be on the agenda for the next regular meeting.

**Tourism Partners Meeting:** Ms. Erwin, opened discussion and advised the next meeting will be in May. Mr. Gent agreed to be the next guest speaker and will talk about the Chiricahua National Park designation.

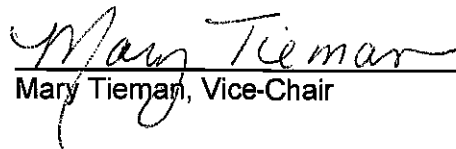
**Commissioners Fam Trip:** Ms. Albritton updated that the next fam trip is to Ramsey Canyon Preserve, April 14, 9 a.m., and that there will be a special tour for members. Ms. Erwin advised she will not be able to attend. Members agreed to meet at the Preserve.

Members discussed the possibility of scheduling the May fam trip to the Chiricahua National Monument.

**Requests of Commission:** Ms. Albritton updated about an outdoor concert in Phoenix where the seating was on grass hills surrounding the stage. Ms. Huisking advised the Tourism Commission Presentation is scheduled for about 5 p.m. on April 13.

**Next Regular Meeting:** May 21, 2015

**Adjournment:** 3:09 p.m.

  
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Mary Tieman, Vice-Chair