

**Sierra Vista Tourism Commission
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
September 17, 2015
Oscar Yrun Community Center, 3020 E. Tacoma St.**

Call to Order: Ms. Tieman called the meeting to order at 8:17 a.m.

Roll Call: Members present: Sabra Albritton, Amanda Baillie, Bob Gent, Vivek Patel and Mary Tieman. Absent: Glen Cobb. Also present Council Liaison, Henrietta "Hank" Huisking, Staff Liaison, Judy Hector and Patrice Graber.

Acceptance of the Agenda: Ms. Tieman offered the September 17, agenda for acceptance. Mr. Gent made a motion to accept the agenda. Ms. Albritton seconded the motion.

The motion carried, the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Acceptance of the Minutes from the July 16, 2015 Regular Meeting: Ms. Tieman offered the minutes of the July 16, 2015, Regular Meeting for acceptance. Ms. Albritton made a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Gent seconded the motion.

The motion carried, the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Call to the Public: Tony Pham from IndoChine Modern Vietnamese Cuisine was present. Jenna Alexander and Sunhilt Gregory from Holiday Inn Suites, Candlewood Suites and Southeast Arizona Hospitality Association (SEAHA) were present. Becky Bjork from The Sierra Vista Herald and Bisbee Daily Review was present as guest speaker and submitted a commissioner application.

Fort Huachuca Liaison Update: Ms. Camara was not present.

Council Liaison Update: Ms. Huisking's update included:

- *A reviewed of tourism/travel publications that she had recently gathered including the book "Boots & Burgers", the magazine "Sport Aviation", a bicycle rental brochure and an "Attraction Menu" from a Tucson B&B.
- *That members of the Sister Cities Commission, mayors of border towns and members of the Cananea city government have been invited to attend the Sierra Vista Symphony Fall Concert featuring Hispanic music.
- *She has requested a council joint work session with City staff and members of SEAHA to discuss goals for economic development and tourism. The tentative date is November 10.

Staff Liaison Update: Ms. Hector's report included:

- *Staff is working very hard on of the new branding project and regular workload.
- *The SierraVistaSelfie promotional campaign has been successful and round two is underway.
- *The Visitor Guide will be re-launched as an "Adventure Guide" to attract a broader audience.

- *She attended the Showcase of Cities tradeshow at the Arizona League of Cities and Towns.
- *Ms. McFarland will represent the City at the Arizona Showcase in Hermosillo and that new updated rack cards and promotional items will be distributed.
- *Members of an advisory committee for the Economic Development division have raised substantial funds to help promote Sierra Vista to retirees.
- *Videos are being produced to promote Sierra Vista as a great city to visit, live and work.

Ms. Hector also updated members on recent Cochise County Tourism Council and Arizona Office of Tourism activities, meetings and projects.

New Business:

Electing Commission Chair and Vice-Chair: Members discussed positions and agreed terms will be for one year and effective this date, September 17, 2015.

Ms. Tieman agreed to serve as Chairperson. Ms. Albritton agreed to continue to serve as Secretary.

Mr. Gent made a motion to elect Ms. Baillie as Vice-Chair. Ms. Albritton seconded the motion.

The motion carried, the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Tactical Recommendations to Council

Short-term attainable recommendations: Mr. Gent reviewed the top three recommendations determined at the Sep. 30, Strategic Planning Work Session. Members discussed the importance of identifying attainable, short-term goals and agreed to identify three goals, to submit them to Ms. Graber, and to continue discussion at the next meeting.

Old Business:

Commission Vacancy; Revisit Commissioner Applications; Associate Commissioner Positions: Ms. Bjork submitted her commissioner application and reviewed her experience in marketing, serving on a tourism commission in Minnesota and work experience with a chamber of commerce, a visitor and convention bureau and workforce development.

Ms. Bjork, Ms. Alexander and Ms. Gregory left the meeting room and members discussed current applications.

Members voted on the applications. The vote was 4 in favor of Ms. Bjork and 1 in favor of Ms. Alexander. Ms. Huisking advised she will request the recommendation be placed on the September 24, City Council Meeting agenda.

Mr. Gent made a motion to accept Ms. Alexander and Ms. Gregory as associate commissioners. Ms. Albritton seconded the motion. The motion carried, the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Ms. Bjork, Ms. Alexander and Ms. Gregory returned to the meeting and were welcomed as commissioners.

Best of Sierra Vista: Ms. Baillie opened discussion and Ms. Bjork reviewed the Best of the Vista 2015 Awards being organized by the Sierra Vista Herald. Proposed guidelines for the event included:

Objectives of the event are to shop local, promote tourism and provide recognition. Paper and online ballots will be available and will determine the top three winners in each category.

Voting promotion will last for three weeks.

Winners will be interviewed and invited to the awards, tentative date November 18.

Winners will be featured in a Herald publication distributed on November 19, and online.

Vista awards may include Sierra Vista, Huachuca City, Hereford, and Tombstone.

Members discussed the awards, categories and printed materials provided by Ms. Bjork.

Ms. Bjork proposed the City of Sierra Vista be the exclusive co-sponsor and requested financial assistance from the City for the event. She advised promotions and publications produced would be available both in print and online.

Mr. Gent made a motion to recommend to Council that the Tourism Commission supports the event and that the City co-sponsor and provide financial support for the event. Ms. Albritton seconded the motion.

The motion carried, the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Ms. Huisking advised she will request the awards be included on a council work session agenda.

Support for National Park Designation for Chiricahua National Monument: Mr. Gent advised the Facebook page is up and that he has been in contact with McCain, McSally and Flake staff members. Discussion included the negative perception that the border area is dangerous, and that efforts to support the change in designation will need to persist. Mr. Gent advised he could use help in seeking support from additional city councils and chambers and that the Chiricahua Monument is being proposed for an International Dark Sky Park designation.

Commissioners Fam Trip: Members discussed the fam trip to Kartchner Caverns on October 17. Mr. Gent advised he will inquire if there is still room on the tour for Ms. Alexander, Ms. Gregory and Ms. Bjorn.

Requests of Commission: Ms. Baillie encouraged members to inform her about upcoming events to include in her KTAN radio show, "The Week Ahead".

Mr. Gent reminded members about the Eclipse Watch at Patterson Observatory, September 27.

Ms. Bjorn stated she is looking forward to serving on the commission.

Mr. Patel suggested that other chambers be invited to the meetings.

Next Regular Meeting: October 15, 2015

Adjournment: 9:48 a.m.


Mary Tieman, Chairperson



Best of the Vista 2015

**The Sierra Vista Herald's Best of the Vista 2015
brought to you by the City of Sierra Vista.**

OBJECTIVE: Shop Local! Promote Tourism!

- Businesses would receive recognition of products and services.
- The City is identified as the exclusive co-sponsor in print and online promotions and will receive the publication for promotional use in print and online. Support a promotion that gets everyone engaged in recognizing and talking about local businesses.

PROMOTION: Best of...

We have elicited best practices from both large and small markets to create a fun and sustainable annual promotion.

A separate, similar promotion will be done in Bisbee during the same time period.

TIMELINE:

Voting promotion (3 weeks)	Fri. 9/25/15 – Thur. 10/15/15
Tabulate non-electronic votes	Fri. 10/16/15 – Tues. 10/20/15
Category "Top 3" – interviews	Thur. 10/22/15 – Wed. 11/4/15
Category "Top 3" – ad/event package sales	Thur. 10/22/15 – Tues. 11/3/15
Publication printing	Wed. 11/11/15 – Tues. 11/17/15
Event by invitation to "Top 3" per category	Wed. 11/18/15
Publication in Herald/Review	Thur. 11/19/15

EVENT: Hosted by Herald and City (based on partnership)

Thursday, 11/19/15 at The Windemere. Hors d'oeuvres, beer, wine.
5:30 p.m. mingle. 6-7:30 p.m. awards presentation.

EXCLUSIVE CO-SPONSOR: \$5,000 + assistance with event

- Co-branded logo in all promotions and surveys. \$15,000 value with print and online calculated at best (lowest) rate available.
- Co-sponsor of presentation event.
- 2,000 copies of publication for distribution plus link to online co-branded publication.

PROCESS: Let's get started.

- Currently 80 categories are listed in the spec ad. Help us cull this to 50-65 for the first year's promotion.
- Participate in selecting and executing theme for this event.

Becky Bjork 9/17/15

SIERRA VISTA
HERALD
 OF THE
BEST
VISTA
2015

WHO'S THE
BEST?

We recognize that area residents are the true experts.
 So we want to collect your votes on everything from your
 top food picks to favorite recreation spots.

CATEGORIES >

Keep it local.

Vote for businesses in the
 greater Sierra Vista area,
 including Hereford,
 Huachuca City and Tombstone.

NOTE ON VOID

AUTOMOTIVE

- Bike Shop _____
- Motorcycle _____
- Dealership to buy a
new vehicle _____
- Oil Change _____
- Parts Store _____
- Tire Store _____
- Dealer to buy a
used vehicle _____

FOOD & DRINK

- Bakery _____
- Breakfast _____
- Bar/Beer _____

PROFESSIONAL

Please include name of workplace as well as
name of person.

- Attorney _____
- Chiropractor _____
- Dentist _____
- Eye Care Specialist _____
- Financial Advisor _____
- Home Health Care
Professional _____
- Insurance Agent _____
- OB/GYN _____
- Pediatrician _____
- Photographer _____
- Physician/Internal
Medicine _____

TOURISM COMMISSION
Strategic Planning Process
September 30, 2014

The Tourism Commission met to conduct a mini-strategic planning retreat in order to help identify ways in which the advisory body can assist with their mission. The group was provided with the last task/purpose statement as specified by the City Council in 2008:

**To advise City Council on policies and strategies related to
tourism marketing and visitor services.**

IDEA GENERATION:

The following ideas were shared by Tourism Commission Members during the strategic planning process. The group then used a multi-voting process to identify those ideas that have the most support from Commission Members to consider pursuing through recommendations to the Mayor and City Council. The ideas are listed in priority order as determined by the group with total votes in parentheses:

- Explore permanent funding mechanisms for investing in tourism programs, advertising, etc. (21)
- Look at how to get convention facilities in the community. Share with Hotels? Joint, public, private partnership. Attract conventions that are regional. (15)
- Relocate Visitor Center to a better location. Maybe partner with the Chamber of Commerce. (8)
- Bring sports fields up to National standards in order to attract various tournaments. (7)
- Stronger partnership with the regional wine industry. Consider an annual wine festival. (7)
- Capitalize on our pristine environment, night skies, low traffic, river, etc. (6)
- Explore fencing around entire Veterans Memorial Park, in order to expand use of park as an attraction. Expand parking availability. Encourage hotels to provide shuttles to park during events. (6)
- Support ways the West End can be transformed into a retail attraction area. (5)
- Find ways to change the perception that proximity to Mexico makes Sierra Vista unsafe, and that Arizona's political challenges make it a state that visitors avoid. (5)
- Support development of an RV park (with camping) nearby to keep those visitors in town. (5)
- Promote "be a local Tourist" in order to help improve local perception. (3)
- Identify types of businesses that would keep visitors here and develop strategies to attract them. (2)
- Solicit corporate sponsors for major projects and attractions. (2)
- Capitalize on outdoor sports, dining, and encourage outdoor retail. (2)
- Support "Rails to Trails" within the County. (2)

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- Support establishment of a true community calendar so that events do not overlap each other.
 - Theatre festival (not just Shakespeare).

OVERARCHING THEMES:

The ideas generated by the Tourism Commission largely fit within the following categories:

- ➔ More advertising and promotion of Sierra Vista to potential visitors.
 - Pre-set tours for international visitors.
 - Attract more from Phoenix and Tucson.
 - Better image/brand/name recognition.
- ➔ Enhanced attractions, events, and opportunities to increase interest in Sierra Vista.
 - More events to draw visitors (wine festival; music; sports; theatre; film); expand existing events (SW Wings, etc.); hire an event coordinator.
 - Attract more businesses to provide services/activities visitors prefer (RV/camping; night clubs; outdoor dining and retail; children's activities; museums; theatre)
- ➔ Infrastructure improvements that would aid in making Sierra Vista more attractive to visitors, events, etc.
 - Convention facilities.
 - Visitor center relocation/improvement.
 - Sports fields for regional tournaments; Veterans Park improvements for large events.
 - Multi-use paths, "Rails to Trails," other hiking.
- ➔ Increase both public and private investment to achieve the goals.
 - Permanent, expanded public funding source.
 - Grants and corporate sponsorships.
 - Partnerships with other organizations.

The Commission should use their next meeting to review all of the ideas and themes, and begin to finalize a few objectives that the City Council can consider in their March, 2015 strategic planning process. Based upon what the Council decides to include in their plan, the Commission can then develop a work plan to appropriately assist the staff leader who will be assigned to work on any objectives that relate to tourism attraction.

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- Expand tourism marketing to Mexico and other international areas. (2)
 - Develop a "Best of Sierra Vista" awards. Consider going beyond City boundaries to the entire region. (2)
 - Establish a concierge service for prospective visitors. (2)
 - Support the City hiring an event planner to coordinate big events. Bring events to Sierra Vista that are in other areas.(1)
 - Support development of a rail line from Benson to Sierra Vista. (1)
 - Support the existing plan to grow the Henry Hauser Museum, and insure it is an interpretative center. (1)
 - Support more music events in the community. (1)
 - Attract an affordable ground transportation service for visitors. (1)
 - Develop pre-set tours with transportation, and then target international visitors.(1)
 - Change perception for visitors and residents that it is difficult to get on Fort Huachuca. (1)
 - Find ways to grow events that are already here, such as Southwest Wings, etc.
 - Identify ways in which tour buses can come and stay in Sierra Vista, not just in outlying communities.
 - Attract things to do in the community, such as theatre, nightclubs for dancing, etc.
 - Advertise Sierra Vista more. Get the Sierra Vista name better known, in Arizona especially.
 - Support the City's branding effort. From branding, establish new identity.
 - New entry signs to Sierra Vista.
 - Support future City Center.
 - Attract a commercial airline service to the airport.
 - Capitalize on Military history to attract visitors.
 - Target Tucson and Phoenix residents more for tourism.
 - More money for advertising.
 - Consider a grant writer for City to grow money for tourism and related programs. Explore more grants.
 - Add more shared use paths.
 - Identify opportunities for multi-sports, multi-discipline events. Make the events annual so people come back. Mountain biking, swimming, marathon, etc.
 - Consider permanent spectator seating for pavilion.
 - Explore a Film Festival using Cinemark.
 - Make the escort program for international visitors wanting to go on Fort Huachuca more formalized.
 - Grow kids programs and activities so visitors with children have things to do.
 - Encourage Hotels to have bikes for use or rent.