

**Sierra Vista Tourism Commission
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
October 15, 2015
Oscar Yrun Community Center, 3020 E. Tacoma St.**

Call to Order: Ms. Tieman called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

Roll Call:

Members present: Sabra Albritton, Amanda Baillie, Bob Gent, Vivek Patel, Mary Tieman.

Members absent: Becky Bjork, Glen Cobb.

Also present: Council Liaison, Henrietta "Hank" Huisking. Staff Liaison, Judy Hector.

Fort Huachuca Liaison, Angela Camara. Associate Commissioners Jenna Alexander and Sunhilt Gregory.

Acceptance of the Agenda: Ms. Tieman offered the October 15, agenda for acceptance. Mr. Gent made a motion to accept the agenda. Ms. Baillie seconded the motion.

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

Acceptance of the Minutes from the September 17, 2015 Regular Meeting: Ms. Tieman offered the minutes of the September 17, 2015, Regular Meeting for acceptance. Mr. Gent made a motion to accept the minutes. Ms. Baillie seconded the motion.

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

Call to the Public: None

Fort Huachuca Liaison Update: Ms. Camara advised that Garden Canyon Road is now open for pedestrian traffic but remains closed to vehicle traffic. The closure will most likely remain in effect through the end of the year.

Discussion included that there is good attendance at the museums and that visitor access procedures are going well.

Council Liaison Update: Ms. Huisking advised members on communication problems with Cananea representatives regarding the invitation to the Sierra Vista Symphony Orchestra Concert. She suggested scheduling a trip to Cananea might help to build relationships.

Ms. Huisking also advised:

Ms. McFarland is contacting and updating civic groups on economic development.

There is a proposed change to the public nuisance code that requires abandoned and foreclosed properties to be registered with the City.

The Environmental Affairs Commission invites members to attend a tour of the Fort Huachuca solar field on the 28th at 2 p.m.

The West End Clean Up that assists property owners will be on the 24th from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Staff Liaison Update: Ms. Hector provided information on two upcoming FAM tours, "Small Bites of Arizona" on Nov. 6, 2015, and "Hike-Bike-Pedal-Paddle-Ride" on April 5 - 6, 2016, both organized by AOT.

Ms. Hector's update included:

The Sierra Vista ICM video has been completed, is posted on the City website and social media, and has been very successful.

Sierra Vista was featured in a Germany news magazine.

She is working with the Airport Commission and assisting them with a tradeshow booth at the upcoming Copper State Fly-In in Casa Grande.

The City was a sponsor of the Cochise County Cycling Classic, reaching over 312 bicyclists.

A portion of U.S. 90 that passes through Sierra Vista was approved by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and is part of a coast-to-coast bicycle route.

Current media activity and highlights of upcoming feature publications and fam trips.

CCTC is sending out a 4th quarter promotional press release with holiday events.

The next CCTC meeting is on Oct. 28, 9 a.m., at the Turquoise Valley Golfcourse.

AOT is investing significant funding in millennial marketing.

That she, along with CCTC, is working to build ties with new AOT directors and hopes to bring attention back to southeast Arizona.

She is planning advertising targeting adventure and millennials, and that this will be complimented by AOT marketing efforts.

New Business: None

Old Business:

Best of Sierra Vista: Ms. Baillie updated that the "Best of the Vista" has been launched for about three weeks by the Sierra Vista Herald, that voting is available online and by paper ballots and the awards ceremony is scheduled for November 7. Ms. Hector advised information and a link for the event has been included in the City enewsletter.

Tactical Recommendations to Council

Short-term attainable recommendations: Mr. Gent opened discussion, and members reviewed ideas that had been submitted by Ms. Alexander, Ms. Bjork and Ms. Baillie.

Members discussed the negative perception that our border area is not safe, continued negative press and other media coverage, and that it is a politically charged issue. Mr. Gent quoted portions of a letter he received from Senator McCain that identified security issues.

Ms. Hector advised that Cochise County Tourism Council is working to change the negative perception. Efforts include contact with the Park Service to remove signs that post "Danger..." in the National Forest and utilizing positive press.

Members discussed what the commission might do to support a positive image, and agreed to contact and invite politicians and representatives to experience travels with the tourism commission. Members agreed to contact Congresswoman McSally and attempt to get a fam trip scheduled on her calendar.

Members discussed other recommendations including:

Exploring/gathering ideas for permanent funding mechanisms and presenting them to Council for consideration.
Promoting our area attractions and events and changing the perception that there isn't anything to do here.
Connecting people in our community including welcoming newcomers and utilizing resources such as social media.
Promoting festivals and events including wine and culinary festivals.
Recommending support and/or continued promotion for the "Best of the Vista" awards.

Ms. Tieman reviewed the top three ideas:

1. Perception. Action item is to reach out to Congresswoman McSally and Senator McCain and invite them to visit the border with the commission.
2. Promote local tourism. Identify ways to keep tourists here longer.
3. Look at next year partnering for the Best of the Vista awards and gear that more towards tourism.

Support for National Park Designation for Chiricahua National Monument: Mr. Gent reviewed that he had met with Congresswoman McSally at the Chamber yesterday and that she seemed to be supportive. Congresswoman McSally indicated that to go forward with the proposal she needs to confirm that there is minimal or no cost impact and that her staff will look into and work on this. Mr. Gent also advised he will be meeting with the Director of National Park Service next month.

Commissioners Fam Trip: Ms. Albritton reviewed the next fam trip is scheduled for October 17, to Kartchner Caverns. Members discussed who will be attending, that the tour and presentation will continue as scheduled and telescope viewing may be cancelled due to weather.

Requests of Commission:

Mr. Patel suggested members discuss ideas regarding services and activities that tourists need.

Ms. Husking related that she likes to bring back news of her travels and relate interesting information regarding her visitor experiences.

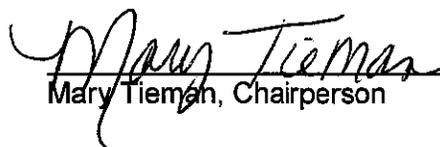
Ms. Camara commented on the recent changes for visitors access requirements on Fort Huachuca including changes that have been made for approved escorts and for large group tours.

Ms. Alexander advised the next SEAHA meeting will be 10 a.m. at the Windemere on October 21, and that SEAHA members will be attending a Council session on November 10.

Ms. Hector advised on notes from Ms. Graber that Jill Adams requests members submit agenda items that include some specifics, and that 400 goodie bags will be prepared for "Guano Happens". She also commented that CCTC is putting together a Facebook contest for next year to increase the number of followers, and that the contest will include prizes.

Next Regular Meeting: November 19, 2015

Adjournment: 9:23 a.m.


Mary Tieman, Chairperson