

**Sierra Vista Tourism Commission
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
November 19, 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: Amanda Baillie, Becky Bjork, Bob Gent and Mary Tieman.

Members absent: Sabra Albritton, Glen Cobb and Vivek Patel.

Also present: Associate Commissioners Jenna Alexander and Sunhilt Gregory, Mayor Rick Mueller, Council Liaison Henrietta "Hank" Huisking, Fort Huachuca Liaison Angela Camara.

Staff present: Staff Liaison Judy Hector and Patrice Graber.

Acceptance of the Agenda: Ms. Tieman offered the November 19, 2015, agenda for acceptance.

Mr. Gent made a motion to accept the agenda. Ms. Baillie seconded the motion.

The motion carried, the vote was unanimous (4-0).

Acceptance of the Minutes from the October 15, 2015 Regular Meeting: Ms. Tieman offered the minutes of the October 15, 2015, Regular Meeting for acceptance.

Ms. Baillie made a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Gent seconded the motion.

The motion carried, the vote was unanimous (4-0).

Call to the Public: Allen Etheridge, new Park Manager, Superintendent for the National Park Service, Southeast Arizona Group introduced himself. Mr. Etheridge expressed his interest in the commission and advised new exhibits in both English and Spanish for the Coronado National Memorial will be completed soon. He also advised 2016 will be the National Park's 100th anniversary and there will be special programs and events.

Fort Huachuca Liaison Update: Ms. Camara advised on Fort Huachuca upcoming events including the B-Troop Change of Command, Holiday Tour of Homes and N.O.E.L., and that information is posted on their Facebook events tab.

Council Liaison Update: Ms. Huisking advised that four Council members attended the National League of Cities Winter Conference and will provide a trip report at the December 8, council work session and that she had received an invitation to Mexico Independence Day.

Staff Liaison Update: Ms. Hector updated on Sierra Vista, Cochise County Tourism Council, and AOT tourism activities including:

She recently attended a AAA Travel Show and provided information about Sierra Vista to approximately 1,000 active travelers and she also attended a National Bicycle Tourism Conference that was very productive.

Advertising for holiday shopping has been placed in an upcoming issue of El Imparcial and media placement in AAA Highroads has been successful and will be ongoing.

Benson is developing a trails network that will connect with Sierra Vista's shared-use paths.

CCTC is developing a marketing plan, that there has been an email release for holiday events, and the next meeting will be on December 3.

AOT reports indicate hotel occupancy for Cochise County was slightly up for October compared to last year, and that year to date occupancy is slightly down for both Cochise County and the state.

The AOT World Tour is on December 10, at the Omni Tucson National Resort.

New Business:

1. Work with Shea and Chamber to add advertising on VisitTucson: Tabled.

2. Kartchner Caverns State Park nominated as International Dark Sky Park:

Mr. Gent advised members that the nomination is going through the approval process and the information will be released to 1,600 science writers. The Park has received many letters of support and should receive approval in the next couple of months.

Old Business:

1. Best of Sierra Vista: Ms. Bjork reported that the event and awards went very well. She said there was good voting participation, the awards had good attendance and that she received good feedback from business owners.

She advised that Sierra Vista had 50 categories, Bisbee had 38 categories, and there was the option for voters to write in a category. The plans are to hold the event yearly and may be held in August or September.

Ms. Bjork also supplied copies of the "Best of the Vista" Herald publication.

Tactical Recommendations to Council

Short-term attainable recommendations: Mr. Gent reviewed short term goals to recommend to council.

Members discussed perceptions that the border area is not safe and ideas on how that perception can be changed including inviting Representative McSally to accompany members on a FAM trip, and encouraging articles be submitted regarding our border safety.

Members also discussed that Sierra Vista crime statistics are very good, and that the City economic development website provides that information.

Members agreed it would be good to schedule a commissioners' FAM trip in January to Cananea or the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and to investigate that possibility.

Support for National Park Designation for Chiricahua National Monument: Mr. Gent updated that efforts are moving ahead well and that it would be good to have support from New Mexico.

Members agreed to help with contacting and visiting New Mexico Chambers and encouraging them to write letters of support.

Discussion included continuing to work and gain support in Arizona including continued contact with Representatives Flake, McSally and McCain and the Department of Game and Fish.

Commissioners Fam Trip: Mr. Gent advised the recent trip to Kartchner Caverns went very well.

Members discussed the possibility of arranging a January FAM trip to Cananea. Ms. Alexander agreed to investigate possible tours, Ms. Baillie agreed to write a follow-up article about their trip and members agreed to continue discussion at the December regular meeting.

Requests of Commission: Ms. Baillie requested that "Discussion of Absentee Commissioners" be added to the next meeting agenda.

Mr. Gent advised the road work in Garden Canyon looked very good during a recent hike. He also advised the Huachuca Astronomy Club went to the International Dark Sky Association and got an award approved for SSVEC for shielding lights next to Patterson Observatory.

Ms. Tieman updated on the Festival of Trees, Santa Fly-In and Christmas Light Parade.

Next Regular Meeting: December 17, 2015

Adjournment: 9:02 a.m.

Mary Tieman, Chairperson

Are Baillie
Vice Chairperson