

Economic Development Council

Tourism Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 20, 2018 • 10:00 AM
Teleconference Available (800) 747-5150 Access Code 7781422

Attendees	Present/Absent	Number of Absences for 2018
Michelle Conway, Chairman	Present	0
Becki Christensen, Vice Chairman	Absent	1
Tony Alba	Present	2
Kathy Dahnk	Present	0
Judy Franz	Present	1
Michelle Masters	Absent	2
Liza Noland	Present	0
Lori Pappas	Present	1
Ann Steward	Absent	1

Staff: Teri Drew, Regional Director, NACOG
 Julia Sawyer, Executive Assistant, NACOG

I. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Michelle Conway called the meeting to order at 10:11 AM. She welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending in person. She asked for introductions around the table. A quorum was present. Chairman Conway welcomed new member Liza Noland and asked her to share her background. Ms. Noland shared that she is the Director of Rural Programs for Local First Arizona. She has experience in marketing in rural Arizona and became acquainted with Local First through the state Rural Policy Forum, and is excited about working with the Tourism Community. Ms. Noland resides in Prescott Valley.

II. Approval of Minutes – September 20, 2018

Chairman Conway asked for questions or comments after a brief review of the minutes. There being no comments, Chairman Conway called for a motion to approve the minutes. **Lori Pappas made the motion to approve the September 20 minutes, seconded by Judy Franz. The motion carried unanimously.**

III. Chairman's Report

Chairman Conway once again welcomed Liza Noland and complimented the Committee for their dedication to the work of the Economic Development Council's Tourism Committee.

➤ Task List Update

a. Survey to Players List

Chairman Conway recapped the survey process which started with creating a list of regional tourism professionals, the Players List, and then the creation of survey questions regarding tourism best practice. Chairman Conway reported that the Survey was sent out to the Players List, and she passed around a summary page fact sheet of the results of the survey. The respondents were regional partners that specialize in training, marketing and education for the tourism industry. Chairman Conway commented that the fact sheet would be a visual tool that can be used by the members of the Committee to share with their communities to identify what resources are available in support of their local tourism-based businesses. She noted that this will also be put on the NACOG website on the Tourism Toolbox page as a resource. Regional Director Teri Drew commented that this fact sheet is reflective of the communities that are represented on this committee. She noted that one of the Goals and Objectives of this group was to develop a resource access tool for rural communities and for tourism development. Lori Pappas asked regarding the placement of Flagstaff on the list. It was noted that this is a first draft and that perhaps the responses from Flagstaff were not yet presented. Some discussion followed regarding the identification of points of contact for each community. It was suggested everyone review the Fact Sheet and suggest additions and corrections accordingly. Tony Alba asked to please include the White Mountain Partnership. Judy Franz noted that she would like to include the Grand Spiral publication/association for marketing the Page/Grand Canyon, Utah area. Ms. Drew noted that contacts should be committee members familiar with the organizations. Some discussion followed regarding contact name spelling, etc.

Chairman Conway opened discussion on the other side of the Fact Sheet regarding marketing opportunities available to business. She noted that she would like to use this document in tandem with the impact statement steered toward the economic development side of tourism. Ms. Drew commented that tourism is an economic driver in the District, which is the reason for the NACOG Economic Development District to have a focus on tourism. She noted that she would like to include discussion about creative ways to use the sales tax from the tourism industry for economic development. As an example, she noted that former Tourism Committee member Mayor Coral Evans had remarked that the City of Flagstaff uses tourism sales tax dollars for S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) programs. Ms. Drew stated that this conversation should be more of a regional conversation among all counties represented on the NACOG district. Chairman Conway asked if adding a couple of economic impact statements to the infographic would be a positive add. All felt it would be a good idea. When the document is complete it will be put on the website as a resource as well. Other discussion followed regarding the logistics of this tool and who it's intended to highlight and reach, as well as other ideas to include for research information. The consensus was that the research piece is covered in education, but there could be clearer explanations for the categories on the fact sheet. Ms. Drew suggested changing the education column to technical assistance unless education refers to workshops, etc. Following discussion, it was determined to leave education in reference to market research with explanations as to what the education includes, and add a column for technical assistance. The heading on the back side of the Fact Sheet was discussed, and the concern was that it may be misleading to state "What kind of marketing opportunities are available to your business?" Ms. Drew suggested changing it to "Explore Marketing Opportunities." All agreed.

Chairman Conway noted that she will reconfigure the infographic and present the draft via email and

collect independent responses via email. She will also present the draft to the next meeting of the EDC.

b. Impact Statement

Chairman Conway noted that the Impact Statement was already discussed somewhat in the Fact Sheet discussion, and asked if the Committee would like to see another full fact sheet to demonstrate the Impact Statement, or combine it with the Fact Sheet. She suggested waiting to see what data is available through the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) to see how the impact statement should be developed. Ms. Drew noted that the data should be relevant, and the year the data is based on should be noted.

c. Tourism Toolbox

Tony Alba noted the progress he has made on gathering community information for the Toolbox, reporting that he has received all of the entry information from AOT as well as permission from Sedona, Local First and the Hopi Arts Festival to include their award information in the Toolbox. He will compile all of the information into a single document and highlight the areas he would like to add to the Toolbox in an organized form. He noted that he spoke with Judy Franz regarding the addition of the success stories for the City of Page such as the Balloon Regatta, and noted she will write up the information for Page. Ms. Franz noted some renewed efforts to bring back the Christmas Parade to Page this year. Mr. Alba reported that his goal is to have his entry for the Tourism Toolbox done by the end of November. He noted that he would also like to include a link to AOT's Tourism Tuesday newsletter. He commented on some contentious council meetings at the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside regarding the Town's perceived lack of promotion of the tourism industry, to which the Mayor replied that it is not only their job to promote tourism. He noted some good events that were generated by a group called Businesses for Visitors, resulting in better collaboration between the Town and the tourism industry in the area. Mr. Alba and Councilor Dahnk reported that the Town has taken over the marketing for those tourism events, and Mr. Alba noted that he is considering entering the Town for an AOT award this year for the efforts. A question was asked if Mr. Alba was looking for additional content for the Toolbox, to which he replied he is. Discussion followed regarding potential content to be added.

Chairman Conway noted for Liza Noland that the Tourism Toolbox is located on the NACOG webpage and will be updated soon. Some discussion followed regarding updating the membership page with photos and bios of the current members.

d. Community Profiles

Chairman Conway turned the topic to community profiles and Liza Noland. Ms. Noland gave a brief synopsis of the process of developing community profiles at Local First Arizona, noting the effort to demonstrate the lifestyle and essence of the community versus the demographics. She noted an additional piece of entrepreneurial opportunities is being added, and their goal to expand that piece. Local First has completed six profiles and are now starting on the next six. The first six were funded by a USDA grant. Ms. Drew noted that before Maya Azzi left Local First, the committee expressed interest in doing a regional profile. She asked Ms. Noland if it would be feasible to do a regional one. Ms. Noland reported that Greenlee is doing a regional one, due to their smaller geographic area and population. Ms. Drew expressed that she would like to highlight each of the four NACOG counties in a single profile. Ms. Noland noted that there are massive assets in this area, and each deserves their own profile. Ms. Drew agreed and commented that a regional profile would need to be customized, and wouldn't discourage communities from jumping on. Her goal is to spotlight the NACOG region, noting some work she has been doing with ROX media on a regional level. She also commented that it could encourage individual communities to want their own profiles. Ms. Noland replied that it would be difficult, but she would look into it, noting that each profile that they do takes about 2 months per

community, and that a regional one would take longer. It was noted that local areas have content they could provide. A question was asked regarding how the profiles are used. Ms. Noland replied that they are not being used yet, but Local First wants to build more robust content in them before pushing them out. She commented that they are also looking at incorporating WeekendZona into the profiles. Ms. Drew suggested that Ms. Noland talk to ROX Media, who is currently going out and doing community profiles and considering doing a statewide profile as well. Ms. Noland noted that profiles cost from \$2,500 and up to \$5,000 to include advertising – this is a one-time cost and the profiles are updated annually. Ms. Noland will advise the committee on the progress of the profiles.

Chairman Conway asked for questions or comments, and Ms. Noland complemented the Committee on the task list and the good progress thus far on it.

IV. Director's Report

➤ Program Update

Ms. Drew reported that she recently did a regional tourism piece for a ROX Media publication and noted that she will send out copies to the committee. She encouraged the committee to seek out any other media outlets where this ad could be placed to let her know. She also noted that if there are specific areas of their communities that they would like highlighted the next to also let her know, with the idea in mind to create a regional story.

V. CEDS 2020-2025 Goals Outline

Ms. Drew gave an overview of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the process of developing it. The CEDS is one of the primary roles of the NACOG Economic Development District (EDD). She said that the CEDS document defines and outlines the goals, objectives and action plan of the Economic Development Council going forward. She noted that no one at the table was present when the last CEDS was done in 2014-15, so the effect is that this committee is working off the ideas and goals of someone else. Ms. Drew emphasized that this is a prime opportunity for this committee to develop the goals and objectives for the tourism industry for the next five years. She explained the process of writing, noting that it will take an entire year to complete. There will be representatives from regional economic development groups to sit on the CEDS Committee, and she invited members of the Tourism Committee to let her know if they are interested in participating on the CEDS Committee as well. Ms. Drew reported that Evelyn Casuga will be the facilitator of the CEDS development process, working through the Center for the Future of Arizona, and APS will be the primary sponsor of the CEDS. As a means of further explanation, Ms. Drew stated that the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) requires all EDDs to have a CEDS, and the EDA only funds projects that are included and defined in the CEDS.

Ms. Drew noted that the Tourism section of the CEDS was put under Focus Area 1 last time – Grow the Region's Business Opportunities. She gave a brief overview of NACOG and the current CEDS, noting for the new members of the committee that the EDD consists of Apache, Coconino, Navajo and Yavapai counties, including the tribal nations. Do we want tourism to be a separate focus area and why? A focus area defines the intent of the region to position a relationship to a particular focus. Goals are the desired ends or conditions if pursued over time that will ultimately result in the attainment of the regional vision of goals, per page 41 of the CEDS. Objectives are the specific targets that will be achieved in implementing the related goals. Ms. Drew stated that she is careful to speak and write broadly in a plan as the document is used as a performance outcome of the EDC. The EDC annually selects goals and objectives from the CEDS and develops a Scope of Work for the year.

The Tourism Committee's goals and objectives were defined by others previously, this year the Tourism Committee decided to outline different goals to develop their scope of work. This new CEDS document will become active in 2020 and go through 2025. The document will be completed in December 2019.

Ms. Drew paused and asked the committee how they perceive the tourism section in the CEDS - should we propose a separate focus area for tourism or keep it as it is, a sub-section under business opportunities? The committee responded that tourism should have its own focus area, as it is a major economic driver. Discussion followed as to why it hasn't been a separate focus area before, to which Ms. Drew replied that it depends on who is at the planning table. More discussion followed, bringing a consensus that the Tourism section should have its own separate focus area.

Ms. Drew briefly explained the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) from which the goals are built. She noted that our CEDS is published nationally. The Committee then paused briefly for lunch.

Following the recess, Chairman Conway led the discussion regarding the Tourism industry SWOT analysis, listing each on a chart:

Strengths: Have a regional collaboration for tourism and economic development

Destinations – great product

Natural Resources/Recreation

Grand Canyon – take it back

Air Transportation: Flagstaff – DFW & Colorado twice daily

Prescott – LAX

Page – Phoenix and Las Vegas

Tourism = Business Attraction

Native American Culture and History

International Labor

Four-Season Destination

Steady Growth

Diverse Population

Gaming

Lodging and camping

Great variety of activities

Social Media & Media

Higher education

Large variety of attractions, fishing, hiking, boating, skiing

Weaknesses: Workforce

Size of Region/lack of public transportation

Cost of Living

Wages

Housing Availability - low

Affordable Housing

Promotional Funding

Lack of business support/services companies – printers, etc. (rural areas)

I-17

Tourism marketing – destinations in close proximity to the Grand Canyon, etc.

Community engagement and education

Tax revenue distribution

Opportunities: Tourist Education – fire prevention, pack in pack out, leave no trace

Destination connections, hub & spoke

“Voluntourism” – giving back – what tourists can contribute to the communities they visit

- Electric Car Charging Stations
- Advocacy – regional – state (educate politicians)
- Air Transportation – Aerial tours
- Tourism=Business Attraction
- Year-round visitation
- Film Industry – resurrect
- Sports programming (Super Bowl)
- AOT and AzLTA Partnerships
- Responsible & Sustainable tourism
- Tourism Entrepreneurial opportunities

Threats:

- Vacation Rentals by Owner (VRBO)/Short Term Rentals/Air B&Bs
- Natural Disasters & Safety
- Drought/lack of water
- Roads/infrastructure
- Traffic volume
- Las Vegas: Water/Visitors
- Competition in the Southwest
- State Funding – drought/wildfires
- Social Media & Media

Much discussion occurred during the listing of each of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with regards to the relationship with the tourism industry for Northern Arizona. Ms. Drew closed the discussion by noting that the CEDS Committee will add value to this list as well, and the Tourism Committee has gotten ahead of the game in terms of the CEDS process. Some discussion followed regarding the perception of over-tourism and the consideration to stay away from that discussion, and educating the locals on the values of tourism. Ms. Drew mentioned supporting the development of recreation and tourism amenities as an objective to add later onto Strengths and Opportunities. She noted that the next effort would be to define these SWOT items into goals and objectives at the next meeting. Other discussion followed around responsible distribution of tourism tax dollars back into the tourism industry, budget allocation of tax dollars by the community leaders; tax revenue allocation in the rural areas is low.

VI. 2019 Workshop Planning Discussion

Chairman Conway noted that the next agenda item would be tabled until next the meeting due to the lengthy CEDS discussion and the lack of time remaining for today's meeting. Ms. Drew noted that the workshops discussion will likely change because of the CEDS emphasis for 2019, and it may be better to move the workshops away from the previous idea of having them the same day as the EDC meetings because of the extended hours of the EDC and CEDS meetings in 2019. Ms. Drew noted that Debbie Johnson of AOT has been invited to be one of the speakers for the CEDS Listening Forum.

VII. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Chairman Conway noted that the agenda items for the January 17, 2019 meeting should include Item VI from today's agenda, CEDS planning, updating the Task List, and the Governor's Conference on Tourism (GCOT) and a possible NACOG breakout session (July 22 – 24, 2019), and whether to move the July 2019 meeting date.

VIII. Member Comments

Tony Alba announced the new Pinetop-Lakeside Council Chamber is now open. He also reported that Sunrise has a new website with a webcam, and consideration is being given to creating a tourism department in Pinetop-Lakeside.

Lori Pappas passed around the City of Flagstaff's recent Annual Report and a Visitor Profile. Positive comments followed. Ms. Drew noted that NAU is the EDA University Center for the District and is funded to do research and development. A question was asked if higher education should be added as a strength or opportunity, and Ms. Drew agreed that it boosts tourism and the economy.

Chairman Conway reported that the Northern Light show at Sedona is coming, the largest light projection on a natural canvas – Camel Head Rock – December 13-16 at 6 pm each night.

IX. Adjournment

Chairman Conway called for a motion to adjourn, **so moved by Kathy Dahnk, seconded by Tony Alba. The meeting adjourned unanimously at 1:13 PM.**

EDC Tourism Committee Minutes from November 15, 2018
Approved:

DRAFT