

Economic Development Council

Tourism Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 16, 2017 • 10:00 AM • Teleconference

Attendees	Present/Absent	Number of Absences for 2017
Susan Johnstad, Chairman	Present	0
Michelle Conway, Vice Chairman	Present	0
Becki Christensen	Present	1
Coral Evans	Absent	6
Judy Franz	Present	5
Richard Heath	Absent	3
Matthew Williams	Present	1

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

I. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Susan Johnstad called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM

II. Approval of Minutes September 28, 2017

Roll call was taken and a quorum was achieved. Chairman Johnstad asked for questions or comments about the draft minutes from September 28, 2017. Matthew Williams pointed out “Drew Drew” in section IV. Jeannette Arntzen will correct to read “Ms. Drew”. Chairman Johnstad called for a motion to approve the minutes with the correction. Mr. Williams made the motion to approve the minutes from September 28, 2017, seconded by Judy Franz. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Chairman’s Report

➤ **Debrief on Tourism Forum**

Chairman Johnstad began her report by stating that she would like to spend a little bit of time debriefing on the Forum that was successfully put together last month in Pinetop. Chairman Johnstad commented that NACOG staff were absolute rock stars and did a great job with the flow of the event; the energy level was really strong and there were a lot of smiles and a lot of engagement. Chairman Johnstad offered many thanks to Teri Drew, Julia Sawyer and Jeannette Arntzen for all of the work they did. Ms. Drew commented that the NACOG staff worked together as a team and she was proud of the work that was done. Ms. Drew thanked the Chairman for the recognition.

Chairman Johnstad thanked the committee for all of their work and contributions on the Forum. Chairman Johnstad gave special recognition to Matthew Williams for all of the extra work he did and for engaging all of the local officials. Chairman Johnstad said that based on the communications she had with members of the local City Council and Chamber of Commerce, they felt very much validated by the event.

Chairman Johnstad asked Matthew Williams to share what kind of conversations and feedback he has had from people in his area. Mr. Williams began by thanking the NACOG staff for all they did. Mr. Williams shared that the Pinetop Country Club commented that they were pleased to have us there and were happy how everything came out. Mr. Williams let the committee know that he had received a nice email from the owners of Charlie Clark's Steakhouse saying they had a great time. Mr. Williams thought it was great to have visitors in the area and it was interesting to read the survey results. Mr. Williams noted that he was disappointed that more members of the EDC didn't come to the Forum. Mr. Williams stated that a lot of his board members were present and they commented that they were impressed with the presentations and the flow of the event.

Next, Chairman Johnstad asked Ms. Drew how she felt about the process and the outcome and what it has meant for NACOG. Ms. Drew thanked Chairman Johnstad for her leadership and engagement in the process. Ms. Drew shared that NACOG had tried to have a Forum in Navajo County once before and it didn't work out. Ms. Drew went on to say that not only did the Forum work this time but it was very successful. Ms. Drew stated that she'd had the opportunity to visit some of the local shops in town and several people commented that had they known about the Tourism Forum, they would have attended. Ms. Drew said that looking forward we should expound on our invitations or spend a little money on advertising, in the future. Ms. Drew noted that Regional Council was held later in the month of October and that all of the comments she received were tremendous and everyone was very pleased, especially Mayor Irwin who was very excited to have had the opportunity to welcome everyone to her community. Ms. Drew agreed that it was unfortunate that there were not more EDC members in attendance however, the EDC members that did attend were very happy. Ms. Drew acknowledged the country club property and staff was excellent, the outside dinners were well attended and overall it went very well. Chairman Johnstad stated she was proud and felt very engaged with tourism. Ms. Drew turned the focus to the quality of our speakers and acknowledged that Debbie Johnson was a great speaker and we need to develop stronger relationships with AOT, AzLTA and Dr. Costen.

Steve North joined the teleconference and stated that he thought the program was really good however; he was disappointed in the number of attendees. Mr. North shared that he is trying to get Dr. Costen to come back to the area and put on a workshop for local businesses in dealing with millennials.

➤ **Survey Results**

Chairman Johnstad moved to a discussion on the results of Forum Survey. There were 33 surveys completed. Chairman Johnson reviewed each of the questions and their responses with the committee. Overall, 95.5% of the responses were "Agree" and "Strongly Agree". Much discussion followed regarding the survey results and comments. Chairman Johnstad brought attention to one comment that said "The first full day was too long and didn't allow enough time to go into the community to spend money". Discussion followed about how, in the future, the program can be developed to allow for attendees to tour the local community. The committee agreed that it would have been nice if the group could have been bused to one of the local attractions. Ms. Drew added that the TRACKS hike was a good event and enjoyed by those that participated.

Chairman Johnstad thanked Mr. North and Ms. Christensen for the excellent jobs they did in moderating the panels and Ms. Drew stated that they "hit it out of the park". Chairman Johnstad also thanked Mr. North for bringing together interesting locals for the event, adding that it really lent to the flavor. Chairman Johnstad asked the committee to share their thoughts on the panels. It was suggested that, in the future, panelists biography's be limited to one sentence and have complete bios available in print. It was also suggested that

every panelist receive the same question so that the audience gets different perspectives on the same topic, making it more of a discussion and less scripted.

Chairman Johnstad questioned whether we would put Forums on in the future. Ms. Drew suggested that as we move into 2018 we look at putting on mini workshops and luncheon presentations, perhaps directly after an EDC meeting. Ms. Drew also said that it is important to look at the survey comments and see what challenges and concerns we can help with. Ms. Drew added that there are a lot of comments about the lack of dollars available for tourism. Ms. Drew noted that we might be able to attract some dollars from AOT or AzLTA. Ms. Drew added that she thinks we can make some impacts, but we certainly do not have money to hand out.

➤ **Transition of Committee Leadership**

Chairman Johnstad reminded the committee that as of December 1st she is stepping off the Tourism Committee. Chairman Johnstad stated that the committee has excellent leadership going forward and informed the committee that the EDC has approved Michelle Conway as Tourism Committee Chair and Matthew Williams as Vice Chair. Chairman Johnstad said that she is excited to have new leadership that has experience and expertise in tourism and possess the clarity and creativity that Ms. Conway and Mr. Williams bring to their roles. Chairman Johnstad added that it has been a privilege to be a part of this committee and to see the impact that we had on the American west. Chairman Johnstad thanked Ms. Conway and Mr. Williams and asked if they had any comments they wished to add. Ms. Conway thanked Chairman Johnstad for all that she has done, particularly for the Forum. Ms. Conway stated that she is looking forward to stepping in to the Chair position and is looking forward to working with committee. Mr. Williams echoed Ms. Conway's comments.

➤ **Committee Priorities and Plans Moving Forward**

Chairman Johnstad moved on to the proposed 2018 meeting schedule. There was a brief discussion about whether the committee would meet bi-monthly or quarterly. The committee agreed to reconvene on January 18, 2018 to set goals and priorities and set the 2018 meeting schedule. Chairman Johnstad concluded her Chair's report and moved on to the Directors report.

IV. Director's Report

➤ **Budget Updates**

Ms. Drew began her report with a brief overview of the final budget from the Tourism Forum. Ms. Drew shared that there were 67 Forum participants, 43 attendees at the Charlie Clark's dinner and 44 attendees at the Cattlemen's dinner. Ms. Drew reported that actual revenue from the event was \$4,922. Ms. Drew added that when we are setting the goals and priorities at the next meeting, we will know that we have these funds on account. Ms. Drew asked the committee what they thought of the video that David Drennon from AzLTA had provided NACOG for the Forum and asked if we might want to do something like, but more targeted, in the future.

➤ **Sector Strategies**

The next item that Ms. Drew addressed was Sector Strategies. Ms. Drew gave an overview of the meaning of sector strategies for the committee. Ms. Drew stated that tourism is the sector and it would be the committee coming together to develop strategies and draw in other members from our district to participate. Ms. Drew said that we can set up sector strategies as a region - the four counties, or we can set up a process for sector strategy and then implement it on an individual county basis. Ms. Drew added that the sector strategy process is a convening of local operators of tourism, participants, chambers and so forth; they identify strategies and we help lead the process of implementation for them. Ms. Drew stated that this is a conversation that she would like to have on the next agenda.

Ms. Drew informed the committee that Thank You letters have gone out to absolutely everybody including individuals who donated gifts, to our speakers, to our sponsors, and to the facilities and hotels and restaurants. Ms. Drew shared that it is important to her to show gratitude and she wanted to make sure that we adequately expressed gratitude to everybody. Ms. Drew let the committee know that the Cable One video from the event should be ready by the EDC meeting and that she is looking forward to sharing the video with the EDC. Ms. Drew noted that the video is of the first day only.

➤ **Survey Results**

Ms. Drew asked the committee how they felt about sharing the survey results and comments with the speakers. The committee agreed that it would be fine. It was decided that the survey would be shared with the speakers via email.

➤ **Thank You and Best Wishes**

Ms. Drew thanked Chairman Johnstad for her leadership and wished her well. Chairman Johnstad thanked Ms. Drew and added that there is no one more gracious at making everyone feel appreciated. Chairman Johnstad thanked Ms. Drew for sending out the Thank You letters to so many and for mentioning those who donated gifts because their generosity had a huge impact on the feel of the entire event. Chairman Johnstad stated that it speaks to a beautiful aspect of the tourism industry.

Ms. Drew closed by saying that the strength of NACOG is its leadership and thanked Chairman Johnstad, Ms. Conway, Mr. Williams and each member of the team for their leadership and added that “together we make a difference”.

V. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Chairman Johnstad stated that the items identified for the next meeting are Sector Strategies, identifying the new committee goals and priorities and establishing the meeting schedule. Chairman Johnstad asked the committee if there were any other items to be added to the next meeting’s agenda, there were none

VI. Member Comments

Chairman Johnstad asked if there were any comments from the membership that had not been addressed already. Ms. Conway stated that she is really grateful for a great Forum and a great group and looking forward to more. Mr. Williams wished everyone a great Thanksgiving and Christmas. Ms. Drew also wished everyone a great holiday season.

VII. Public Comments.

Chairman Johnstad called for comment from the Public, there was none.

VIII. Adjournment

Chairman Johnstad wished everyone happy holidays and the meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM.

EDC Tourism Minutes from November 16, 2017

Approved: January 18, 2018