

**Economic Development Council
Tourism Committee Meeting ♦ October 27, 2016**
Teleconference

Members:			(Absences YTD)	Members:			(Absences YTD)
Adams, Sharon	Absent	2		Bressel, Brian	Present	1	
Christensen, Becki	Present	0		Conway, Michelle	Present	0	
Evans, Coral	Absent	4		Franz, Judy	Absent	7	
Heath, Richard	Present	0		Johnstad, Susan	Present	1	
North, Steve	Present	0		Prince, Don	Absent	3	
Williams, Matthew	Present	0					

Guests:

Staff: Julia Sawyer, Executive Assistant

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions

Dr. Susan Johnstad called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM and welcomed everyone. She asked for introductions. There was a quorum present.

2. Approval of Minutes from July 11, 2016 and September 8, 2016

Chairman Johnstad asked for review and approval of the July 11, 2016 and the September 8, 2016 and called for a motion to approve the July 11, 2016 minutes. Chairman Johnstad noted that these minutes were from the meeting held in Tucson, and were not approved at the last meeting because there was not a quorum. **Matthew Williams made a motion to approve the July 11, 2016 minutes as drafted, seconded by Michelle Conway. The motion carried unanimously.** She then called for a motion to approve the September 8, 2016 minutes, thanking Michelle Conway for chairing that meeting. **Matthew Williams so moved, seconded by Becki Christiansen. The motion carried unanimously.**

3. Chair's Report

• **Welcome New Members**

Chairman Johnstad welcomed new members Brian Bressel and Richard Heath, and welcomed EDC member Steve North to the Committee, noting that if he wishes to be a standing committee member or a supporting one, he is welcome. She discussed that, moving forward, assistance from Economic Development Council (EDC) members and representatives from the White Mountains region who would like to share in the planning of the Fall 2017 Tourism Forum would be welcome. Chairman Johnstad also noted that Heather Ainardi has resigned due to other commitments. Chairman Johnstad acknowledged the important role Ms. Ainardi has contributed on this Committee.

Chairman Johnstad reported on information she has received since the last meeting regarding the timing of the Fall 2017 Forum and an Arizona Association of Economic Development (AAED) Fall Forum meeting scheduled for October 25-27, 2017 in Prescott. She noted that, while it was not a direct conflict, there may be losses for our Forum being in the same month. She will discuss more later in the meeting.

Chairman Johnstad reported she shared with the EDC in early October that bids for Host Community for the Forum have been received from the Pinetop Country Club and from Torreón Resort, and she thanked Matthew Williams and Steve North for securing those bids. She also reported that Brian Bressel had already secured the first sponsorship via the Sunrise Resort, and also that there are already strong ideas in progress

regarding speakers for the event. She noted that the response from the EDC was very positive and the timeline is moving forward as has been approved.

- **Consider approval of bids received for Host Community**

Chairman Johnstad asked for comments on the conflict of dates for our Forum and the AAED forum to begin this discussion. Comments varied between negative impacts due the attendees having to choose, and also that the 2 groups aren't necessarily related, and would consist of 2 different populations and focuses. Chairman Johnstad noted that the discussions for our Forum suggested a broader base beyond the tourism factor, to include a focus on Economic Development as well. A question was asked about joining forces with the AAED forum as an extension of their event, to combine efforts. However, the AAED forum is being held in Prescott, while our Forum is being held in the White Mountains. AAED holds 2 forums per year, and in different parts of the state. Dr. Johnstad noted that, while partnering is a good thought, it would involve moving our forum from the White Mountains. It was noted that it was just an idea, considering that it could be a way of incorporating more of an economic development theme into our Forum. It was noted that AAED tends to stay away from the tourism sector, and is more of an economic development and certification focused event. The discussion lent toward the AAED forum not really being a conflict because of the rural areas being more involved in the Tourism Forum rather than the urban areas.

Comments were made regarding getting a broader base of invitees to include press, tour operators, etc. The common consensus was that there is more value to keep our Forum in the White Mountains and reach out to those more rural areas dependent on tourism. Chairman Johnstad asked Rich Heath to put to paper the value of the Tourism Forum to the rural areas and how it works with economic development there, and to bring clarity to future discussions with people we want to attend and potential speakers and sponsors. She noted that this would also be beneficial in communicating with the EDC as to why we are going forward with our selected dates. Mr. Heath agreed to do so. He noted that it would be good to communicate our forum to the AAED and collaborate with them to avoid duplication of interests while planning is taking place.

Dr. Johnstad recapped what she has heard from the Committee, that they are committed to the October 11-13 dates and want to move forward, yet wanting to have clarity in what it is our Forum will achieve and who we hope to draw in. Ms. Conway noted again that the chosen dates will be difficult for Sedona people to attend because of the season being busiest of the year during that month. It was noted that snow might be a factor to consider if the dates are moved to later in the season or in winter, and the fall colors are a real drawing factor for the White Mountains area. Comments were made regarding starting our Forum earlier in the fall color cycle, maybe in late September and into the 1st week of October. Dr. Johnstad commented that those dates were considered before, and that the chosen dates were the best possible, considering other direct conflicts. It was noted that the later in the season in the White Mountains, the less expensive it would be. More discussion followed that the dates chosen are good and that there would be conflicting dates no matter what. Chairman Johnstad reminded the Committee that the chosen dates have already been announced to the EDC as well as others, and if they didn't have to be changed it would be best. The idea carried that peak colors were best during the 1st week of October, and discussion followed. Julia Sawyer noted that EDC will be meeting on October 5. Discussion followed regarding inviting the EDC to the Forum for that time. Dr. Johnstad asked the committee if they could wait on securing the date to allow her to come up with alternative dates for the Forum, to include the current dates, the week before and perhaps the last week in September, in order to evaluate potential conflicts and then present that to the EDC. The Committee agreed. She asked everyone for their input on the potential impact the alternative dates could have regarding cost changes, availability of rooms, etc. in an independent email. She noted that she would work with Julia to send out an email for everyone's input.

- **Consider approval of bids received for Host Community**

Dr. Johnstad moved to discussion on a potential host community, again thanking Matthew Williams and Steve North for securing some pricing information from Pinetop Country Club in Pinetop-Lakeside and from Torreon in Show Low. She asked Mr. Williams and Mr. North to present an overview of each for the Committee to consider. Mr. Williams noted that both locations being considered are great venues. He noted that Pinetop Country Club is a beautiful location about 10 minutes east of Pinetop-Lakeside going toward Sunrise. He noted the meeting room is large with a beautiful view, the food is good, and the season is slower at that time. The prices quoted were for 2 options, either with food at a lesser cost or with a higher cost meal. His suggestion was to look at either including food in the cost of registration or to break the food out separately as a choice outside of the registration fee. He also suggested one meal off site, as had been done in the recent Rural Forum held there. He asked for questions. It was noted that a separate fee for food is a good idea, and allows people to register for what meets their individual schedules. Others agreed that a separate dinner out would be beneficial to the community as well. Chairman Johnstad asked Mr. Williams to explain the rates. He reviewed the rates as had been sent out to everyone earlier. He noted the costs being \$48 to \$64, depending on lighter meals or buffets. He noted that Pinetop Country Club will not charge for meeting rooms provided there are at least 100 attendees.

Chairman Johnstad asked Steve North to describe the bid information for Torreon Golf Club, just outside of Show Low, which is a beautiful setting and golf course as well. Participants for the Forum will be allowed to play golf at the private golf course at a special package rate either before or after the event if they would like. Conference rooms available will hold 250 for the larger one and 80-100 for the smaller one. Besides golf, there are other recreational offerings as well. Discussion followed regarding the packages available. Chairman Johnstad asked the Committee if there are any suggestions or considerations in determining the location. It was suggested that cost would be the main determining factor. Discussion related to distances apart from the Sunrise Park centered around a misconception that one is closer than the other, and there will be a considerable distance to travel to Sunrise with either venue. Brian Bressel commented that there isn't much difference in the two venues as far as distance from Sunrise, and he suggested value-added options for activities at Sunrise included at registration could give people the same type of options for activities as they get for food.

Having found his information on the bid, Mr. North then shared that Torreon has a large banquet room that can hold up to 200 people and is priced at \$300/day with break-out rooms included. He suggested that he could work with Torreon on that price if it becomes an issue. Breakfast buffet is \$16/per person, lunch from \$18-\$24 inclusive. Beverage stations would be set up in the rooms, and are included in the room rental. Chairman Johnstad thanked Mr. North and noted that the food options offered at Torreon are probably more upscale than Pinetop Country Club. Pinetop Country Club, however, said that the conference room rental would be free with a guarantee of 100 people. She asked if anyone else had anything to add. It was noted that the two facilities were equal in quality, and comparison is difficult. Chairman Johnstad asked Mr. North to go back to the General Manager at Torreon to ask about flexibility on room rental rate and bring a report back to the next meeting. A question was asked about how many people are expected, and it was quoted between 90-125. It was noted that the size or occupancy capacity of the room will limit our registration, but the response was that the room capacity should not limit our options. Chairman Johnstad thanked those who were looking into this information, and she suggested that, with added information, an email vote prior to the next meeting would assist in selecting the venue.

- **Assignment Touch Base**

Chairman Johnstad recapped the discussion thus far, and moved to assignments for Committee members for the Forum. She suggested 3 or more Committee groups to deal with individual aspects of the Forum. Discussion followed that it would be good for sub-committees to take care of the Forum logistics. A

question was asked about a timeline for the items to be followed, and Chairman Johnston said there was a general timeline, but nothing detailed. Chairman Johnstad suggested that she and Rich Heath connect on generating a checklist for planning to be brought to the Committee at the next meeting.

4. 2017 Proposed Meeting Schedule - DRAFT

Chairman Johnstad asked Julia Sawyer to review the proposed dates for Tourism Committee meetings for 2017. Ms. Sawyer noted that a calendar had circulated previously with the 2nd Thursday of the month being the scheduled meeting time, and following a discussion with Chairman Johnstad, the 3rd Thursday of the month posed less conflict with Chairman Johnstad's schedule. Ms. Sawyer asked Chairman Johnstad if she would like to call for a motion to adopt the proposed 2017 EDC Tourism Committee Meeting Dates. Chairman Johnstad asked for a motion to approve the proposed calendar with the clarification of the time of day being 10:00 AM for meeting dates and times. **Matthew Williams moved to adopt the revised 2017 meeting calendar, seconded by Michelle Conway.** Chairman Johnstad asked for a vote on the calendar, **the motion passed unanimously.** The next meeting will be held via teleconference on November 17, 2016 and December 15, 2016 at 10:00 AM. Some discussion followed regarding whether there is a requirement to meet in person for some meetings or not, and it was determined that there is nothing definite. Ms. Sawyer noted that she will look into the meeting requirements and respond to Chairman Johnstad.

5. Member Comments

Chairman Johnstad called for member comments, there were none.

6. Public Comments

Chairman Johnstad called for public comment, there was none.

7. Adjournment

Chairman Johnstad called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, **so moved by Rich Heath and seconded by Michelle Conway.** Chairman Johnstad called for a vote, **the meeting unanimously adjourned at 11:10 AM.**