



## Economic Development Council

# Tourism Committee

## Meeting Minutes

**Thursday, March 18, 2021 • 10:00 AM**  
**Zoom Meeting**

Attendees	Present/Absent	Number of Absences for 2021
Tony Alba, Chairman	Present	0
Becki Christensen, Vice Chairman	Absent	1
Michelle Conway	Present	0
Judy Franz	Present	0
Tricia Lewis	Present	0
Lori Pappas	Present	0
Ann Steward	Present	0

**Staff:** Julia Sawyer, Executive Assistant

**Guest:** Dakota King, NACOG-EWD Senior Administrative Assistant

**I. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Tony Alba called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM and acknowledged all who were present. A quorum was established. Chairman Alba asked Executive Assistant Julia Sawyer to make an introduction of a new staff member at NACOG. Ms. Sawyer introduced Dakota King as Regional Director Teri Drew’s new Senior Administrative Assistant, responsible for Ms. Drew’s schedule, calendar and other related duties. She asked Mr. King to share his background. Mr. King introduced himself as a graduate of Northern Arizona University (NAU) and a resident of Prescott for most of his life. All welcomed him, and Chairman Alba asked for his email address. Ms. Sawyer noted that her responsibilities will still lie with the NACOG Boards, Councils and Committees, in addition to some additional duties.

**II. Approval of Minutes – November 19, 2020**

Chairman Alba called for questions and comments regarding the minutes from the November 19, 2020 Tourism Committee meeting, and a **motion and second to approve the minutes as drafted; so moved by Lori Pappas and seconded by Michelle Conway. The motion carried unanimously.**

### III. Chairman's Report

#### ➤ Welcome New Member – Tricia Lewis

Chairman Alba began his Chairman's Report by welcoming new Tourism Committee member, Tricia Lewis. Chairman Alba reported that the Economic Development Council (EDC) approved the appointment of Ms. Lewis to the Tourism Committee at the February 4, 2021 meeting of the EDC following the recommendation of the Tourism Committee. He asked Ms. Lewis to share about her background. Ms. Lewis shared that her previous experience was with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) for 9 years, as well as various other experiences and her own tourism marketing business. She is a Prescott native and has been working as the City of Cottonwood Tourism and Economic Development Director for nearly a year. Ms. Lewis expressed appreciation to the Tourism Committee for their recommendation to the EDC for appointment. All welcomed Ms. Lewis to the Committee.

Chairman Alba began a discussion regarding the planned updates to the NACOG Tourism Committee website page, noting that at the last meeting there were a couple of members who volunteered to assist, Lori Pappas and Ann Steward. Chairman Alba apologized for not organizing a meeting at that time, noting that things got very busy during the holidays. He asked if Ms. Pappas and Ms. Steward were still willing to help with planning, they both agreed that they are willing to work on the website planning. Ms. Pappas noted that one add that would be beneficial would be to post the various funding mechanisms currently available as a resource to businesses. Chairman Alba asked if someone would be willing to take the lead on this project, as he has become overextended with projects and cannot lead at this time. Ms. Pappas said she would take the lead, and Ms. Steward offered to help. Chairman Alba thanked them for assisting and noted that he will send out an invitation for a call in the near future.

Ms. Sawyer noted that Mr. King will be the lead at NACOG for website support and suggested he be included in the meeting. Mr. King shared that he has a great deal of experience with website maintenance. Chairman Alba noted that he will send an invite to Mr. King as well.

Michelle Conway commented regarding how to provide content that is relevant and demonstrates the worth of the Tourism Committee. Discussion followed regarding focusing on who the end user will be and how to provide business support and resources. Also discussed was how to make the page more visible through Google searches. Judy Franz noted that she has utilized Google My Business for her business's website and offered to assist with ideas if needed.

Chairman Alba thanked everyone for their input and moved on to the next agenda item.

### IV. Lunch and Learn Planning Discussion

Chairman Alba reported a successful Lunch and Learn on January 29, 2021 with Arizona Office of Tourism Executive Director Debbie Johnson via Zoom. He noted that a survey went out to the participants after the meeting and garnered about 20 responses.

#### ➤ Survey Results – January 19, Lunch & Learn

Chairman Alba reviewed some of the answers to the survey, noting the suggestions for future Lunch and Learn events. He noted in particular that it was suggested to have National/State Park representation as a future speaker, and the suggestions for topics included business attraction in Arizona, media resources and calendars of events, and COVID-19 pandemic-related information. Brief discussion followed regarding the good suggestions.

➤ **Next Up (Future Events)**

Chairman Alba opened a discussion regarding the Committee's thoughts on the next event, currently scheduled for May 20, 2021 in a virtual platform. He noted that he cannot be the lead on this event and asked for someone to consider taking this one on.

Chairman Alba asked for suggestions on a theme. Ms. Conway suggested that a hot topic currently is "Leave No Trace" in Sedona and other local areas, and that responsible tourism would be a good consideration. She suggested leveraging AOT's connections to this campaign and noted that it might be an interesting avenue to take. Ms. Steward agreed, noting that AOT has a toolkit that the Committee could use in preparation, and suggested that this theme is especially important after all that the tourism destinations and communities have gone through this past year.

Chairman Alba suggested that a timely topic to add to that discussion would be fire awareness, since the Lunch & Learn would be taking place at the start of wildfire season. He noted that 90% of the state is experiencing drought conditions, and the Northern Arizona region is headed for a severe fire season. He noted that fire awareness is an important message, and may need to be its own topic. Ms. Pappas suggested that it is a relevant topic to Leave No Trace, and suggested a consortium of the NACOG committees to get the word out about fire awareness. Chairman Alba asked Ms. Sawyer if fire awareness has been a topic at the last couple of EDC meetings, as he has missed them. Ms. Sawyer noted that fire awareness has not been a topic of discussion at the EDC lately, however it was discussed during the Navajo County Economic Recovery Town Hall that was held yesterday, and forestry matters are a hot topic with the EDC.

Chairman Alba asked for thoughts on combining the topics for the next Lunch & Learn. Ms. Franz voiced her support of Leave No Trace, and discussion followed regarding the intersection with tourism, and whether there would be enough time within the 90 minute time frame. Ms. Pappas noted that a lot of tourism takes place in the forests, as do the wildfires, so there is definitely an intersection with Leave No Trace. She noted that she has points to share based on her experience working with the local fire departments and forest services. Chairman Alba noted that he will reach out to some of his forest service contacts in the Pinetop-Lakeside area, and suggested others do the same. He noted that Ms. Drew would likely have suggestions as well, asking Ms. Sawyer if she would. Ms. Sawyer noted that Ms. Drew would likely have some suggestions, and also noted that, as for the last Lunch & Learn, she would request that the Tourism Committee once again take this task on, as the NACOG EWD staff are ramping up with additional workload due to the recent departure of Cody Pace, former Economic Recovery Administrator.

Chairman Alba called for volunteers to work on preparations for the May 20<sup>th</sup> Lunch & Learn, and he will set up a meeting. Lori Pappas volunteered to be a part of this program planning, as did Ann Steward. Tricia Lewis noted that recovery would also be an interesting topic, and asked to be a part of the planning committee as well. Chairman Alba thanked everyone for the input.

**V. Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

Chairman Alba noted that the next meeting is the Lunch & Learn and that this would take the place of regular

business, however if someone has an urgent item for consideration to let him know.

## VI. Member Comments

Chairman Alba called on each individual present for Member Comments, beginning with Michelle Conway. Ms. Conway noted that, with the new Sedona Chamber CEO in place there are several new things happening that she is making herself available to, consequently she hesitates to offer assistance with the initiatives that were discussed today, however she is available for any input she can give as needed. Chairman Alba asked her about the leadership class she took, and she gave a brief update of the program and how COVID-19 affected it. She noted that it was a good experience and recommends it highly.

Tricia Lewis reported that Cottonwood is preparing to launch an Economic Development Guide for the community and that hospitality business is up in the City. She noted recent updates to the [www.CottonwoodAZ.org](http://www.CottonwoodAZ.org) website, a new tourism-dedicated website, and will be increasing advertising for Cottonwood going forward.

Lori Pappas complimented Ms. Lewis for the good news regarding the upswing of Cottonwood's advertising. She noted that Flagstaff is moving toward a more moderate re-opening stage, and asked the Committee if their January and February numbers were reporting strongly, as the numbers in Flagstaff on the last Star Report were strong. All reported significant increases in numbers. Ms. Pappas also asked if Spring Training was affecting any other areas, as Flagstaff is seeing more business as a result. No one else noted significant impacts.

Ann Steward reported that the City of Prescott has been busy and recently went out for a marketing bid. She also reported that the City Council recently filled a vacant seat, and that Prescott is saddened at the loss a firefighter.

Judy Franz noted that the City of Page was down in numbers during January and February, but now Lake Powell is completely booked and the City is getting busy. She noted that the water on the lake is down and is more dangerous for boaters. She also reported that the Slot Canyons are looking at opening up canyon-by-canyon, and that hotel occupancy is up as they are working their way out of 2020.

Chairman Alba reported that Pinetop-Lakeside is back into the event planning phase, considering the Governor's 50 or fewer participant limit (unless mitigation plans are in place). He noted that the Town has just added a page to their website for event planning, and that special event liquor licenses are again being issued. With that, he closed Member Comments.

## VII. Public Comments

Chairman Alba called for comments from the Public, however there was no Public present on the call.

## VIII. Adjournment

Chairman Alba thanked everyone for their time and called for a **motion to adjourn; so moved by Michelle Conway, seconded by Tricia Lewis. The meeting adjourned at 11:04 AM.**