

Visitors Promotion Committee
May 15, 2019
MINUTES

In attendance: Lynne Ireland, Becky Perrett, Jeff Cunningham, Amy Dickerson, Aaron Stitt, Susan Madsen, Nicole Fleck-Tooze, Roma Amundson, Michelle Waite and Kerry Eagan

Absent: Roland Morgan

Staff attending: Jeff Maul, Derek Feyerherm, Ron Kalkwarf, Todd Wiltgen and Diane Pryor

Guests attending: John Chapo, Chris Goforth, Troy Gagner, Maggie Stuckey, Susan Larson Rodenburg and Dan Lesoing

Call to Order and Introductions:

Lynne Ireland called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. and introductions were made. John Chapo, from the Lincoln Children's Zoo, brought animal cookies for everyone and thanked the committee for their support over the years.

Prior to hearing the grant requests, Jeff Maul gave an update of the Improvement Fund balance and said there are plenty of funds to support all the \$10,000 or less grants requested.

Being no further questions or comments, Ireland welcomed the first presenter. Lynne also excused herself as she had a conflict of interest with the first presenter. She asked Becky Perrett to lead the discussion in her absence.

History Nebraska Grant Request:

Chris Goforth began his request by thanking everyone for this opportunity and passed around a special issue of History Nebraska's magazine telling the story of women empowerment since the ratification of the 19th amendment. 2020 is the centennial of when Nebraska ratified the 19th amendment and this Votes for Women! exhibit will open August 15, 2019. The exhibit will highlight women and social justice by telling the story of various past and current powerful, successful women; Helen Boosalis, Virginia Smith and Deb Fischer to name a few. It will tell how they have helped impact our community and pave the way for other women to make their own impact. Goforth told the committee he has funds to get this started and get the message out now but is requesting \$9,978 to help them next year and to keep the ball rolling. They need momentum, he said, and help with promotion and advertising costs associated with such exhibits. He is estimating the number of attendees to be 30,750, with 13,750 of those from out of town resulting in 3,000 hotel nights. The economic impact, Goforth felt, could be as high as \$1.03M. Ireland opened the floor to questions. One was the timeframe and Goforth said it would be August 2019 to August 2020. Jeff Maul asked if the money would be for marketing or the exhibit itself; marketing was the answer. Amundson noted that Kay Orr was the first woman, Republican governor of Nebraska and that women were not allowed in the Nebraska National Guard until 1972. Maul said that mothers often make the vacation plans and this could possibly be something drawing women to Lincoln for the family vacation. Stitt wanted to verify that the presented statistics were for a 12-month period – yes, they were. Being no further questions, Goforth left the room. During discussion Waite asked for clarification that the VPC can give grant money specifically for marketing. Maul said yes, it is okay and similar requests are typical in these less than \$10 grant requests. Stitt said maybe he didn't give enough information of how the hotel room

night number was figured and Jeff Cunningham thought when a family comes to Lincoln for this exhibit they will certainly do more while in town. Cunningham made a motion to grant \$9,978 to the History Nebraska, Nebraska History Museum for promotion of their exhibit. Dickerson seconded the motion. With no further discussion, Perrett called for a vote. Cunningham, Dickerson, Madsen, Perrett and Stitt voted yes. Ireland abstained. Morgan was absent. Motion carried. Following the vote, Ireland rejoined the meeting.

Lincoln Arts Council Grant Request:

Troy Gagner made a grant request to the committee for \$10,000. He said the 2019 Lincoln Arts Festival usually held at SouthPointe Pavilion, has outgrown that venue and will be moving to downtown Lincoln this year. Gagner is excited about this move and said it will be held in conjunction with Lincoln Calling – Lincoln's largest music festival on September 21 and 22, 2019. They will be located adjacent to 14th & P Streets. The Arts Festival will be able to add artists and activities working with others to add festival flair. They are expecting about 20,000 people that weekend and hoping they get the out-of-town guests' percentage to 21%, some coming from eastern Nebraska, western Iowa, southern South Dakota and northern Kansas and Missouri. Gagner talked about how they are going to utilize the city's buses, trolley system and bikes to allow the attendees to get around to the various presenters, performers and artists. He also is hoping for marketing from local media, maybe even having the local news broadcasting live from the festival that weekend. He would utilize the money granted for an extensive marketing campaign showing the vibrancy of the arts, pulling in artists from across the country, making it an ARTS weekend with Lincoln Calling and other arts events partnering together and finally showcasing downtown Lincoln as the new art scene in Lincoln. Ireland opened the floor to questions. Cunningham asked what the hours would be. Lincoln Calling will be Friday night, the Arts Festival will be Saturday 9-8 and Sunday 9-5. Maul applauded Troy for his collaboration with the others in this arts weekend. Gagner was asked why he feels this is the best fit for his festival and he replied because of the combination of music and arts. He thought the art would really reach the audience listening to the music from Lincoln Calling. Stitt asked what advertising they planned to purchase and Troy said TV, radio and a little newspaper. He also brought up the on-site TV spot that weekend. Gagner was excused and the committee began discussions. Susan Madsen said this would be an additional thing to do downtown, which is always a good thing. It was noted the weekend matches up with a Husker football away game, which is ideal. Fleck-Tooze said this has been a great event in the past with a really good set-up. Stitt made a motion to grant the \$10,000 request to the Lincoln Arts Council. Madsen seconded the motion. With no further discussion, Ireland called for a vote. Cunningham, Dickerson, Madsen, Perrett, Stitt and Ireland voted yes. Morgan was absent. Motion carried.

Lincoln Parks Foundation Grant Request:

Maggie Stuckey and Susan Larson Rodenburg addressed the committee to request a grant of \$3,956.15. Since the Nebraska Centennial Mall was renovated in 2016 there has been very little done to promote it across the city and state to bring in visitors. The Mall is the connection between the University and the Capitol. It is seven blocks long and serves as a scenic connection. There are an estimated 100,000 visitors and a variety of tours each year, including school children from across the state, visiting the State Capitol. Rodenburg said they would like to expand and improve the existing attraction and promote and advertise such exhibits and that is what they would use the funding for. They are printing 31,000 brochures to distribute to people and organizations around downtown. Ireland asked for questions. Cunningham asked if these were new brochures or a re-print. Larsen Rodenburg said brand new. Perrett asked how long 31,000 would last and they said two years. Ireland said since the purpose of the Improvement Grants is trying to get people overnight, she asked how the grant would help doing that. Larsen Rodenburg answered that Centennial Mall will be another attraction for people to visit while in Lincoln. They said they are

marketing online and through other outlets. Maul said the CVB will add the brochures to their packets they distribute to help and encouraged them to reach out to services such as Certified Folder that put brochures in hotels throughout the state for additional distribution. Wiltgen asked if there was a technology side and Larsen Rodenberg said it will be on two websites. Waite suggested they put the brochures in other venues including the University's visitor's center. The two guests left the room and the committee discussed. Dickerson said there is a need to get the word out about the Mall, and this would help. Derek Feyerherm added that the CVB is often asked about attractions for the Native American culture and this would help with sales efforts when recruiting conferences. Madsen noted several downtown tours and asked if there was a way to bring awareness to all of these tours. Maul said a page could be set up about walking tours on the CVB website and include them. Perrett made a motion to grant them the \$3,956.15 for the brochures. Madsen seconded the motion. With no further discussion, Ireland called for a vote. Cunningham, Dickerson, Madsen, Perrett, Stitt and Ireland voted yes. Morgan was absent. Motion carried.

Susan Madsen excused herself from the meeting. The meeting was ahead of schedule and Dan Lesoing hadn't arrived yet, so the committee went on to the approval of minutes and financials.

Approval of February Minutes:

Ireland asked for approval of the February minutes. Perrett made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Cunningham seconded the motion. There being no discussion or corrections, Ireland called for a vote. Cunningham, Perrett, Stitt and Ireland voted yes. Dickerson abstained. Madsen and Morgan were absent. Motion carried.

Approval of April Financials:

Ron Kalkwarf presented the financials with the Profit and Loss statement covering July 2018 through April 2019. Total Income was \$1,793,975 which was over budget by \$21,208 due to grant income offset by grant expense. Total Expenses totaled \$1,896,299 and Kalkwarf pointed out Net Income was at (\$102,324) this year and the net income was (\$71,556). Kalkwarf stated the loss would be addressed in an upcoming agenda item with the CVB requesting improvement funds for the use of promotion Dickerson moved to accept the financials as presented. The motion was seconded by Perrett. With no further discussion, Ireland called for a vote. Cunningham, Dickerson, Perrett, Stitt and Ireland voted yes. Madsen and Morgan were absent. Motion carried.

Lincoln Sports Foundation Grant Request:

Dan Lesoing spoke next to the group requesting a grant of \$10,000 to replace all the signage and improve the Lincoln Sports Foundation (LSF) MX track. He began his presentation letting everyone know since his request three months ago they have a settlement signed and the lawsuit has been dropped. Lincoln Sports Foundation (LSF) owns the complex now, he said. Lesoing feels there has been a lot of wait and see and now they want to change the signage to let everyone know Abbott has been rebranded with LSF. This along with the track enhancements will require an estimated \$26,900 and he is requesting \$10,000. Lesoing asked for questions. Maul started with what signage has already been replaced. LED lighting has been installed. The entry sign is new as well as some indoor signs. LSF has approval from a benefactor to go ahead with the signs, saying the funding will be there to offset the remaining expenses not covered by the grant. It has been promised to him. Dickerson asked how fast the track could be improved. End of May, Lesoing replied. Fleck-Tooze asked how the teams will hear about them; what are his plans for outreach. Lesoing said several organizations have reached to LSF about utilizing space. Lesoing believes the rent will be less than some of the other properties in town and that should bring in some users. Fleck-Tooze asked where they are at on Phase 1. Lesoing let the group know they have an anonymous donor and are

partnering with Clark Enersen to develop the design so they can send it out for bid. Stitt asked what events, if any, they are having there now. He said Capital Soccer Association (CSA) is using five soccer fields, they have some basketball games scheduled there in June and a Mud Run coming up this summer. Stitt asked how their relationships were with previous users. Lesoing told him CSA had left, but now were back and VCN is wanting to come back with some of their club. He thinks once everything is repaired more clubs and teams will want to return to using the facility. Dickerson asked which item would be best to make the money ask for, the track or the signs. Lesoing was willing to ask for one or the other, but maybe the track because it can be advertised for better. Cunningham said we need to know which item he is asking the money for because we need receipts to show it was used for a certain thing. You need to say exactly what you are requesting for, Cunningham said. Wiltgen posed the question if the track is improved, can you attract more users. Lesoing said he thinks so. Fleck-Tooze asked if they lease the center and Lesoing said they own all of it, with no mortgage. They must pay said the mortgage for ten years but the legal settlement provides that Abbott Foundation pays these costs. After ten years, it'll be theirs. Lesoing was excused from the meeting and the discussion began. Ireland told everyone it was certainly more positive than his previous request. Eagan was asked how many grants the facility has received over the years and he said they have received several with the last one about four years ago, he thought. Feyerherm brought up the fact that LSF are planning a circuit for the MX track in 2020. Maul mentioned the motocross phenomenon, Diesel Thomas, a local top national rider, who is bringing a lot of attention to the Lincoln track. Dickerson said the committee would be able to get receipts for the signage, if we went that route with the grant request. Stitt asked what events are there now that the signage would help with. Feyerherm pointed out the motocross, soccer and volleyball are available for use already at this point. Perrett made a motion to approve the \$10,000 grant request for the track at the Lincoln Sports Foundation Complex. Stitt seconded the motion. With no further discussion, Ireland called for a vote. Cunningham, Dickerson, Perrett, Stitt and Ireland voted yes. Madsen and Morgan were absent. Motion carried.

½% CVB/Event Promotion Lodging Tax Request:

Jeff Maul addressed the Committee with a request for improvement funds to be released to the CVB in order for them to continue the bid process in bringing in new events and continuing relationships with existing organizers. He said request was for \$150,000 (for January 2019 – April 2019 collection) and would be used for NSAA Boys and Girls State Basketball. Stitt asked if just for the NSAA. Maul confirmed. Perrett made a motion that the VPC has made the determination that facilities are adequate in order to request Improvement Fund dollars be used for promotion by the CVB as requested. Dickerson seconded the motion. With no further discussion, Ireland called for a vote. Cunningham, Dickerson, Perrett, Stitt and Ireland voted yes. Madsen and Morgan were absent. Motion carried.

CVB FY 2019/20 Budget:

Maul presented the proposed CVB budget for the July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020 fiscal year. Beginning with income the total room tax request is down 2.7% over the previous budget. Maul stated this amount came from discussions with Dennis Meyer, fiscal officer for Lancaster County. Bid fee room tax from the improvement fund is the same this year as last year at \$366,000. Total budgeted income is \$2,216,120, down 2.2%. Moving to expenses, Maul stated salaries are up 8.2% because of tenured staff and helping to pay the salaries for shared employees. Medical dental, life and disability insurance rates also are projected at an increase due to moving to a plan to become ACA compliant. Travel and training are up 12.5% due to new tradeshow being attended by the CVB Equipment/Maintenance is up by \$20,026 due to software enhancements. There is an increase in printing because of the Visitors Guide and new brochures. Professional fees are up by \$3,235 due to using new auditors, RSM, and their fees. There is an increase in public relations of \$7,000 as a result of our staff getting out there and meeting with our contacts.

Advertising is down \$44,000 because there was a significant investment with the Reimagine Lincoln campaign last year and plan to pull back some. Event promotion is increasing by 20.5% to be used for bid fees in non-sport marketing. Maul said sports event promotion will be down by \$142,250 since the USA Roller Sports won't be here this next year. Cunningham moved to approve the proposed CVB FY 19-20 budget as presented. Perrett seconded. Being no questions and no further discussion, Ireland called for a vote. Cunningham, Dickerson, Perrett, Stitt and Ireland voted yes. Madsen and Morgan were absent. Motion carried.

Directors Report:

Jeff Maul began his report talking about state baseball going on and the CVB providing all the teams with plenty of pizza. Lincoln will be hosting the 2019 Volleyball Nations League in June at Pinnacle Bank Arena. It is pro volleyball and more of a party-style volleyball with lots of music in between points. On June 15 the Final X Wrestling event will be at Devaney and this will determine the 2019 U.S. Senior World Teams in both men's and women's. The 2019 Lincoln Craft Beer Tour will kick off on May 24. You can pick up your tour booklet at the Visitor's Center along with tour stickers. A free pint is available to you at all participating breweries and if you visit them all, the first 100 will receive a commemorative tulip glass. Maul updated everyone on the Manzitto project progress on West O. It is scheduled for a late fall/early winter opening, weather permitting. A new rail museum and viewing platform is in the works. Larry Engle is trying to get this museum built. Also, work is being done on a Nebraska Museum of Aviation in Lincoln. The Visitors Center has expanded the hours for the summer, Tracie Simpson of the CVB has been working this past week at the Brochure Swap in Seward and there is a ribbon cutting for LSF Sports Complex scheduled for June 21. Maul added he is working on a tourism facility survey. Discussion in the community is ongoing about ballfields in Lincoln and the CVB website redesign will be coming in 2020.

Feyerherm talked next about sales and proposals. He said we have 61 sales leads for 30,013 room nights. 81% of those are regional/national and 77% are new business. There have been six proposals submitted for consideration and are sitting on 16 leads currently pending for 7,580 room nights. In 2019 Booked Business, Feyerherm went on to say, there are 56 events booked for 23,247 rooms. 65% of those are regional/national and he expects that number to increase. 77% are new business as well. USA Roller Sports will return to Lincoln in 2021 and 2022. The USA Rollers Sports met and it will be held in Cedar Rapids in 2020 before returning to Lincoln. The CVB has had success in group tour market collaborating with other communities. Kelsey Meyer is doing great with that trying to freshen it up. There has been several tradeshow, one being the Heritage Club in LaVista in March. Meyer attended and had 20 appointments come from it. The Chicago Sales Mission was in late April and Feyerherm and Kelsey McGreer attended. Several leads were developed as a result. Derek Bombeck attended the NASC Symposium in Tennessee and had 29 appointments to follow up with. In other updates, the CVB has a new Sales Development Manager, Kelsey McGreer, who joined the team in March to work the SMERF markets. Feyerherm closed saying the CVB was in the Top 3 for the Sports Tourism Organization of the Year by the National Association of Sports Commission and that he is chairing the Marketing Committee established as part of the Sports Nebraska Coalition marketing sports across the state.

VPC Committee Appointments:

Ireland stated that she will be reaching the end of her term. It is the recommendation of the Chair and Vice Chair, as well as Jeff Maul to do the following for the coming year: Becky Perrett as Chair until her 8-year term ends on June 2020. Amy Dickerson as Vice Chair. Ireland made a motion to approve the recommendation as stated. Stitt seconded the motion. Ireland called for a vote. Cunningham, Dickerson,

Perrett, Stitt and Ireland voted yes. Madsen and Morgan were absent. Motion carried. This will now go to the County Board for final approval. Maul took the opportunity to present Ireland with a gift showing their gratitude for her years of service, thanked her and her term ending leaves a vacancy on the committee. Maul thought they should try to keep this position as one for a Lincoln/Lancaster County attraction.

There is a recommendation of Tara Knuth, Lincoln Childrens Museum, to fill the spot of Lynne Ireland, who will have served eight years, ending in June 2019. Tara would begin her term on July 1, 2019. Maul said we have interest from Lincoln citizens, via Lancaster County as well, if the committee would like to go that route instead. Dickerson made the motion to recommend Tara Knuth in the vacant spot on the committee. Perrett seconded. Ireland asked for a vote. Cunningham, Dickerson, Perrett, Stitt and Ireland voted yes. Madsen and Morgan were absent. Motion carried. This will now go to the County Board for final approval.

New Business:

Ireland asked if there was any new business. Maul said there would be a special meeting of the Committee on May 29 at 1 pm for a special grant request from Amy Dickerson and the Lancaster County Event Center.

Adjourn:

Being no further business, Perrett made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Stitt seconded the motion. Being no further discussion, Ireland called for a vote. Cunningham, Dickerson, Perrett, Stitt and Ireland voted yes. Madsen and Morgan were absent. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:48 p.m.