

Tourism Wells Gray
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
Thursday July 6th, 2023

MINUTES of the meeting of the Tourism Wells Gray Board of Directors held in person and via Zoom on Thursday July 6th, 2023, from 1:35PM – 3:36PM at the DLCC multipurpose room in Clearwater, BC.

PRESENT:

Chair M. Larose	MRDT
Vice-Chair H. Wadlegger	Director at Large
P. Bradstock	Clearwater Chamber of Commerce
L. Frizzle	District of Clearwater, Councillor
R. Vesak	TNRD Area A
T. Houghton – via Zoom	BC Parks

STAFF:

A. Benoit	Executive Director
A. Svenson	Visitor's Centre Manager

REGRETS:

Treasurer T. Govaert	MRDT
H. Louwerse	Guiding and Activities
W. Robinson	Accommodation and Food
V. Gat	BC Parks
A. Green	Simpcw First Nation
K. McKay	Parks Permit Holder

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- a. The meeting was called to order by Chair at 1:35PM.

2. ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA:

MOTION: That the agenda for the Jul 6th, 2023, Regular Board Meeting be approved.

Moved by H. Wadlegger

Seconded by P. Bradstock

CARRIED

3. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING:

MOTION: That the minutes of the meeting from Jun 8th, 2023, be accepted as presented.

Moved by H. Wadlegger

Seconded by P. Bradstock

CARRIED

4. CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Season End Hospitality Gala – Kalen Jones of Valley Pride - Kalen has approached Tourism Wells Gray with a proposal to combine efforts and throw a hospitality gala for all workers and owners in the hospitality industry in Clearwater at the end of the 2023 tourism season. Traditionally, Tourism Wells Gray has thrown a season end stakeholders event, which is typically attended by owners/operators of local businesses. Kalen emphasized the need to celebrate not only the owners/operators, but the workers who interact with tourists day-to-day throughout the season. Several points were raised:
 - i. Tourism Wells Gray supports and would like to be equal sponsors of this event.
 - ii. Tourism Wells Gray will hold a minor AGM separate from the gala, rather than combining the events.
 - iii. Proposed dates are currently Oct 13th or 14th. P. Bradstock to check with Chamber of Commerce on thoughts since their Awards Night is the following weekend.

MOTION: That Tourism Wells Gray redirect \$1500 earmarked for the season end stakeholders event to use towards the season end hospitality gala jointly sponsored by Valley Pride and Tourism Wells Gray.

**Moved by M. Larose
Seconded by R. Vesak**

CARRIED

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. CEBA Loan Repayment – now completed
- b. Executive Director Cell Phone – scheduled to be completed next week
- c. North Thompson Communities Foundation Spring Grant – Final report was submitted and NTCF has issued a cheque to the TNRD as our flow-through sponsor. TNRD to issue a reimbursement cheque to Tourism Wells Gray within the next 3 weeks.
- d. ‘Wells Gray Sketches Book’ – As per the TWG board’s suggestion, a donation box has been set up at the main counter of the Visitor’s Centre, and a suggested donation of \$20 has been listed. All proceeds will be deposited into a BC Parks PEF funds specifically for Wells Gray Park, with project designation to be decided at a later date.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a. River Safari – River Safari has approached the Visitor Centre several times this season, asking to put a sandwich board advertisement outside the Visitor Centre. Discussion was had on the degree to which Tourism Wells Gray wants to promote out-of-town businesses. Concerns arose about directing visitors to leave our community with these ads, rather than encouraging them to stay in Clearwater longer. River Safari is currently promoted in the Wells Gray Visitor Centre through brochures, similar to the visitor guides from other regions that are available freely through most visitor centres.

MOTION: That Tourism Wells Gray reserves outdoor promotional marketing spaces to local community events and businesses that are in line with both BC Parks and Tourism Wells Gray mandates.

Moved by M. Larose
Seconded by P. Bradstock

CARRIED

- b. VIC Staff Room – Proposal was made by Executive Director to contract the installation of an interior wall in the Visitor Centre on the main floor in order to create a staff room, available to all workers in the building, in order to promote and maintain staff well-being. T. Houghton suggested that TWG fund this internally, rather than through BC Parks funds, since it is an infrastructure upgrade. P. Bradstock brought forward concerns of costs, and suggested the project wait until the Destination Development Fund project begins in the fall. M. Larose rebutted, stating that completing the project now would make the rental space downstairs more desirable. Consensus was that this project will not need a permit, but the Executive Director will confirm with the TNRD Building Inspector regardless.

MOTION: That the TWG Executive Director obtain a quote on installation costs and timeline for creating a staff room on the main floor of the Visitor Centre and bring this to the board for voting.

Moved by H. Wadlegger
Seconded by M. Larose

CARRIED

- c. ED Vacation – Aug 14th – 18th – Approved
- d. In camera session
- e.

CLOSED MEETING - The Tourism Wells Gray Board of Directors went into “in camera” executive session from 2:34PM – 2:39PM with unanimous consent.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

- a. NTVMC – The Lower North Thompson Tourism Society (LNTTS) has announced that they will not be continuing their partnership with Tourism Wells Gray, Tourism Blue River, and Tourism Valemount as part of the North Thompson Valley Marketing Consortium past March 31st, 2024. The remaining partners have decided to continue forward, and the LNTTS has approved a redirection of 2023/2024 funds to overhaul the main website. The Visitor Guide will also be resigned, an RFP will be issued this fall for the marketing contract for the group (currently with Symphony Tourism Services). Executive Director to send out more detailed information to the board for their reference.
- b. Wellsgray.ca Website Detail – M. Larose expressed concerns over lack of detail on the Tourism Wells Gray website, specifically regarding paddling information for the Clearwater River. Discussion ensued regarding the level of detail that should be made available to tourists through a passive channel such as a website. Concerns are that inexperienced paddlers may put themselves at risk if they attempt boating on the river without first consulting a local source. ED agreed to liaise with local rafting companies to improve the information available on the website, whilst directing visitors to contact said companies directly for more detailed information. Website amendments will be sure to highlight paddler safety.

- c. Starry Nights Festival – Suggestion was made to approach the TNRD for potential funding of this community event.

8. VISITOR CENTRE REPORT

- Staffing - Sickness and burnout started to impact the staff in June. Since the last board meeting, the VIC hired one of the volunteers, Kathy Murta, to work part-time at the centre. BC Parks also organized two of their Rangers to attend the Visitor Centre on the CSS Grad weekend, when staffing was particularly low. This was a success. Staff are feeling more refreshed now that the centre is better staffed, and Amanda is optimistic that they are set for the rest of the summer.
- Parking Lot - The issue of the parking lot lines came up again, and discussion was had on the difficulties in securing a contractor this year. Amanda impressed that the parking lot is currently quite chaotic and at times unsafe due to the lack of lines. Discussion was had on limiting further distraction at the centre, such as buskers, with this in mind. Lynne will follow up again with the DOC and Chad to try and secure a quote for line painting.
- Visitor Centre Expenses – Amber brought up that the VIC expenses for 2022 were upwards of 25K, and that the budget of 10K is likely too low for 2023. A suggested goal of 15K was made. Currently, the VIC is still underbudget – the TWG board will reassess at next meeting and vote if an increase of funds is required.

9. FINANCIAL REPORT

- MRDT for April was higher than expected again, likely as a result of the new end date for the Trans-Mountain pipeline workers of October 2023. Amber presented a trend forecast for 2023 based off 2016-2022 data and assessed that we are currently on track to meet or exceed our projected revenue of \$150,000 for MRDT in 2023.

10. CHAIR'S REPORT

- Meira will be attending the TOTA board meeting in Kamloops on August 23rd at the Big Horn Golf & Country Club.

11. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS -

a. **BC PARKS: Tod Haughton**

- Viewing platforms at Spahats are slated to be redone next year
- Upgrades planned for the Trophy Mountain/Sheila Lake campground on July 24th.
- Moul Falls Trail will be closed July 18th and 19th for assessment for stair replacement project.
- There is talk of adding boardwalk around Caligata Lake, but is not confirmed at the moment.
- The Azure fire is essentially out at this point due to all the rainfall in the past month.

b. **MRDT: Meira Larose**

- N/A Nothing to report.

c. **SIMPCW: Alison Green**

- Regrets
- d. **PARKS PERMIT HOLDER: Kenneth McKay**
 - Regrets
- e. **ACCOMMODATION & FOOD: Will Robinson**
 - Regrets
- f. **GUIDING & ACTIVITIES: Holly Louwerse**
 - Regrets
- g. **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: Peter Bradstock**
 - BC Chamber sponsored an initiative for dashcams on commercial vehicles.
 - Lisa (admin) is currently on hiatus and therefore there is no one in the Chamber office at the moment. Contact can still be made through email to the main address or to Peter directly as needed.
- h. **DISTRICT OF CLEARWATER: Lynne Frizzle**
 - The town trails ribbon cutting was postponed until the fall to allow inclusion of the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in the ceremony.
 - Canada Day at Dutch Lake Beach was a huge success. Volunteers handed out 600 hamburgers and 300 hot dogs. Tourists commented on how impressed they were to see such a big celebration in a small town.
 - Question arose of if there is still a signboard at the Dutch Lake washrooms, and if TWG should post a sign directing to the Visitor Centre for out-of-towners.
- i. **DIRECTOR AT LARGE WGOC: Hazel Wadlegger**
 - WGOC will be having a solstice ride on June 21st from 5pm-9pm. There will be a social following the ride. This will be at Candle Creek Trails, and Backcountry Bowls will be on site as a food vendor.
- j. **TNRD: Rob Vesak**
 - On June 11th, Usoff Tsao was out in the communities working on an initiative to bring different communities together to address larger issues. Ex. Barriere is looking into putting dashcams into all commercial vehicles.
 - Rob mentioned that TWG could potentially approach the TNRD for funding of the staff room upgrades to the Visitor Centre.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: The next regular board meeting tentatively set for Thursday September 7th at 1:30PM in a DLCC meeting room.

13. ADJOURNEMENT:

- a. **M. Larose moved to adjourn meeting at 3:36PM.**

CARRIED