

**Utah Office of Tourism
Board Meeting
Friday, October 11, 2019
Natural History Museum of Utah
Rio Tinto Center/University of Utah
Swaner Forum, 5th Floor
301 Wakara Way, Salt Lake City, UT 84108**

Members Present:	Lance Syrett, Nathan Rafferty, Dirk Clayson, Elaine Gizler, Mike Taylor, Shayne Wittwer, Sara Toliver, Kym Buttschardt
Members Excused:	Dean Cox, Ryan Starks, Glen Overton, Greg Miller, Brian Merrill
Staff:	Vicki Varela, Dave Williams, Becky Keeney, Denise Jordan, Cecilia Bahena, Anna Loughridge, Rachel Bremer, Haley Rodgers, Emma Checketts, Melissa Kinney, Andrew Gillman, Rosie Serago, Lorraine Daly
Visitors:	Tina Henrie, Carrie Cox, Breck Dockstader, Cody Adent, Kaitlin Eskelson, Hannah Saunders, Megan Griffin, Jonathan Smithgall, Molly O’Neill, Kylie Kullack, Eric Thompson, Monique Beeley, Adam Whalen, Emily Christopher, Jim Breitinger

WELCOME

Lance Syrett called the meeting to order and welcomed the board, staff, and visitors to the Natural History Museum of Utah. Jim Breitinger, Director of Marketing for NHMU welcomed the Tourism Board and guests.

Lance then asked members of the board and visitors to introduce themselves.

MINUTES

MOTION: Mike Taylor motioned to approve the September 17, 2019 meeting minutes from the meeting held in Logan, UT. Dirk Clayson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Vicki Varela, Managing Director, reported on the following items:

- Ryan Starks leaving the board to take a position in the Governor’s Office of Economic Development. Search will start for his replacement to represent Wasatch, Juab, Utah and Summit counties, suggestions welcome.
- Strategic planning process was started in July. Coraggio Group of Portland, OR has facilitated the process and gathered information for us to look at through a different lens. Report given to UOT is 98 pages.
 - Right zone for adventure travel

- Missing opportunities around growing interest of cultural and heritage tourism – lacking in storytelling and assets. Thinking about ways to improve.
- 359 respondents to Stakeholder survey. Concerns are:
- Over-crowding issues
- UOT should show more leadership around conservation and stewardship. Forever Mighty, what territory to claim? Anchor our ownership in The Mighty 5 and demonstrate our leadership as good land stewards. Good opportunities and responsibility. Still thinking this through.
- Red Emerald initiative – enthusiasm at the high level, good strategic direction. Many questions on the exact initiatives, how everyone can play a part in it and next steps.
- Deeper into destination development and management– enthusiasm for what’s been done and a need to show more leadership in that area.
- All staff did Coraggio interviews & Q12 (Gallup) questionnaire that measures work place environment. Culture is great, 4.3 on a scale of 5 – rare high marks. There is work to be done to help staff know their “lanes” and create more productivity. Stakeholders are looking for more information regarding staff and who to contact for needs. We are working through the process to complete our staff reorganization.
- Social listening exercise, no big surprises so far. Instagram is the key social listening tool, 30% of our social media. Second highest discussion on social media is regarding infrastructure, over-crowding. Stakeholder survey – we’re more critical of ourselves than visitors are re: food scene, accommodations, etc. but good social media on food scene in Salt Lake City.

MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT

- **Marketing Committee Report**
 - **Dashboard Results:**
 - Dave Williams, Associate Managing Director, reviewed the dashboard measurement results for length of stay due to advertising, year to date TRT (trending well), efficiency metrics of website engagement, etc. This information was provided to the board in a handout. ([Link](#))
 - **Fall/Winter Southern Utah Ad Campaign Creative Review:**
 - Reviewed lower occupancy in southern Utah is in the winter months.
 - Staff and agency is working on how to adjust this to get more tourism in southern Utah.
 - Advertising can be pinpointed/targeted to specific warm-weather potential visitor.
 - Creative ideas were shown in marketing meeting, updated creative will be presented in November board meeting.
 - Media buy, need funding to move forward later in the month.
 - Becky Keeney, Operations and Marketing Manager, discussed how the budget would be dispersed by type of media.
 - Requesting \$400,000 of current budgeted 3-Season campaign funding for the media buy as described in [this attached presentation](#) .

Motion: Shayne Wittwer motioned to approve using \$400,000 from currently budgeted 3-Season campaign funds for this campaign. Dirk Clayson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- **VisitUtah.com Update:**
 - Dave Williams reviewed what has happened recently with newly contracted website vendor to update our current site.
 - Rosie Serago, Content Strategist, reviewed the process of completing the RFP for a new website vendor and what the next steps are for updating the VisitUtah.com site to be more personalized for visitors/users. ([presentation attached](#)) .
 - A request was made for one-time additional funding for a technical lift from current and old year budget line items. This is for an upfront improvement instead of working through the current approved budget.
 - Dave reviewed that the board has currently approved \$425,000 for website development. We have \$150,000 in carry-forward from last fiscal year that can be used for this project. The request is for \$140,000 from other budget line items at this time. Also funding will be requested to be added for fiscal year 2020-2021. The additional funding breakdown is included in the attached presentation (see above).
 - Board asked staff to work with vendor to see if the cost could be reduced for the same work. They would like to be included more in the process so they can make informed decisions.
 - Lance Syrett, Board Chair, asked that staff work with vendor this week and then schedule a Board conference call to discuss findings.

Motion: Nathan Rafferty motioned to have staff go back to vendor to let them know that the board is questioning the costs and see if they can be improved. Once that conversation has happened, the board will convene for a conference call next week. The motion was seconded by Mike Taylor. The motion carried unanimously.

- **Update on India Sales Mission:**
Rachel Bremer, Global Markets & Destination Development Manager, reported on the recent UOT sales mission. India is an emerging marketing for travelers and the sales mission from last year did garner earned media. This year is the second sales mission and was very well received. This is a market that we need to continue to watch. ([presentation attached](#))
- **Urban Marketing Update:**
Andrew Gillman, Creative & Content Manager, reported on the progress of the urban marketing front. He reviewed the editorial strategy for content on the website on the first page of his presentation ([attached](#)). More content will be produced for winter in southern Utah. Right now the team is focusing on urban on the Wasatch Front to get these cities on the map. Rosie will take the lead on the next Explorer's Guide and it will focus on urban.

The video “Permit of Solitude: Canyoneering Robbers Roost” shown at the end of Andrews’s presentation can be seen here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zs4h5mEAJJ8>

UTAH TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Kaitlin Eskelson, Executive Director of UTIA, update:

- Thanks to everyone that attended the annual tourism conference. Next year’s conference will be in Salt Lake City.
- Legislative update:
 - Significant win on DABC alcohol policy changes reversed but will be revisited in the 2020 legislative session.
 - Beginning October 1, the marketplace facilitation bill addresses any entity acting as a third party on-line has to collect and remit taxes. All short-term rentals have to collect and remit taxes. AirBNB has been collecting taxes, about \$12 million, last year and there should be about \$5 million still possible from tax collection from other on-line entities.
 - TRT conversations have been ongoing on the TRT split and how the funds are to be used by identifying the needs of the communities.
 - UTIA has several meetings scheduled next week but is requesting private sector entities speak to their legislators. They want to hear from the people in their areas that are affected by these bills. Private sector involvement is very important.
- A request was made for a talking points sheet for private sector individuals. UTIA will have a white paper for use in about a week and will make sure it gets out to private sector.
- UTIA is working to get a specific person at the Utah Tax Commission to work with TRT remittance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPCOMING EVENTS

- Elaine Gizler - October 28, 2019 at 5:00pm, Moab Town Hall – videos will be presented to the community on efforts of sustainability and that tourism is essential for the economy.
- Dirk Clayson - The Kanab Center in Kane County is nearing completion. Their first event was held on October 10th. The Southern Utah Tourism Summit will be held at the Center on April 2 – 3, 2020.
- Shayne Wittwer - The St George Airport is now open with flights to Dallas, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Denver and Salt Lake.
- Sara Toliver - Kym Buttschardt is being honored this evening by Weber State with a distinguished service award.
- Vicki Varela – Stakeholder Summits will be held next week, reminders will be sent out by Lorraine.

MEETING ADJOURNED