

**MINUTES of the NEVADA COMMISSION ON TOURISM
RECOVERY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, December 1, 2020**

The Nevada Commission on Tourism held a Recovery Committee meeting at 1 p.m. on December 1, 2020 via Zoom.

Call to Order

Pam Robinson called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

Committee Members Present

Christian Passink
Julie Pazina
Kristin Windbigler
Pam Robinson
Patty Herzog
Tim Haughinberry
Tracie Barnthouse

Committee Member Absent/Excused

N/A

Staff Present

Jessica Grundy
Shari Bombard
Juraj Sojka

Guests Present

Kate Wilson

ROBINSON: I think we have a quorum. We've got all the commissioners or all the committee members on.

PASSINK: You're right.

ROBINSON: Jessica, if you want to confirm that it was properly posted and call the roll and confirm that we've got a quorum, that would be terrific.

GRUNDY: Sure. Hi, this is Jessica Grundy for the record. Yes. Everything was posted. Let me go ahead and call roll to make sure we have a quorum, but it appears we do, so I will go ahead with that. Christian Passink?

PASSINK: Here.

GRUNDY: Tracie Barnthouse?

BARNTHOUSE: Here.

GRUNDY: Pam Robinson?

ROBINSON: Here.

GRUNDY: Tim Haughinberry?

HAUGHINBERRY: Here.

GRUNDY: Julie Pazina?

PAZINA: Here.

GRUNDY: Kristin Windbigler?

WINDBIGLER: Here.

GRUNDY: Patty Herzog?

HERZOG: Here.

GRUNDY: All right. That is everybody.

ROBINSON: Did I hear Patty say she's here?

GRUNDY: Yes.

ROBINSON: Good. Okay. Great. Well, let's go ahead and get started. First, I just want to say I'm really happy to be here. I'm sorry I missed our first meeting and I'm really sorry because now I'm the Chair and I wasn't there, but I'm really happy to be able to serve Travel Nevada. The State of Nevada is dear to my heart and particularly the rural communities, so whatever we can do with this committee as we look forward to really important issues and being part of a solution as we recover, I'm excited to do and I think we've got a really dynamic group here that we will look forward to working with. Before we get started -- well, we are started. Public comment. Do we have anybody from the public that would like to make comments for three minutes? Nobody? Okay. Let's move to the minutes from -- and if any of you out there hear that somebody is trying to get in, then just wave at me to stop me and we'll go back. I'm pretty informal that way. Everybody got a copy of the transcript. Thank you, Jessica. Are there any edits or changes that need to be made?

PAZINA: Yes. This is Julie Pazina for the record. On page 4, it's marked down as, I believe, Kate Wilson making the motion for the nomination for Pam Robinson as service chair. I did make that motion, so it should be Pazina rather than Wilson.

ROBINSON: Perfect. Any other changes? Okay. Can I get a motion to accept the minutes as amended?

PAZINA: This is Julie Pazina. I would like to make a motion to approve the minutes from last meeting as amended.

ROBINSON: A second? Oh, come on. We're not going to be shy, are we?

HAUGHINBERRY: I'll second that.

ROBINSON: Thank you, Tim.

HAUGHINBERRY: You're welcome.

ROBINSON: All right. We've got a motion and a second. All in favor, say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Great. Our minutes have been approved and so we'll just jump right into our agenda item and, Christian, I think I will turn this section over to you and you can review the Travel Nevada stuff. I know you have assigned different people to different parts of it and however you're most comfortable doing it. If you want us to hold questions and/or comments or we can wait and do something like that if we need to adjust. Let's just jump right in.

PASSINK: Okay. Thank you. Madam Chair. For the record, my name is Christian Passink and I am the Director of Sales and Industry Partners for Travel Nevada. It's great to be here for the second meeting of the Travel Nevada Recovery Committee and I would like to congratulate Pam Robinson on being named Chair of this committee. She was nominated by the members of this group and then was voted unanimously on by our most recent full commission meeting that was held on November 4th. At the first recovery committee meeting, we introduced three new programs to the committee. Those were the Destination Development Program, the Volunteerism Program, and a hybrid infrastructure marketing recovery grant program using Coronavirus relief funds. I'm pleased to say that the revised application questions and the guidelines that were approved by this committee at the previous meeting worked very well for us and they also worked very well for the applicants. We're also pleased to announce that the grant application platform that we normally use for our regular grant program worked very well for this and no small part did almost everybody was already registered within the program, had a username, a password, and an account already set up, which made the process familiar to them and a lot easier to manage because we didn't have to recreate that whole thing. Because of the way the questions were structured, it was easy for staff to separate the Volun-Tourism projects from the marketing projects or the

infrastructure projects. As soon as the guidelines were approved at the last meeting, we hit the ground running. Shari Bombard, Rural Programs Manager, did three consecutive grant workshops the very next day, so we knew time was of the essence. We wanted to get the most information to the people in the best way possible, and it does have a lot of synergy to do these types of workshops because you start to hear people sharing ideas and concepts that other people are picking up on with the ultimate goal to try to get the best possible product. The more projects you have to evaluate, the better likelihood of getting solid, really good projects, so we were hoping to announce that this meeting that we were going to get back to in-person destination development meetings and territory meetings, but as you know, the current situation with the rise in the COVID cases throughout the state and our surrounding states has caused us to put those in-person meetings on hold for now, but we continue to meet regularly via Zoom. Aside from the very tight timeline, we feel that we'll still be able to accomplish the Volun-Tourism projects even though we're not able to assemble large groups of volunteer workforce to assist with that, so we're taking those projects on a one-by-one basis to see what we can do in the time that we have to comply with all the guidelines and still do good work and accomplish these, but it is setting the groundwork for the future where we can start to develop attractions and points of interests and reduce blight in some of the areas throughout rural Nevada in an overall effort to try to improve the product and to identify areas throughout the state that are motivated to want to get into some sort of a destination development-type program to demonstrate that they have a long-term plan to promote tourism, which makes it more attractive to put marketing dollars behind that because there's the possibility and the potential to regain those funds through visitation. Our Destination Development Program is moving along nicely under the circumstances. It's proceeding as planned. We have more information on that lower down on the agenda, as well as the Lincoln County questionnaire that is going out to the residents of Lincoln County to try to get their input as much as possible before we get started. As Chairwoman Robinson said, the rest of the staff has more detail on these programs. I wanted to give a broad overview of it. If anybody has any questions for me, I'd be happy to answer them now or probably better to just wait until Shari and Juraj present, because they're going to probably go over quite a bit of material that will answer most of those questions, so at this point, I would like to turn it over to the Rural Programs Manager, Shari Bombard, to give an update on the coronavirus relief grants, so go ahead, Shari.

BOMBARD: Thank you, Christian. I'm with my list of talking points over here. For the record, my name is Shari Bombard and I'm the Rural Programs Manager for Travel Nevada. Good afternoon, Madam Chair, and members of the Recovery Committee. It is my pleasure to present to you an update regarding the COVID-19 Rural Recovery Grant Program funded through the Coronavirus Relief Fund. The grant recommendations you received in the back-up were approved by the full commission on November 4th. We received 169 applications requesting \$3,376,079.48 in funding. We were able to provide funding for 120 of those requests, totaling \$1.65 million. \$1,726,079.48 had to be cut or denied, so we had to cut more than we were able to award. As Christian mentioned, three Zoom grant workshops were held for our partners to explain the new rules and new application that was approved by this committee. The Volun-Tourism Impact Project was also a part of these grant workshops and Juraj Sojka will address that program after my presentation. As grants were reviewed, all applications that also applied for the VIP program were shared with Juraj for further evaluation of eligibility for that program. Because several of you are new to our grant programs and because this program is so different from previous grant programs, I felt it would be helpful to explain how the whole review process worked. So once the grant application period closed, all the grants, backup quotes, everything was printed out. I then read every single word and it was a lot of pages, over a thousand, reviewed all quotes and backup and then made notes right on the applications. I wrote down questions to ask the applicant, concerns with eligibility, areas that could be cut, et cetera. Because these grants must follow all the federal CRF rules and funds must be paid back if a project is determined by audit to be ineligible, any projects that had any doubt whatsoever as to eligibility were either denied or the portion that was potentially ineligible was cut immediately. With so many applications and so much to cut, the possibility of having to return the funds was not worth the risk. The CRF rules that had the most impact at this stage were the requirement to remarket an area as open or safe and the requirement that the project be completed by the 12/30/20 deadline. In the case of media buys, the CRF rules state that the advertising must significantly begin and have impact prior to the 12/30/20 date, but the advertising may go into 2021 as long as it is part of a normal purchasing practice. That is why when you look at all of those recommendations, you'll see television buys or billboard buys that go 12 weeks, three months, et cetera. Those types of media purchases are normal and thus eligible per the Governor's finance office. Following these steps gave a good starting point to really look at the quality and potential economic impact that the projects could make in rural

Nevada. One of the first steps was to look at the projects to see if they would create sufficient return on investment for the cost. The intent of the CRF program is to have immediate economic impact to assist with recovery. This is where advertising projects that would bring people to our rural areas were given preference over certain signage and other projects that would not contribute to actually bringing visitors to our rural areas. The questions that led to some projects being cut or denied or approved in full were the following: Will this project bring visitors to the area? Does this project market the destination as either open or safe? Will this project encourage people on road trips who would not plan on stopping in certain areas to stop? Does this project have immediate impact? How does this project contribute to economic impact? Is this project completable by 12/30/20? Is this project a duplication of efforts from the various territories or other organizations? If projects are similar, do they complement each other and is approving both a responsible use of funds? And can this project be completed with less funds? Is there room in the budget to cut to more reasonable amounts without hurting the integrity of the project? Once those questions are answered and various projects cut or denied based on the answers, I started looking at an equitable distribution of funds throughout the rural areas of the state. In some cases, individual communities applied for upwards of \$500K total. That would represent almost a third of the full amount available and would not be an equitable or fair distribution of funds. At this point, applications that made it through the initial process are compared to each other based on geographic area. If organizations had multiple applications that would cause a drastic imbalance of funds, the applicants were contacted to ask what their priorities were and if there were areas that could be cut or reduced while still completing the project. One example of this is the Travelzoo application for Las Vegas territory. They applied for \$50,000, which is a large amount, especially since the territory submitted so many applications at a high price point. Travelzoo also had a \$25,000 package that was very effective. The cut was made without making the project unable to be completed. This is true of all awarded projects. I'm certain all of them will be able to be completed with the funds awarded based on budget, provided quotes, discussions with applicants, all of that. I would like to point out that their preferences were taken into consideration as part of the review process, but in no way were any sort of guarantee as to funding. The project still needed to be based on what was most effective with the best ROI but knowing an applicant's priorities is very helpful when applications are similar in impact. Once these steps had been completed, the amounts were once again tallied up to see how much still needed to be cut and it was at this

point that the projects that had lesser priority were denied or cut based on all of the above parameters. Throughout the entire process, I was in constant contact with the Governor's finance office to ensure compliance with all federal CRF requirements. After all of that and the initial recommendations were made, they were reviewed with Christian Passink, Director of Sales and Industry Partners and then once finalized, the recommendations were shared with all of the territory chairs and the rural commissioner, and feedback was requested. The finalized recommendations were then presented to and approved by the full commission on November 4th, and the applicants were notified. I am already receiving reimbursement requests and I've seen several of the social media and other marketing campaigns go live, which is very exciting and nice to see as well as gotten updates on a few of the more, like, physical project-oriented awards. So that is exciting to see, too, so are there any questions regarding any of all of that, regarding those grants?

ROBINSON: No questions, but thank you, Shari, once again for doing a great job and being able to pivot so quickly with your team there and take advantage of what looked like kind of doom and gloom for our rural communities to come back and be able to help them that way. We've got some pretty dynamic partners that help us get that done. Thank you.

BOMBARD: Thank you. Are there any other questions or comments (Inaudible)? Okay. So, at this time, I can pass it on to Juraj to discuss VIP grants and also destination development. Thank you very much.

SOJKA: Thank you, Shari. Talking about VIP, that's our shortcut for a Volun-Tourism Impact Project. So Volun-Tourism Impact Project Grant Program was introduced during this grant cycle. During the COVID-19 crisis, we tried to come up with the ways in which we could best assist our rural Nevada tourism industry partners and make it part of our recovery plan. We were also trying to find a way to get more volunteers involved in tourism and to identify the areas throughout the state that are in need of improvements. While we are in early stages of developing a destination development program, this will help us to lay groundwork for starting to get into these communities and improve the visitor experience as well as increase the quality of life for the residents. While we have programs for marketing and infrastructure for some projects, some projects are denied or don't comply with the current grant guidelines. We wanted to develop a program to assist them not only financially but to organize a workforce to help provide manpower needed to get some of these important projects completed. Main focus of a VIP Grant Program was on the

projects related to tourism grants that will improve the visitor experience and also involve community volunteers. As the program develops, we are hoping to make it permanent program for Travel Nevada. As Shari mentioned previously, the VIP grant application was included in a Federal CRF grant application using the same grant guidelines and total budget for this grant cycle was \$45,000. We receive 23 applications total and six applications qualified to be part of this pilot program, and total awarded was \$44,921. The list of approved applications was included in the package provided to you prior to this meeting and all those projects are being slowly executing or started the process and to my knowledge, the first project that will be completed will be Tonopah Business and Attraction Recovery Marketing, and this will be done this coming weekend, starting on December 3rd. I mean, Thursday going throughout the weekend, so this will be the first project completed, and I haven't received any reimbursement requests yet, but I know they'll be coming next week. Any questions?

ROBINSON: Juraj. I know this may have been talked about before, but how was it determined that Caliente and Lincoln County would be our first destination development project? I love that idea, by the way, because they have a lot to offer there.

PASSINK: I think I can answer --

SOJKA: Yes, that's more of a Christian question.

ROBINSON: Okay.

PASSINK: Because I was involved with it from the beginning. We sat down and tried to figure out what a criteria would be to highlight a destination and what it had to have was close proximity to a reliable drive market, so it couldn't be a destination that was too hard to get to. It had to have some sort of intrinsic qualities that a program could be built around, which in this case is outdoor recreation. Caliente had amazing mountain bike assets and the Silver State OHV trail. You got Cathedral Gorge. You got, you know, Kershaw Ryan and the five state parks within that area. It's underserved and it also has a close approximation to Las Vegas, which has the potential to pull international visitors or people on an extended road trip. They had to have taxable lodging, so some small communities in Nevada didn't have the room base to make it a workout. The other criteria was that there had to already be some synergy in there because we knew that Travel Nevada wouldn't be able to do all the heavy lifting themselves and that's where, as I say, the magic happened, the serendipitous moment where Shari Bombard and Patty Herzog got together and they were also

looking at that area. Economic development was looking to diversify that area, too, so tourism kind of was a perfect fit to add to what they were doing there. We had the Office of Outdoor Recreation. We had Economic Development. We had Lincoln County Community Action Team. We had Travel Nevada, so it was just kind of the perfect location to start. It was an area that also doesn't have any kind of a CVB or any chamber of commerce, so it's a clean slate. They don't have any branding or anything, so it was something that we could come in and start fresh to prove the concept that if we take the full force of the State of Nevada with the Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism, and try to go into a community and prove that we can make this a purpose to attract a visitor to where they can come and fulfill the experience that they're going to get, so that was kind of the criteria. It had to be easily accessible. It had to have lodging. You had to be able to have other attractions that didn't have to be built or have a huge investment, and so all of those things kind of came together in really a perfect way. It is far to get to from here, but it's not about us getting there, but that was one of the problems is you don't just drive to Caliente for a quick meeting and come back. But normally, we would be working this in with our normal territory meetings when we're traveling throughout the state as well, so eventually it won't be too much of additional burden to the program. In fact, it'll enhance it because all of the techniques and things that we learn from this process, we're going to share that knowledge with all the other territories and the other destinations so that they can start to take advantage of the work that's being done in Caliente. So that was really it. Once we knew (Inaudible) was working there and they actually didn't have any negatives, it was pretty easy to decide. To find the next place was a little more difficult, you know? We literally probably mentioned every town in Nevada and talked about strengths and weaknesses, so just that exercise alone, was amazing, and as you know, being a member of the Territory Advisory Committee meeting, we had this overall feeling of trying like crazy to be as fair as possible, so what was happening was certain areas that were really primed to get stuff done weren't getting as much attention as other areas that weren't really ready for that, so we think that this is going to help us with limited resources kind of focus on one area to prove the concept that we can come in, and it's like a convention and visitor's bureau in a box and just move into a community. Just right now, we're already looking at it. I told Juraj to have the mentality that if he's applying for the job as the Tourism Director of Lincoln County and opening up an outdoor recreation store in Caliente at the same time. That's the mentality that you have to have is you have to promote this region to a point where a business

can be successful that is catering to outdoor recreation. So that's kind of the very start, and I think just having a clean slate is refreshing and it feels good and you know what, they want it. That was the most important thing is, you know, in rural Nevada, if the community doesn't want it, there's nothing that we're going to be able to say or do that's going to convince them, but they have asked to increase their tourism and their promotion and to develop their trail system and all that. We're excited about it.

ROBINSON: Thank you. Appreciate that.

PASSINK: Mm Uhuh.

ROBINSON: Does that cover everything on that topic for you, Christian?

PASSINK: Yes, it does. There was just one other thing that I left out in my opening comments and that was in regard to the reopening plan and the recovery plan. Part of our original recovery plan was this document was the reopening plan, and as you know, we're in Version 2.0 of this right now, so reopening plan didn't really seem to fit, and we were updating this document as things go because as you know, it's one of the most important things for a visitor is to find current updated information on destinations they're traveling to, so we just kind of retitled it to the response plan. Chris and Tracie do a great job of keeping track of that, so as the guidelines and the restrictions relax or increase, we're keeping track of that, so that is definitely part of our recovery plan is to get the most updated information to the visiting public. I just wanted to thank Tracie and Chris for their work on that.

ROBINSON: Great. Thank you. Before we go into agenda -- did you have something else, Christian?

PASSINK: No, I was going to say that does conclude my presentation.

ROBINSON: Okay.

PASSINK: Thank you.

ROBINSON: Before we go forward, there wasn't actually an action item on minutes on the agenda, so we will put a notation in there that we discussed minutes, and then we'll take the proper steps to make sure that we agendize those for action items in the future. Agenda Item D is outdoor, special events, and when this committee was first talked about by the Lieutenant Governor, and she asked me if I would participate on it and I was really happy to do that, and I started thinking about what we can do to enhance and support what Travel Nevada does. How we look at opening kind of the recovery open in a different way. How we look at

potentially, I mean, we've got our giant conventions and all of those big events that it's going to take some time for that to happen and how do we possibly look at smaller opportunities, smaller events, maybe new ones enhancing some that are already in our rural communities that we can still stay within the guidelines and the directives that the Governor has given us. But we start planning ahead. With the possibility of a vaccine really looming near, we might be able to get there a little bit sooner than we did. I think we're still going to -- I like the idea that -- I kind of compartmentalized how we reopen in Nevada in three different ways, kind of our internal Nevada audience. I love the marketing ads that Travel Nevada is doing, these full-page ads. I think they're effective. They're fun, they're ingenious. I think that they're really going to be effective, so I'm looking, you know, looking at what we do internally and getting people to continue to, within Nevada, discover our Nevada and do that. Then kind of branching out a little bit on that regional side, I mean, you look at Caliente and we've got a really, within a hundred miles, a great Utah audience there, too, Las Vegas, different things there. You look at, like, a (Inaudible) and you pick up the Arizona part and those kinds of things, so looking kind of, I call it, domestic, which is really internal and then kind of regional before we move nationally, because I think people still have to get to where they feel comfortable traveling, and we want them to come back and know that we are open in certain ways and that we're safe, and, you know, the International, Christian, that's all up to you to, you know, that's going to be a while before that happens. So being able to brainstorm with the committee members and staff and look at how we can be prepared. What's some of the opportunities are to look at how we work with maybe our partners and the county, different cities that have to give permits to certain events and that right now, maybe they feel like they can't permit anything because of where we are in our COVID numbers and things. But there might be ways that you can redo the way you do an OHV run or you do a trail bike thing or something like that, and how we might be able to help work with those through GOED and Caleb Cage's group and things like that to potentially look at new opportunities and outdoor events in particular. Our Outdoor Recreation office obviously is a great asset there and being able to provide synergy within our different organizations and our different divisions and state government, 'cause not one division can do it all, and so that was part of what this was, and it's really kind of a brainstorm session. I hope that our committee members will think about some of that. Julie, I know you are an event planner on a large scale, you know, that's what you do, so how do we do that safely that we make sure that the Governor's office can be part of this. The Lieutenant

Governor has been a great champion for trying to find ways that we keep, you know, our economy going and that we start to recover in a different way, and we're just going to have to look differently at a lot of things for some time. This was really just to start that conversation about how we brainstorm, how we get prepared. If we really do jump pretty quickly, how quickly can we pivot? Our territories are pretty nimble, you know. They can move things pretty quickly in their different worlds if we can help come up with the sidebars and the, you know, bumper lanes to potentially help them do that. I don't know if we need -- I'd like to have comments and conversation on this. I don't know if we need an action item to maybe come back just with Travel Nevada, kind of think about what that means on what we're doing without adding a huge set of work things onto your plates. But, you know, we've got these great grants going, the destination plan, the Volun-Tourism. Christian, you know, that, I think, has a tremendous opportunity and so how do we kind of rebrand and start getting people able to do events and how do we market that properly so that people know that we're still kind of -- that we are open, but we're just open differently than we were before and so that's been in my head.

PASSINK: Madam Chair, if I may.

ROBINSON: Yes, please.

PASSINK: For the record, Christian Passink. I think from what I see right now is the risk of losing some of our already established great events, because, you know, it's a lot easier for another destination to try to attract these events by offering incentives or something that they haven't previously had, so I think right now that if an event is to be canceled, for whatever reason, that the organizers need to know why and that we still appreciate their business, and then we're going to help them out and take steps to keep that event in Nevada, where it belongs. There are some events that can't be moved out of Nevada, like Cowboy Poetry is a perfect example. Last I checked, I think there were over 60 spin-offs, but if the granddaddy of them all leaves Elko, then you'll never get that back. You see that with like the rodeo. Jerry Jones wanted that rodeo forever. It is now in Jerry Jones's brand-new stadium, so Vegas has to compete to get that back. So I think right now, when we can't really safely do some of these events, we need to let the organizers know how much we appreciate their business and Nevada is the best place to hold this event and this will be over soon and that we will, you know, compete with other areas that will try to, you know, that are looking at our events, so I

think that that would be something that we could do and that's on the local level because the local convention and visitors authorities are the ones that work with these event organizers throughout the year, so I think that's probably the first thing, is to try to avoid any slippage to let anything go away.

ROBINSON: True. And maybe that's where this committee has the ability to work in a, you know, little bit smaller scale on how do you change it enough to still make it the right kind of event for Nevada and do it with the new restrictions and concerns that we have? Probably, I don't know, but probably for another year until, you know, the herd immunity and the vaccine and everything really gets in, and then people start to feel comfortable again, so trying to rethink what the structure of an existing event is and/or a new one that can operate properly, those -- I don't have all the answers, but it's one of the things that I've been thinking about how we work on doing that.

PAZINA: This is Julie Pazina for the record, and I think it's a wonderful idea and again, thinking locally, we have so many smart minds in Nevada, not just our territory members, but if we expand that to look at groups like the Las Vegas Hospitality Association. Brenda just had a chance to speak to that group a couple of weeks ago. That's 500-plus members from the tourism industry in Nevada that will do anything to make sure that we succeed. When we look at groups like that and even spread it out. When you look at service leagues with the Volun-Tourism project, we have Junior League of Las Vegas. We have Junior League of Reno that can really get actively involved and start thinking of ideas for things that we can do in our community and ways we can help out, whether it's with the current Volun-Tourism projects or expanding on that to do outdoor projects that fit the criteria of what we can do right now but show that events can continue safely in the state. I would love to get more people that love and are so passionate about our industry involved and really just build those partnerships.

ROBINSON: Do we want to look at, you know, each of us has a different kind of a focus group, if you will, or groups of people that we've worked with, is that something we want to try to bring back and look at how we involve those and do something in not, I don't want to say formal way, but a more organized way possibly? I mean, how would you look at making that happen, expanding the broader audience and groups, Julie?

PAZINA: Julie Pazina again for the record. You know, I think the best idea, we just had Brenda speak at one of the meetings, but we have monthly meetings and I think if we can combine a Los Vegas territory with Las Vegas Hospitality Association, the local chapters of International Association of Exhibitions and Events, Professional Convention Managers Association, we'd have all of those resources right here in the state that are committed to Nevada succeeding and our tourism industry succeeding, and I think if we can have a speaker, whether from this committee, from Travel Nevada and share what we're looking to do and what we would like to see happen, there's just so many great minds that can then be working together to make those events happen and I would be happy to help put together, you know, some of those groups and try to make that meeting happen if it's something that the committee is interested in moving forward.

ROBINSON: I like that idea very much and, you know, you've got your unique niche down in the southern part of the state, and there are those same kind of unique areas with different focuses in other parts of the state, but there's all overlap with all of that, so this is a discussion item, so I know we can't -- I don't know. Kate Wilson, is that something that we can do as a request or do we have to have it agendaized for that or --

WILSON: Yeah, I think, since this is a discussion item, there's nothing to vote on, we can, you know, the primary purpose of the recovery subcommittee is to report back to the Lieutenant Governor and to the broader committee. I think it's totally fine to bring this as a discussion topic and see if we can move forward. The only thing we can't do is decide that, yes, we're going to do it on this day or we're going to do this thing, but I think a discussion can continue outside of the committee, so.

ROBINSON: Okay. Thank you.

BARNTHOUSE: This is Tracie Barnthouse the record. I just wanted to jump in and add something to that really quickly. I think when it comes to what we're talking about going and doing all these networking events, I think there's also a PR aspect to it, as well as so many states --

ROBINSON: Totally.

BARNTHOUSE: -- are looking at ways to, you know, restart that industry. I think if we could take the lead and be kind of the leaders in that message and this is -- kind of give, you know trade journalists or even consumer-facing media a look at how we're doing it in Nevada, we could really own that and get some good PR effort out of it as well, I think.

ROBINSON: Completely. That ought to be part of that kind of report back is that we've got to be able to tell people our story to make it so that people know. I like that idea a lot.

WILSON: And Kate Wilson for the record. Just one other thing quickly. You know, Pam had brought this to the Lieutenant Governor as something that she wanted to discuss, which we thought was incredibly timely and useful. I think more broadly, I think this sort of hits on what Tracie was just speaking about and making sure that Travel Nevada and the recovery subcommittee and the broader tourism commission are able to sort of streamline messaging so that --

ROBINSON: Yes.

WILSON: -- people know that we have the information, that we are happy to help, that we can get, you know, there are so many things that are changing with COVID. There's so many things that are changing within GOED, within the Governor's office, within restrictions that if we can somehow streamline that information to people so there's consistent messaging so that they know where they can find this so that they can feel more comfortable and confident in planning these events and trying to get out into the rural Nevada areas and things like that, that's sort of the primary focus for what we want to see sort of come out of this.

ROBINSON: Julie, you were going to say something?

PAZINA: Yes, thank you so much. You know, the thing I was going to add to that actually echoes a lot of what Kate just said. You know, it's not just a good idea to look to each other to start planning events and making tourism happen, but it's a great audience of a lot of people who really care and love the State of Nevada who are committed to the tourism industry to talk to them as well about the amazing tourism opportunities we have in the state and the Discover Your Nevada campaign as well, so that should also be an important part of the discussion.

ROBINSON: What, I don't, you know, what I wanted to be careful that we don't do is just come up with another program that is similar to what's already being done. You know, we don't need to reinvent the wheel, but we need to really take the highlights in

that and then look for those separate types of opportunities that we may have overlooked before when we didn't need every single event at the time. Any other comments?

WINDBIGLER: Kristin Windbigler for the record.

ROBINSON: Yeah.

WINDBIGLER: But as somebody who had their in-person event canceled for this in January, and, you know, we are definitely exploring things that we might be able to do, especially in the summer months, but, you know, event planning requires a lead-up time. Like, you have to think ahead and so what is okay or not okay now, it's a totally different situation two or three months from now and I think personally, what I would find helpful is somebody who plans events is best practices. Like how -- because you have to figure everything out for yourself and trying to figure out, like, is this going to be okay? And is this going to be okay three months from now? And if it's not, you're going to take a loss because you've already invested time and money into that. So, I would like to see something like that come out of our effort.

ROBINSON: Yeah. I like that idea and I think that was all kind of part of this as how do we not plan for right now and try to look forward to be prepared because we know it's going to be different. I mean, it will be different, right, everybody? And how we do that, but the idea of best practices for the broad bumper strips on what can and should be done is a good one. I know that because you look at Cowboy Poetry and when we got the notice, it's, like, Oh, now, how could you have done that? You know? Every other seat in the convention center don't do the G3. That's a pretty tough one because then you lose what the event is so.

PAZINA: This is Julie Pazina for the record. One more thought is the next Commission on Tourism meeting isn't until February, so if we're bringing this back to the Commission on Tourism for approval, that puts us two months out from really having any kind of authorization to move forward with this, and I feel like with where we are as a state right now, the sooner we can move forward with something the better. I don't know necessarily how to approach that or if Kate has an idea of how we might be able to, because this committee was created essentially to be a little bit more nimble, and if we have to wait to move forward until the commission meets and approves things, it puts us behind.

ROBINSON: I wonder if -- I mean, my first instinct is maybe since it's not a new program or it's not a new budget item, if you will, does it have to go to the full commission or is it, we can start working on it as a report on working with Kate and through the Lieutenant Governor's office on these are the things that we're starting to do right now to look down the road and be prepared as to help the tourism industry recover. I don't know. Kate, do you have a --

WILSON: Yeah. The only thing that, since is just a discussion item, I'm unsure if we can actually take, you know, we definitely can't take any action, but --

ROBINSON: Right.

WILSON: -- I'm unsure if we can formalize anything from this specifically. The only thing that I can say is I think coming from this, Chair Robinson can absolutely speak to Lieutenant Governor, let her know what was discussed in the meetings, sort of what the thoughts were. If there is an interest in moving forward quickly, there is a way that we can have a, you know, single agenda item meeting where we decide to formalize this, make it an action item and bring it to the committee. You know, of course, we're up against the holidays, which is a little bit difficult for timing, but I do agree with you, Commissioner Pazina, that time is of the essence, obviously. So, you know, we would have to sort of work internally to set up a more formal action item to be brought in front of the commission if we wanted to do that in the short term.

ROBINSON: Okay. Why don't we talk about that, Kate, on how that looks and what might be required? We'll put the bullet points together of kind of this conversation and maybe we can talk to Lieutenant Governor and see if we can get moving faster on something.

WILSON: Yeah, I think that that's smart. I think if we can come up with a concise sort of cogent way to create an action item to make this a more formal process and maybe Christian and Tracie can hop on with us as well and see if there's something very succinct that we could get so we can hop on the phone and approve it as an action item, bring that in front of the committee and get that streamlined a little bit.

ROBINSON: Okay.

PAZINA: I just think that so many people right now, especially in the tourism committee, and I'm sure this is seen all across the territories, they just want a voice. They want to do whatever they can to help and feeling like we're giving them a platform to have a voice and help will go a long way toward making them feel valued and to really making them feel like they're helping our state move forward and they will be.

ROBINSON: Yes, totally.

PAZINA: Thank you so much, Chair Robinson, for bringing it forward. I think it's an amazing idea. And thank you to everyone on Travel Nevada, because I know there'll be a lot of work ahead.

ROBINSON: Yeah. Thank you.

WILSON: And Kate Wilson for the record. Just one other thing. You know, this does not preclude Travel Nevada staff from starting to work on some ideas for this. I know Tracie, Sherry, Christian, you know, Brenda, the whole team is probably, you know, definitely aware of what's going on and I'm sure a lot of these conversations have been happening internally for a long time, so if there are things that staff want to pull together independently, stuff that you guys have been working on, thoughts, or, again, things that you already have internally to sort of get the ball rolling, I think that that would be hugely helpful, you know, because again, nothing precludes you from you guys doing your job, which you do so well. If there's anything that you're already working on that you can pull together for the recovery subcommittee to sort of start this moving forward, that would be awesome.

ROBINSON: Thanks, Kate. And I'm happy to help any way that assists Travel Nevada on what they're doing right now. So okay. I think that's good for that one. We move into Agenda Item E, the PR update with Tracie.

BARNTHOUSE: Hello, everyone. Tracie Barnthouse for the record. Now that the dust has settled on the election and we've really started to focus in on our legislative efforts and kind of what Julia was talking about is covered in this section a little bit. As in the past, we're going to be working again with the Abbi Agency on some of these legislative efforts, including the development of a legislative briefing book, talking points and partner outreach. One project that I've been focused on this time is a legislative dashboard. This is being finalized at this point, so I'll just go ahead and walk through the purpose and the top line items of this tool. It's always crucial that our elected officials know how important tourism is to our state, but especially so during this upcoming

legislative session. We hope to paint the picture that visitation to the state and room and tax collections were trending upwards for some years and that following COVID, those numbers significantly dropped, and that tourism is what can help bring the economy back. Since we're unable to hold an in-person tourism date in the legislature this year, we instead are going to be creating individual tourism at a glance dashboard for each legislator. The dashboard will include a welcome video from Dr. Scolari (phonetic), data that's specific to that elected official's county or territory, statewide tourism data, a written or recorded testimonial from someone in that legislator's county or district that speaks to the importance of tourism to them personally, and links to our research reports. Each legislator will receive a personalized URL and will be encouraged to visit throughout the session as the numbers will be updated on a monthly basis. The delivery method of the URL is still being planned, but we're thinking of clever ways to hopefully entice our elected officials to visit their page, though I will say that if I got a personalized link with my name in it, I'd probably be tempted to go check it out and see what it's all about. Hopefully, the same will ring true with them. As I mentioned, the dashboard will continue to be updated throughout session, and we'll be using the email newsletters as touch points to remind legislators to visit for the latest data and information. The template is currently with one of our website developers. It's in the work right now, and I'll be sure to share it out with the committee as soon as I received the draft, but I'm really excited about this project and wanted to know if there are any questions.

ROBINSON: I have a question, but that's a great idea to target them individually.

BARNTHOUSE: Thank you.

ROBINSON: I mean, we've got such a terrific story to tell and there's something in every single person's district that should be a touchstone to them when, you know, looking for things that they might not know about that introduces them to a new aspect is a really, really great way to do that.

BARNTHOUSE: Thank you. Yeah. The more personalized we can make it to them, I think the better. We're looking for, as far as the data goes, we're looking at if we can on a county level, but if not, a territory level basis. We're really waiting for some data and hope to make it as personalized as we possibly can to that legislator's specific community.

ROBINSON: I don't know how many even really know about the territory program completely. You know, they probably know about all of the things that happen with it, but they might not actually know about the territory. It's really a good opportunity to educate them.

BARNTHOUSE: Yeah. Part of the dashboard, too, was going to include a snapshot like a county or territory snapshot. If they aren't familiar with, you know, our territory, how we categorize them that we're going to use that block to kind of explain that you live in this territory and here's what it is comprised of, here's, you know, some grant money that has gone to different programs in the territory, and hopefully, explain a little bit more about what our territories are all about.

ROBINSON: And important for them to know that these are volunteers. These are just -- these are volunteers who make so much happen, which I think is good. Thank you.

BARNTHOUSE: All right. I will move on to the next section then. The partner toolkit and partner outreach, we are so fortunate here to have a strong and supportive group of industry partners who are willing to advocate on our behalf from Commissioner Pazino's comment during the last meeting, I've drafted an email that's going to go out to the tourism industry, asking them to reach out to their elected official to share their story about how COVID has affected them personally. That email is scheduled to go out this month and that database, it'll go to about 1800 people who are a part of the industry partner newsletter group. In addition, I'm working with our art director to produce a partner toolkit that will include resources designed to help our partners share the tourism means more message with their audiences, as well as their elected officials. It will include talking points, social media graphics, with data, sample op-eds and letters to the editor that they can use, sample letters to legislators, a guide on how to reach elected officials if they never have before and photo and video assets. The toolkit is currently in the works and I plan to share it with partners in January. In addition to the legislator newsletters, I'm working on a timeline for stakeholder engagement newsletters to go to the tourism ministry to keep them updated on our efforts in the legislature and how they can help us throughout session. One final thing I wanted to know is right now, we're in the data gathering, asset building and planning phase of the legislative action plan. The other items that I went over during the last meeting are still moving forward. Those include traditional media relations for earned coverage and statewide public and various TV shows, radio, radio public affairs shows, newspapers and magazines, updates to

TourismMeansMore.com. Once we receive data and distill it into talking points, a social media plan for our NV Tourism industry facing accounts, and eventually planning meetings with key legislators to discuss the importance of tourism to Nevada. There's a lot in the works and I feel really confident about our legislative action plan. I think we're going to do some great stuff in this upcoming session. With that, I'll take any questions anybody might have.

PAZINA: Hi Tracie. This is Julie Pazina for the record. First, thank you because this sounds wonderful and I'm so excited. Second, when you do send out that partner toolkit, I'd be happy to get it out to my network as well. If I can help in any way, definitely let me know, and I would say also we're a resource and if any of us on this committee or the commission, larger commission, as a whole can help during those meetings with legislators, I have some pretty good relationships with some of our legislators, and I'd be happy to be a part of some of those meetings, because this is my industry. I'm so passionate about it, and I would love to do anything I can to be of help. Thank you so much for all the hard work that you and all of the Travel Nevada's doing and Lieutenant Governor's office. Thank you.

BARNTHOUSE: Thank you. Thank you so much and, yeah, I would love to ask the committee members and commissioners as well to spread the word. You know, the more support we can get in the legislative session, the better. Thank you so much for offering that and more to come for sure.

ROBINSON: Well, I think that's where you being able to reach out because we all have different relationships and that kind of thing, so if there are particular people that you need to be talked to or whatever, just you should feel free to reach out to us. This is --

BARNTHOUSE: Thank you.

ROBINSON: -- this is exciting. Thank you very much. Good work.

BARNTHOUSE: Thank you.

ROBINSON: Any other comments? Okay, so we are to Agenda Item F, committee member comments. Nobody?

PAZINA: This is Julian Pazina for the record. I just wanted to say again to everyone from Travel Nevada, Lieutenant Governor, and Lieutenant Governor's office, Chairman Robinson, thank you all committee members. This committee is so important

right now, and I know for all of us, we see our fellow members of the tourism industry suffering daily. I can't tell you how many friends I have who've been furloughed and then laid off who are so scared and nervous about the future when it comes to paying rent and putting food on the table, so the efforts that we're making right now are so, so important. Thank you to everyone who's putting their heart and soul into this.

ROBINSON: I agree. Thank you, Julie. This is Pam Robinson for the record. We've got a real opportunity here. I'm really excited to be a part of the team at Travel Nevada and all of the different networks that each of the different committee members and staff have are essential to this, and I think every little part that moves us further ahead is positive, and I know that we've got the support of the Lieutenant Governor's office and I know the Governor's office. They are, you know, they live and breathe this recovery every single day, so what we can do to aid them and stay true to the things that they're trying to accomplish and make some progress here, I think we've got a terrific opportunity. Feel free to reach out. If anybody has any other ideas I'm open for those. Christian, anything else?

PASSINK: I don't think I have any further comments.

ROBINSON: We will then go into public comment. Do we have anybody on the phone that would like, or on the Zoom, that would like to make public comment, please? No comments. Okay. Do we set a next meeting, or do we want to shoot for a timeframe and have Jessica send out a doodle poll? How are we planning that and when is the next full commission meeting? I heard Julie say in February.

GRUNDY: This is Jessica Grundy for the record. We are looking at a commission meeting February 17th. That is not a hundred percent confirmed yet, but that's what we are shooting for.

ROBINSON: Okay. I would say we probably want to meet before then and have some of these ideas that we have been discussing a little more formalized so that we can take it to the full commission if we can't start moving before then. Does that make sense to people and in January? Okay. I'll just go offline with Christian and Jessica or something, and we'll figure out a couple of week timeframe there where we can send out a doodle poll and see if we can get back together again. I don't want to meet just for the sake of meeting. I want us to make sure we've got, you know, to do some productive, you know, work. So, anything else? I will

take a motion for adjournment. Thank you again. This is a great group and I think we have a real opportunity, so who would like to make a motion to adjourn?

PAZINA: This is Julie Pazina for the record, and I would like to make a motion to adjourn at 2:02 p.m.

ROBINSON: Do I have a second?

WINDBIGLER: I will second. Kristen Windbigler.

ROBINSON: Thank you, Kristen. We got a motion to second. All in favor, say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Terrific. Thank you everybody. We'll be in touch. Have a happy holiday.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

DRAFT