

**CITY OF TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES
LODGERS TAX ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2024**

REGULAR MEETING

Regular meeting of the Lodgers Tax Advisory Board of the City of Truth or Consequences, New Mexico to be held in the City Commission Chambers, 405 W. Third, Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, on Monday, September 16, 2024 at 12:00 pm.

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Foerstner.

ROLL CALL:

Jake Foerstner, Chairman **Absent**
Gina Kelley, Vice-Chairman
Linda DeMarino, Member
Victoria Harrington, Member
Jessica MacKenzie, Member **Absent**

ALSO PRESENT:

Katy Martinez, Deputy City Clerk
Tammy Gardner, Executive Assistant

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Member DeMarino made a motion to approve the agenda. Member Harrington seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a. Regular Meeting Minutes of July 22, 2024

Member Harrington made a motion to approve the minutes. Member Kelley seconded the motion.

Gina Kelley, Vice-Chairman voted aye
Linda DeMarino, Member recused herself from the vote
Victoria Harrington, Member voted aye

Motion died due to a 2-1 vote. Minutes will be presented at the next meeting where a full quorum will be present.

3. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 minute rule applies)

Cary "Jagger" Gustin: I am here to give you guys an update on the Artist of Sierra County Studio Tour. As of the 11th there are twenty-three confirmed studios that are going to participate. On the website the landing page has been up for a month. The full event will be up in 2 weeks this will include pages for each artist, a page for lodging opportunities and a page for galleries and other local businesses. The social part of it, we will start address with social media marketing campaign in about 2 weeks as well targeting audiences within a plausible day's drive of Sierra County who are interested in art, culture, and travel. We will focus on featuring each artist individually, as well as highlighting the benefits of visiting Sierra County and in particular, Truth or Consequences.



Vice Chairman Kelley: What is the website address?

Member DeMarino: It is www.aosc/studiotour.com

4. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Discussion/Update: MainStreet TorC "Redefine" Marketing Campaign Grant Application. Becca Eza, Mainstreet.

Member DeMarino: I am the president of MainStreet Truth or Consequences. Gina and I also serve on the lodger's tax board. What we want to say is we acknowledge our affiliation with MainStreet and saying that our application has been created with the same critical nature that we use as the lodger's tax board and that we believe that MainStreet will be utilizing these taxes to promote the city in a way that is going to be a benefit to the city and also fiscally responsible. Gina and I will be making no money on this as a matter of fact MainStreet will take in no money either on this. Gina and I will make no money on this and that being said we will be voting on it. In a board meeting a long time ago Bruce Swingle made it very clear that it's not a conflict of interest to vote on an application if you are not receiving any money if there is no benefit coming into you. I just wanted to say that right up front.

Becca Eza: We are proposing a marketing campaign using the newish logo that has been in use for a while already. To really roll that out with print ads, digital billboards, social media, television advertising and all of this around the theme of redefining how people are seeing T or C. In the past it maybe not had much of a reputation, or it has sort of a negative reputation. We want everyone to redefine their image of T or C. With simple phrases like redefine office space so someone working on a laptop in a hot spring or redefining girls' weekend out. A lot of these things to tend to revolve around hot springs which is a big part of the culture here but some women enjoying their time in the hot springs.

Member DeMarino: Another one might be redefining traffic and a picture of people floating down the river but we are also really cognizant that we need to promote other parts of our city its not just the hot springs so there will be advertisement with things outside of hot springs.

Becca Eza: There will be shopping, dining, outdoor recreation, all the other amenities of town. This will include billboards and print advertising in reginal markets to El Paso, Las Cruces, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Tucson and essentially Austin, TX. Along with that we are looking to get some promotional items with the new logo such as shirts, bags, pens, little things to hand out to promote the city. We are also requesting funding to create a T or C specific tourism website. The thinking behind that a lot of people don't know that T or C is in Sierra County and so trying to google and find tourism info for T or C its kind of hard sometimes to get to the Sierra County tours page. Otherwise, you google T or C, and you end up on the city page which isn't really very interesting if you are looking to take a vacation. We want to have a T or C specific page that links to those other pages as well and makes it easier to showcase specifically what is going on in T or C. The last request is for funding to finish and publish the relocation guide which has been in the works for several years and is partially completed. It's a nice publication that showcases all of the amenities that T or C has to offer potential residence. There will be lots of pictures and articles about different things the town offers.

Member Harrington: How did you pick the cities to promote T or C?

Member DeMarino: Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and El Paso those are already our market. People are already coming from those places, so we just want more people to come from those places. Then a newer one to our list is Tucson, it's only 4 hours away, that is a totally perfect market, it's artsy they have a lot of people. If people come from 4 hours away, they are not just going to come and go back home so it's definitely going to put them in a hotel.

Vice Chairman Kelley: I will add that every weekend I have people at the visitor's center from Tucson and so now I am asking them. I was told by a gentleman on Saturday that the only advertising for New Mexico he has ever seen in Tucson was for Silver City.

Member Harrington: How else do you track besides the visitor's center?

Member DeMarino: One of the things we are going to use is different web addresses. In the past everything has gone to the Go Sierra County so a lot of tracking is tied into there but to actually have a different website so that we know that the traffic coming in is coming in because of our advertising and of course we will put google analytics to that beyond that we will talk to business owners of course. We know by talking to business owners that this is really big need. This year has been really hard on a lot of people as was last year. Getting the word out about T or C is a good thing.

Vice Chairman Kelley: The digital marketing that is tied in we are going to do New Mexico Magazine print and digital, Tucson Lifestyle print and digital, Albuquerque Magazine, The City Magazine which is El Paso and Las Cruces. All these are lifestyle magazines, they are not cheap stuff they are high end going for a different demographic. All the digital advertising will also direct people to that website and so we can track off that. We will get analytics from those vendors.

Member Harrington: Does MainStreet have the money to put up.

Member DeMarino: It is a lot of money. We don't expect to pay \$48,000 upfront for everything. We are not paying in the very beginning for every single thing. We have enough money to be able to cover our expenses as they are phased. Which is kind of how it goes there are somethings we are going to have to pay up for right away, but we are also be able to get reimbursement back fairly quickly and cover those cost. We don't anticipate this being a problem.

Vice Chairman Kelly: I also contacted people like New Mexico Magazine and the billboard companies I wanted to make sure we weren't advertising at the same time as Sunny 505 campaign that the city is doing. I want to fill in where they aren't so that we are not stepping on each other and it is more of a constant flow of marketing.

Member DeMarino: We are really looking at from now until the end of the fiscal year. One of the things in here is a television ad also along with developing 15-minute segments that will really be good to put out on social media. The first part of this is going to be in the fall and early winter is going to be utilized for developing the graphics and putting them out early next year. If we get a lot of this going in January through April then our May, June, and July which are typically slower. People will now have T or C in their head, and I will up tourism for next year.

Member Harrington: I think we need to have more videos or pictures of art hop because people get here and have no idea what it is. But I know if people visually saw kind of what it was, they would want to come here. It is exciting and it is something fun and different. I think it would be something good to add later on a visual thing for people to get hyped up about.

Member DeMarino: I would think it would end up in one of our redefined pictures.

Becca Eza: Yes, redefined night life.

Member Harrington: Yes, something like that I think is really good. People get here and I ask them if they are here for the art hop, and they don't know what I'm talking about. I do know that it is fun and different. I think people would drive 1-2 hours just to have something to do and escape from reality and go do something. I think this all really good its stuff people talk about but hasn't necessarily been done or they say we need it, but it hasn't happened.

Member DeMarino: MainStreet is really excited to do this. I was really a timing thing there for a while putting all the pieces in place that we needed to. Now the pieces are in place to be able to do this. We are looking forward to it and honestly, I have ideas. If this campaign goes well and I fully expect it to I think we can continue this campaign and next year come back to lodger's tax talk about this campaign, then talk about other opportunities for getting people into town. I don't mean to go into phase 2 right now but I'm going to like some of those things being how do we get the mid-week travelers and how do we get conferences and business retreat, and business meetings here because we have assets that those places need to host those things so that would be one of the things. Another thing would be focusing on how to get the people that are at elephant butte lake in the summer, what is it what we need to do to get those people into town. This is really the first step for us, and I look forward to having a successful campaign and then moving forward from there.

Member Harrington made a motion to approve MainStreet TorC "Redefine" Marketing Campaign Grant Application. Member DeMarino seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD:

There were no comments from the board at this time.

6. COMMENTS FROM STAFF

There were no comments from the staff at this time.

The board scheduled their next regular meeting at 12:00pm on Tuesday, November 12, 2024.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice Chairman Kelley adjourned the meeting at 12:21pm.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 12th day of November 2024.



Jake Foerstner, Chairman