

Tourism Coordinating Council – Jefferson County
Minutes of Meeting of the Coordinating Council
July 9, 2024 (DRAFT)

The July 9, 2024 meeting of the Tourism Coordinating Council (TCC) for Jefferson County, convening as a hybrid meeting - was called to order at 2:02 PM by TCC Chair Diana Smeland. A quorum was in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

Council members present: Diana Smeland (chair), Bethany Smith, Marsha Masey, Cleone Telling, Amy Neil

Valued Partners: Commissioner Greg Brotherton, Jessie Short

TCC Marketing Coordinator: Steve Shively

No Public Comments received

PUBLIC
COMMENTS

Approval of Agenda was approved with consensus. **Consent Agenda** Consisting of TCC June 11, 2024 Meeting minutes, as well as the current TCC budget, and JeffCo. Hotel Room Tax budget reports were all approved by consent without objections. Approved.

CONSENT
AGENDA

Commissioner’s Report – Commissioner Greg Brotherton provided an update on several community matters. The road work, including the Beaver Valley roundabout, is progressing smoothly. The 4th of July was successful with no major health or safety issues. The sheriff’s proactive measures at Gardner boat ramp mitigated potential problems from out-of-town visitors. The region is experiencing dry and hot conditions, leading to a county-wide burn ban.

COMMISSIONER
REPORT

Brotherton is also involved in the pool task force, which is exploring options for a new aquatic facility in the tri-area. The task force has identified viable locations and is considering the high cost of repairing the Mountain View pool. They emphasize the importance of cost recovery, with Snohomish as a model, achieving 96% cost recovery compared to the local target of 60%. A two-pool solution is deemed unrealistic due to political and financial challenges. The success of the South Whidbey Island facility, which passed a property tax levy after extensive planning and initial failed levy attempts, serves as a case study. The main decision now is whether the new pool should be located in Port Townsend or the Tri-Area, considering funding mechanisms like the Public Facilities District (PFD) or a Metropolitan Park District, each with its own political and logistical hurdles.

Commissioner Brotherton also provided an update on the short-term rental moratorium and planning commission activities. An emergency moratorium on short-term rentals was enacted after a failed initial hearing. During the recent hearing, no public comments were received. The planning commission is actively considering options based on community input from three charrettes led by Brent Butler from the Department of Community Development.

Jefferson County has 75-76 licensed short-term rentals, but a Granicus report identified over 500 operating outside city limits. The moratorium does not make these rentals illegal but pauses new permits to avoid changes affecting good-faith applicants. Upcoming regulations likely include yearly health and safety inspections and requiring license numbers on rental websites, similar to Seattle. The aim is not to reduce accommodations but to ensure safety and proper regulation, acknowledging the importance of rental income for many rural residents. No significant concerns about neighborhood degradation were noted in the three public meetings.

OPTC Report – Due to the July 4th holiday, OPTC didn’t meet at their regular interval. The monthly meeting will of OPTC will take place July 11. No report.

OPTC REPORT

TCC Marketing Report - Marketing Report – Steve Shively provided TCC with updates of ongoing projects, report highlighted successful promotional activities. Key mentions including:

- Current North America @TALK content creators FAM tour in south county. Heading tonight to Port Ludlow. With emphasis on content and article for Bleisure market travel opportunities.
- Reviewed a report regarding the value of Family Travel segment, contracted by the near state-leading decline in Jefferson County youth.
- News regarding the 30th anniversary celebration for the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, July 26 and 27 at the Field Hall event space in Port Angeles. This celebration honors the marine sanctuary, an important part of the Olympic Peninsula's coastline.

TCC MARKETING
COORDINATORS
REPORT

New Business –TCC agreed to review last years TCC LTAC application in anticipation of 2025 RFP process.

NEW BUSINESS

Area Reports –

Tri-Area's Bethany Smith - provided updates on local weather, a recent meeting with Old Alcohol Plant Inn wedding clients, and upcoming events. Key points included:

AREA UPDATES

- The 4th of July celebration at the inn was successful, with two bands, barbecue, and perfect weather.
- The summer season has started well, with numerous events planned, especially donor events by Bayside.
- Susan's current art show is receiving positive feedback.
- The inn's patios are open for dining, gardens are in great condition, and many weddings are scheduled.
- There's a noticeable decline in the number of children in Jefferson County, the military presence, especially the Navy, significantly impacts the economies of nearby towns like Oak Harbor and Bremerton. The arrival of the USS Ford will bring ~5,000 sailors and their families, affecting local barracks and communities.

Chimacum – Crystie Kisler reported:

- Upcoming events include a drum workshop and the second annual Jamaican Independence Day goat dinner in early August.
- There's a focus on pacing activities throughout the year for effective planning.
- Chimacum is bustling, with notable activity at the Farms Reach Cafe, though details are currently unclear.
- Local farms are thriving, and the Chimacum farmers' market is doing well.
- There's a need for better organization and strategy within the Tri-Area business community, potentially reviving the previously disbanded Tri-Area chamber.
- Glendale Farm, now led by Seth Sexton, is undergoing renewal and will participate in the Farm Tour. The farm is exploring camping and glamping opportunities and has launched a new website.

Quilcene – Cleone Telling shared:

- The recent hot weather has caused the Worthington Park poppies to fade, leading to the replacement with Cosmos flowers.
- The 4th of July celebration was a successful community event organized by the Lions Club, Masons, and Worthington Park. It featured hot dogs, sodas, fresh-squeezed lemonade, potluck dishes, and traditional kids' games. The event was well-received and may continue next year.
- Upcoming Worthington Park events include:
 - An acrobatic circus on July 27th.
 - The Tasting Gala fundraiser at Worthington Park.
 - Several weddings in August and September.

- The Oyster Races in September.
- Recent events included the Gravel Unravel cycle race (now called Bon Jon Pass Out), which was well-attended despite rainy weather.
- The community has seen a lot of hiking activity in the mountain trails, though this has slowed down recently.

AREA UPDATES
(Cont.)

Kalaloch – West End – Amy Neil provided an update on the Kalaloch area, focusing on the impact of highway construction and the busy summer season. Key points included:

- **Highway Construction:**
 - Extensive WSDOT construction is underway along the coast, with multiple traffic stops between Forks and Kalaloch, and north all the way to Port Angeles.
 - The construction causes significant delays and slow commutes, exacerbated by the presence of log trucks and slow-moving tourists, especially due to idle traffic lights.
- Amy, an avid hiker, noticed a significant increase in the number of – fair weather - hikers recently, making her hiking experience less enjoyable.
- Amy suggested that the ONP (Olympic National Park) consider solutions like those implemented at Hurricane Ridge, which includes parking and transportation management.
- She mentioned that ONP is monitoring Mount Rainier's timed entry pilot program as a possible solution for managing visitor numbers.
- Amy emphasized the need to promote less crowded, yet equally beautiful, alternative hiking destinations on the peninsula to help reduce congestion at popular spots.

Gateway Visitor Information Center (VIC) – Steve reported:

- The Gateway was temporarily closed during WSDOT's SR19-104 roundabout construction, leading to VIC staff furloughs, but it has since reopened and was very busy over the 4th of July.
- The historic Thresher artifact was moved to the Jefferson County Research Lab, facilitated by the Jefferson County Historic Society.
- The area where the Thresher was located has been graded, and plans are in place to install picnic tables in its place.
- The visitor information signs from the Port Townsend Chamber's Information Center are being mounted at the new location.
- Overall, operations are going well.

State of Washington Tourism - Marsha reported on the State of Washington Tourism doing a lot of really good communication around responsible travel, getting out and seeing various aspects of the state. They are also gearing up to start their own advertising in the fall, as well opening registration for the State Tourism Conference, October 7-9 in Vancouver, WA.

Port Ludlow - Diana Smeland provided updates on the Port Ludlow area, focusing on occupancy rates and upcoming events. Key points included:

- **Occupancy & Performance:**
 - Room occupancy is generally available Sunday through Thursday.
 - Weekends are mostly booked.
 - Year-to-date room nights and average daily rate (ADR) are slightly behind expectations.
- **Events:**
 - **Land Fest:** Will be held in the marina tent on July 11th.
 - **Cruising Event:** On July 24-25, featuring 100 boats traveling 100 nautical miles from Olympia to Port Townsend, with many stopping at Port Ludlow.

AREA UPDATES
(Cont.)

- **Pacific Northwest Small Boat Festival:** Scheduled for July 26th, showcasing 75 small boats in the water and 25-30 on land.
- **Weddings:** A 130-person wedding this weekend and another at the end of the month.
- **Concerts:** Free concerts on July 27th at the Village Center and August 4th on the lawn near the Conference Center.
- **Community Activities:**
 - Planning pre-events for October's Apple Cider Festival, including apple dessert and cocktail exhibitions.
- **Traffic & Tourism:**
 - Positive and negative feedback on temporary Burma-shave style signs related to ongoing road work; signs will be removed after project completion.
 - Increased traffic due to roadwork is expected to boost visitor numbers.
 - Efforts to promote the community and its amenities to travelers.

Dining:

- Four operating restaurants: The Fireside, a Mexican restaurant, a new Pizza Place (opened 60 days ago), and J.R.'s Sand Trap at the golf course.
- A fifth restaurant (hamburger place) is coming soon.

Additional Opportunity for Public Comment - no public comments received.

PUBLIC
COMMENTS

Adjournment – Diana **adjourned** TCC meeting at 3:16 PM

ADJORN

Next called meeting of TCC is Tuesday August 13, 2024 – 2:00 PM scheduled as a hybrid – in-person from Port Ludlow and/or via Zoom access.

NEXT MEETING

Respectively Submitted – Steve Shively