

**Elko Convention & Visitors Authority
Lodging Committee Meeting
Ramada Elko Hotel and Stockmen's Casino
340 Commercial Street
Elko, NV 89801
Wednesday, March 28, 2018
6:00 PM.
MINUTES**

Committee Members Present: Matt McCarty, ECVA/Marriott Townplace Suites
Sam Bhakta, American Inn
Bob Bhakta, Esquire Inn
Dan Bhakta, Holiday Motel
Chuck Lal, Days Inn
Kris Pachigar, Thunderbird Motel
Jacqueline Ramirez, Ramada Stockmens
Alen Doman, Best Western Elko Inn
Jolene Stone, Ledgestone Hotel
Becky Plaizier, Home2Suites
Michelli Leedy, Holiday Inn Express/Elko Chamber

ECVA Staff Present: Tom Lester, Tourism & Convention Coordinator
Amber Merz, Administrative Assistant

1. **Welcome & Introductions;** Barry Bhakta, Chairman

Mr. Matt McCarty called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm and stated that he would be chairing today as Mr. Bhakta was unable to make it. Introductions were made around the room.

2. **Public Comments** – Non-Action Item

Pursuant to N.R.S. 241.020, 2 (c) (3) this time is devoted to comments by the general public, if any, and discussion of those comments. No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this item on the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on a successive agenda and identified to be an action item.

None at this time.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the January 24, 2018 meeting – **Action Item (public comment)**

Mrs. Jolene Stone made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 24, 2018 Lodging Committee Meeting, Mrs. Michelli Leedy seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion and update regarding the Elko City Councils review and possible amendment to the “Room Tax” City Code –**Non-Action Item**

Mr. McCarty explained that the city has been looking at changing the Room Tax code and they were meeting with Mr. McCarty and a number of other hoteliers to discuss the changes that they felt were needed. They have presented an amended code to this group to critique and amend, originally they were supposed to meet again to continue working out changes that everyone would be comfortable with. Unfortunately this has changed and the amendments to the code have been fast tracked. The city is planning on having the first reading of the amended code at the next City Council meeting on April 10th and they have not released this amended version yet. Mr. McCarty stated that he does have the last version of the code that was presented to them but it will likely be changed again before being read at the Council meeting. He stated that many of the changes on the current version focus on auditing, for example under current code hoteliers do not have to keep records of guests for auditing purposes but under the tentative version there are 17 points of record that must be kept for auditing purposes. He explained that the city copied a lot of the code from Washoe and Clark county code so the hoteliers had a hard time arguing against the changes as the city felt that if it worked in other counties it would work in Elko. He stated that another big change revolves around the 28 day room tax exemption portion of the code. He explained that if you have a guest that wants the tax exemption they must declare upon checking in that they will be staying 28 days or more and they must pay for their stay upon checking in. If they do not pay in full on check in they are not eligible to be tax exempt. If they do pay for their stay up front but check out before the 28 day stay is up then the hotel is responsible for paying room tax on those nights.

Mrs. Jolene Stone asked if they would be able to run the guests card as an “Authorization” instead of charging it.

Mr. Alen Doman stated that he worked as an Auditor for the state of Utah for many years prior to this and based on his experience he does not believe that an “Authorization” on a card would qualify the guest for the exemption.

Mrs. Stone asked if a guest were to stay for a week and then notify her that they would be extending their stay an additional 30 days would she be able to start their 28 day stay when they checked in originally or would she have to start it when they notified her.

Mr. McCarty stated that the exemption would only start when the guest notified the hotelier of their intent to stay 28 days.

Further discussion took place.

Mr. McCarty stated that the next change was that occupancy reporting would no longer be optional. He explained that currently only 30% of the properties are reporting back to the city, so going forward they will be requiring that hotels fill out the worksheets and submit them back.

Mr. McCarty then explained that for guests to qualify for the state tax exemptions they will only be able to accept payment by a government issued check or credit card, tax exempt letter are also not considered valid. He stated that Bed and Breakfasts are now defined as anyone who rents a room in their home for one night or more and they are now required to pay room tax. This include vacation rentals such as Air B&B.

Further discussion took place.

5. Review of ECVA Activities and Room Tax Update - **Non-Action Item**

Mr. McCarty stated that the room tax report is included and as you can see room tax proceeds are down this month but hopefully once we start getting consistent reporting we will get a clear idea of what is going on.

6. Review of ECVA Marketing Activities – **Non-Action Item**

Mrs. Juli Nelson was not able to attend this meeting but did include a report for the committee to review.

7. Review of ECVA Event Activities – **Non-Action Item**

Mrs. Erin Myers was not able to attend this meeting but did include a report for the committee to review.

8. Review of ECVA Convention and Tourism Activities – **Non-Action Item**

Mr. Tom Lester read through his report for the committee. He stated that his leads from North American Journeys have been sent out to them and that there were some leads that

were very promising so he hopes that they choose to reach out to them. He stated that he also attended the Boise Golf & Travel Expo in February with representatives from the Hampton and that those leads were sent out as well. There will be a Latin American FAM tour coming through in April and a Chinese/Indian Receptive FAM tour in May. Mr. Lester stated that he will be working on the new Elko Area Marketing video this summer. He is looking to get some good footage of outdoor recreation such as jet skiing, hiking, ATVs and other outdoor activities. He stated that the Trifold Brochures have been reprinted and are being distributed through certified folder. Mr. Lester stated that Mrs. Nelson redid the Adventures on the Edge brochures and those have been reprinted as well. He explained that he wrote grants to help fund the production of both.

Further discussion took place.

9. Discussion of lodging related opportunities or issues – **Non-Action Item**

Mr. McCarty stated that we are going into Election season, Mr. Ellison will be up for reelection running against Mr. Johnson and City Council has the potential to see at least two new members possibly three.

Further discussion took place.

10. Next Lodging Committee meeting: **May 23, 2018 – Location TBD**

11. **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.



Don Newman
Executive Director