



## Blaine Tourism Advisory Committee

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# MINUTES

City Hall Council Chambers, 435 Martin Street, Suite 4000 [www.ci.blaine.wa.us](http://www.ci.blaine.wa.us) (360) 332-8311

**Tuesday, April 13, 2021**

### Called to order at 8:01 AM

**Roll Call:** Eric Davidson, Bob Boule, Debby Farmer, Louise Mugar, Sukhwant Singh Gill (absent), and Micah Mullin, Danielle Gaughen (non-voting).

\*Board Member Mullen joined meeting at 8:10

**Staff Present:** Alex Wenger, Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator; Stacie Pratschner, Community Development Services Director; Allison Tompkins, Community Planner I.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**MOVED BY BOARD MEMBER FARMER AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER BOULE TO MOVE DISCUSSION AND APPROVE MINUTES TO TOP OF MEETING AGENDA.**

**BOARD MEMBER FARMER MOVED TO TABLE THE MINUTES UNTIL NEXT MEETING. SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER BOULE. MOTIONED PASSED (3 FOR & 1 ABSTAIN).**

### AUDIENCE COMMENTS

- Christina Winkler addressed board members regarding BTAC grant application process.

### LODGING TAX REPORT

- Community Development Services (CDS) reported on current lodging tax revenue. Current revenue is around 16.16% of the total budgeted revenue. Percentage of total revenue for the first quarter is on track with 2019. Board members asked questions and had a discussion.

### NEW BUSINESS

- CDS gave an update on the formation of the Ad-hoc Arts Commission. Staff has published a newsletter in the Northern Light requesting applications for commission members. Board members had a discussion.
- CDS gave an update on Summer Events including cancelation of the Chamber's Centennial Celebration and Peace Arch Park Reenactment Ceremony. The Blaine Harbor Music Festival has opted to run a virtual event. Staff worked with the festival organizers to modify their contract and reduce their BTAC grant award to \$5,000. Under direction of city management, staff will be working with grant recipients to remove provisional restrictions within their current contracts for events happening after June 15, 2021. Board members asked questions after event.
- CDS gave an update on the Centennial Street Banners. Staff are considering delaying purchase and installation of the street banners due the cancellation of the Centennial Celebration.

#### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

- Board Member Boule proposed a grant program strategy for supporting local hotel/motels. The City of Renton launched a program to offer gift certificates for local businesses to guests who book 2-night stays in local hotels. Board members discussed implementation strategies and were overall agreeable with adopting a similar program for Blaine.

#### **BOARD MEMBER BOULE MOTIONED TO MOVE FORWARD ON EXPLORING PROGRAM PROPOSAL TO SUPPORT HOTEL/MOTELS. BOARD MEMBER MUGAR SECONDED. APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- Chair Davidson asked board members to discuss short term vacation rentals (Airbnb & VRBO) within city limits. Vacation rental are currently not taxed, licensed or regulated under the City's Municipal Code. Board members discussed and directed staff to report back to BTAC on regulatory pathways for addressing concerns with vacation rentals.
- Board Member Mugar gave an update on the Whatcom County Tourism Board efforts to attract Seattle area boaters to Norther Whatcom County waters.

Next meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2021

**Adjourned 8:55 AM.**