

CITY OF ELKO
NATIONAL HISTORIC CALIFORNIA EMIGRANT TRAIL
INTERPRETIVE CENTER ADVISORY BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
5:30 P.M. P.D.T., THURSDAY, AUGUST 9, 2018
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 1751 COLLEGE AVENUE, ELKO, NV

CALL TO ORDER

Jan Petersen, Chairwoman, called the National Historic California Emigrant Trail Interpretive Center Advisory Board meeting to order at 5:41 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Jan Petersen, Chairwoman
Bob Heguy
Laurie Walsh

Excused: John Collett

City Staff: Curtis Calder, City Manager

Others: Alex Rose, California Trail Interpretive Center Supervisory Park Ranger

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 22, 2018 – Regular Session **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

No action taken.

I. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Update and further discussion regarding the National Historic California Emigrant Trails Interpretive Center Foundation, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

Item tabled by general consent.

- B. Update from the Bureau of Land Management regarding an update of miscellaneous items of interest pertaining to the National Historic California Emigrant Trails Interpretive Center, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

Alex Rose, California Trail Interpretive Center Supervisory Park Ranger, said Connie Jacobs created a draft business plan for 2018 through 2028 and was in the process of presenting it to the BLM Recreation Advisory Committee, which will take place this fall. If the plan is implemented it would generate approximately \$40,000 in revenue to assist in hiring a seasonal park ranger. If more revenue was generated it could possibly fund a permanent park ranger position.

Jan Petersen asked if the money generated from the fees would be appropriated to a certain account.

Mr. Rose answered yes, all of the fees would go directly to the Trail Center and they can accumulate. The reason the estimated figure was so low, is that with federal sites, a lot of people get in free automatically. Seniors are free with a senior pass and youth are free. This is going to be a lengthy process and we are only at the beginning of it. Senator Amodei has been seeking to create a line item in the congressional budget to fund the center. He has been in communication with the Trail Center accumulating as much data as he can to build his case. There is an appeals process with the BLM Nevada State Office and they have included the Trail Center in an appeal for additional funding to the Washington Office. This is a big deal because of all state priorities in Nevada; we ranked as one of the top three. We are requesting \$590,000. We may receive extra funding at the end of our fiscal year, which is September. He has been at the Trail Center for 4 years and he remembered when they had people from the City helping with landscaping needs. If there were any possible way to get landscaping assistance once again from the City, it would be appreciated.

Curtis Calder, City Manager, said he has spoken with Connie Jacobs within the last month about having some parks people go out and help her when we get past our peak season. They need some additional assistance with weeding and general landscaping. We would do it free as an investor of the facility. It is not something we can do on an annual basis unless we come up with some type of partnership. In years past, we budgeted money specifically for that.

Laurie Walsh asked about Elko Clean-Up Day.

Mr. Calder explained it was a City sponsored event but is a regional clean-up. We do it twice a year, in the spring and in the fall. Those have free landfill days. We could discuss a partnership in January because then we could get the county involved too and it gives everyone time to budget for it.

Bob Heguy asked if those were just budget line items in each of the entities budget.

Mr. Calder answered yes.

Mr. Heguy asked what the difference was between a budget item being allocated by each entity as opposed to a cooperative agreement of funding. He felt that the Elko County School District could be a third party that they could try to get on board. The reason he asks was he wondered if it would be more helpful to write up a cooperative agreement versus a budget line item in each person's budget.

Mr. Calder said he had never really thought about the school district, but felt it was a great idea. Hopefully, if the \$590,000 line item issue became a reality, the assistance wouldn't be needed. He asked when they would know whether they will be receiving that money.

Mr. Rose explained it would likely be fiscal year 2019.

Ms. Petersen asked what happened to the sprinkler system at the Trail Center.

Mr. Rose explained it was in terrible shape. Right now we are selectively watering certain areas but not near enough what it should be.

Mr. Calder reported James Wiley said when he has free time, he would go out there and work on the irrigation system. He was able to get it running before. He wasn't sure why it was continuously needing maintenance.

Mr. Rose was hopeful in the future they could get professionals to come in from the outside and completely look at the entire system and get the job done. We have essentially been piece mailing it together over the years.

Ms. Walsh felt zero-scaping was a more appropriate landscaping idea.

Mr. Calder said the center was designed to represent the different climates and ecosystems as they go across the Wasatch, the dessert and the Sierra Nevada's.

Mr. Rose said the Spanish language program has translated a majority of the panels in their exhibits into Spanish. They have a guide at the front desk that can serve those Spanish-speaking visitors. In September, they will be hiring a short-term position to assist their site with other Spanish translation opportunities. It was all being paid for with a grant. It's a short term project but the person would assist them with coming up with a plan on how to better serve the Spanish-speaking visitors and programs as well. The next part of that will be how to market the Spanish programs. For Trail Days, for the first time ever, we offered a Spanish program. We didn't get any attendance though. We are going to continue to try to reach out to the Spanish-speaking community. The Nevada Outdoor Schools has been assisting them with creating educational programs that dove tail with Nevada state curriculum needs. They are researching the curriculum and standards for each grade in order to line up their curriculum with those standards. We are in the process of creating an education plan, which is a formal plan and something which has never been done. The Acorn Group has been selected to facilitate the creation of this plan. This is being done through our partner the Southern Nevada Conservancy. The goal is for the center to be a resource for the schools and teachers. The OCTA Convention in 2020 is coming to Elko. It is a big conference and is a big deal. It will bring a lot of people here. There is a possibility of the Trail Center receiving an immigrant journal from 1860.

Ms. Walsh asked how they would conserve it.

Mr. Rose explained he wasn't sure but would pass the question on to Ms. Jacobs. We started evening programs this year. We do two programs in June, July, August and September, for eight total programs.

Mr. Heguy asked how this summer was going in relation to previous summers.

Mr. Rose explained part of his job was to keep track of the statistics of the site. For July, their attendance was down 40%. They have gone up every year in attendance for the last five years. It was a major blow to them because July is usually their busiest month of the year. One reason for that is we are closed on Monday and Tuesday during the summer. He felt another reason the numbers have decreased was they have seen a decrease in tour bus traffic.

Ms. Petersen said she has talked to several people who have attempted to go to the Trail Center on a Monday or Tuesday, only to discover it was closed. She felt it was a detriment to the center to be closed those days.

Mr. Rose said when he worked at the Trail Center in Wyoming, they were closed on Monday too. When he came to the center here, they were a 7 days a week operation but then it got cut down to 5 days a week.

C. Review California Emigrant Trails Interpretive Center Master Plan, and/or related documents, and matters related thereto. **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

Mr. Calder said they met with the acting state director two months ago. We emphasized the importance of the Trail Center to the local economy and citizens. We explained the City's position to the \$2 million investment we had made in the facility. We wanted to show how important the \$590,000 line item was. It looks like that meeting was effective because we now have this appeal to the Washington Office. Even if there were successful in getting a portion of the \$590,000, it would make a huge difference for the Trail Center. If that does occur, the City of Elko would like to see a 7-day schedule during the summer months.

Mr. Rose said approximately a year ago, he and their marketing partner were brainstorming ways to reach the community. Tom Lester had provided them with a list of tour bus operators with email addresses. We sent a marketing email and created a brochure. This area is ripe for opportunity and in a prime location. We have a powerful and dynamic story that resonates internationally. The three most powerful symbols of the west are cowboy, Native American and pioneer. Cultural tourism is on the rise and the baby boomers are retiring and hitting the road. They were also in the process of creating a marketing plan through their partner.

Mr. Calder said they were in a wait and see mode and they just needed to wait and see what happens. There were also a lot of nonprofit organizations in the area that may be willing to partner with them too.

Ms. Petersen asked if the board needed to send a letter to the congressional representatives in support of the center.

Mr. Calder explained the appropriate process would be for the board to take action to recommend that the City Council send a letter.

**** A motion was made by Laurie Walsh, seconded by Bob Heguy, to draft a letter of support to give to the City Council.**

The motion passed unanimously. (3-0)

SCHEDULE THE NEXT CALIFORNIA TRAIL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

The next October 11, 2018

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Wilkinson
Assistant City Manager