

**Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board
Draft Minutes January 19, 2021**

I. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Members Present: Katie Bruell, Acting Chair; Linda Deck, Stacy Baker, Members

Others Present: Kelly Stewart, Staff Liaison; Randy Randall, Executive Director-Tourism Santa Fe; Melanie Pena, Director-Discover Los Alamos, Linda Matteson, CMO; Joanie Griffin, Sunny505; Dianne Marquez, Manager, Parks, Recreation & Open Space; and Barbara Lai, Administrative Support.

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 12:03 pm by Kelly Stewart.

Approval of Today's Agenda

Ms. Stewart said she will assume unanimous approval unless there are objections. There were no objections and the agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Baker moved to approve the minutes for November 2020. Ms. Deck seconded. There were no objections and the November minutes were approved.

LTAB Membership Status

Ms. Stewart updated the board on membership changes, specifically that the two lodging representative positions are vacant.

Public Comment

No public comment.

II. PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS

Tourism Data Collection-Randy Randall, Executive Director, Tourism Santa Fe

Randy Randall presented background information on the collection of the Lodgers' Tax in Santa Fe from hotels, motels, and short-term rentals. The short-term rentals cap is 20%; however, there are more in reality. Mr. Randall believes there are about 1,800 rentals in the historic district.

Mr. Randall reviewed the consultants the city of Santa Fe has used to track short-term rentals and visitor data as metrics for assessing the effectiveness of TOURISM Santa Fe's marketing efforts. **Air DNA** (\$2K/yr.), a former contractor, "scrapes" the internet and short-term rental platforms to identify short-term renters in the greater Santa Fe area and the Lodgers' Tax collected. **Key Data Dashboard** (\$6K/yr.), also "scrapes" internet data, as well as factual data collected directly from reservation systems of property management firms that manage multiple units that conduct short-term rentals. Mr. Randall also mentioned **Home Compliance**, a consultant that specializes in short-term rental compliance, including identifying and communicating with the municipality's short-term rental community by monitoring more than 100 short-term rental platforms, identifying STR properties, and sending notifications regarding the municipality's relevant regulations and requirements. Ms. Stewart mentioned that both the Town of Taos and the City of Roswell use *Home Compliance*.

TOURISM Santa Fe also contracts with **See Source** (\$22K/yr.) which uses cellular data to collect visitor demographic and behavioral data, including average length of stay, trip origin, group size, average age, transportation mode (air/car). This data is included in Santa Fe's *Santa Fe Data Platform*, available to the public.

Mr. Randall, based on his experience, recommended the following actions:

- Update the current Lodgers' Tax Ordinance to acknowledge short-term rentals as a lodging option,
- Create a separate Short-Term Rental ordinance to incorporate Senate Bill 106 that allows municipalities to establish a process for collecting Lodgers' Tax from all individuals/entities that provide lodging, no matter how many rooms they offer to collect and pay both Lodgers' Tax and GRT from renters, as well as HB117 that restricts exemptions for temporary lodging that exceeds 30 days so that beginning on the 31st day, Lodgers' Tax may be collected—funds which may be designated by use by municipalities for construction, maintenance and renovation of County-owned tourist attractions and related facilities projects that support public safety and community development efforts, and promotion of economic development related projects.
- Ensure the short-term rental ordinance includes language that distinguishes long-term rentals from permanent residences to preserve appropriate product for affordable housing.
- Define permanent residency in the STR ordinance. In City of Santa Fe, if you pay the city tax, you are considered a permanent resident.
- Educate the public regarding short-term rentals and Lodgers' Tax collection and expenditures.

His presentation was followed by an extensive question/answer session. LTAB members were appreciative of Mr. Randall for taking the time to share his experience in of implementing the tax. He emphasized that Los Alamos's mission should be to steal some of the short-term rental business from Santa Fe.

Mr. Randall also thanked Los Alamos County for continued support and funding contribution (\$50,000/year) to the Fly Santa Fe initiative. He reported that the consortium of participating municipalities and businesses is seeking CARES funding to restart flights as soon as it is safe.

III. NEW AND PENDING ITEMS/PROJECTS

2021 LTAB Meeting Calendar

Ms. Bruell moved to approve the 2021 LTAB Calendar Ms. Baker seconded. The calendar was approved by the board.

Letter of Recommendation to Council

Ms. Deck moved to approve the letter from LTAB Acting Chair Katie Bruell regarding LTAB's recommendation to Council to direct County staff to pursue a comprehensive process to update the Lodgers' Tax Ordinance and create a new Short-Term Rental policy and ordinance. Ms. Stewart said she will assume unanimous approval unless there are objections. There were no objections and the letter was approved.

Los Alamos Destination Programs Status

Ms. Stewart reported that, according to the most current reporting from the State Department of Health, Los Alamos County is designated red for COVID cases, so museums and visitor centers remain closed. While the County is not encouraging visitation due to COVID, staff continues to produce new and updated materials. The most current project is a retooling of the Historic Walking Tour, including new additions such as the Women's Army Corps (WAC) Dorm and Oppenheimer's home on Bathtub Row. Formerly maintained by the Los Alamos Historical Society, the brochure is now being produced by the County, with review and input from the History Museum staff and other associated attractions.

State Economic Development Initiatives

Kelly Stewart attended an abbreviated, virtual version of the New Mexico Hospitality Association's annual Tourism and Hospitality TRENDS Conference on Monday, January 11, part of the kick-off of the 2021 Legislative session. NMHA and New Mexico Tourism Department staff reported on the status of the New Mexico State Safe Certified program and Recovery Readiness Programs that delivered new content for participating destinations throughout the state. NMHA is also planning to conduct a series of workshops with destinations to review the new Lodgers' Tax Handbook and assist in municipalities efforts to update policies and ordinance to accommodate the new Lodgers' Tax legislation related to collection and spending of Lodgers' Tax from short term rentals.

Outdoor Recreation. Ms. Stewart reported that the County's application for a grant to fund trailhead installations was rejected. However, there are plans to work with the Outdoor Recreation Division of the state's Economic Development Department to enhance and promote Los Alamos' outdoor recreation offerings.

New Projects

No report.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Tourism Metrics

Ms. Griffin reported that, based on anticipated availability and distribution of vaccines, it's possible that tourism travel may resume as early as May. In preparation for making sure Los Alamos is a destination for the drive market, Sunny505 is working with Kelly to put together an hour-long virtual FAM (familiarization) tour on Zoom for travel writers, consisting of a mix of recorded content and live presentations, as well as an opportunity for Q&A.

Lodgers' Tax Revenue Report

Ms. Stewart reported that Lodgers' Tax Revenues are down 51% from last year.

Visitation by Attraction

Ms. Pena reported that Fun and Games (tourism materials distribution) came up to Los Alamos in November and picked up 50 boxes of the new Adventure Guide distribute to hotels, visitor centers and other locations throughout the state. Staff at the visitor centers responds to phone and email messages. Ms. Baker and Ms. Bruell reported on the high participation numbers to the virtual programs offered by Pajarito Environmental Education Center (PEEC) and the Bradbury Science Museum. Katie Bruell shared a map of the United States that shows all the states from where participants are viewing.

Tourism Implementation Task Force Report

Ms. Matteson reported that Tourism Task Force sent a letter to Council supporting LTAB's recommendation for a comprehensive process by a consultant to update the Lodgers' Tax Ordinance.

Ms. Matteson also stated that the Manhattan Project National Historic Park staff are in the process of creating an app to provide information concerning the park and the community.

MainStreet/Creative District Report

No report.

Community Development Department Update

No report.

Community Services Department Update

No report.

Councilor Report

No report.

Upcoming Events Calendar

No report.

Other Announcements

Nothing to report.

IV. NEXT MEETING/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The next scheduled meeting will be on February 16, 2021, at 12:00 noon, via ZOOM.

V. ADJOURN

Ms. Stewart adjourned the meeting at 1:44 p.m.