



APPROVED: June 8, 2016

**CITY OF ALBANY
TLT AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
City Hall, Santiam Room
Wednesday, May 11, 2016
3:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Scott Pierson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members present: Scott Pierson, Julie Jackson (arrived 3:20 pm), Chuck Leland, Mike Martin, Betsy Penson (left 5:00 pm), Steve Reynolds

Committee Members absent: Mitch Langjahr (excused)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 13, 2016

MOTION: Chuck Leland moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mike Martin seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0. Julie Jackson arrived after the vote.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

Presentation – TLT Recipient: Albany Downtown Association

Peggy Burris, Executive Director of the Albany Downtown Association (ADA), gave a presentation about the ADA and the Main Street Program. A copy of the presentation was provided in meeting packets. Highlights of the presentation and comments included the following:

- The ADA strives to be the trusted organization to unite people and their passion for improving the downtown community as a place to eat, shop, and play.
- The National Main Street Program is one of the most powerful economic revitalization tools in the nation. Albany is one of only six performing members of the Oregon Main Street Program. The four-point Main Street approach includes Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Vitality.
- In the area of Organization, the ADA is a nonprofit organization with a Board Directors, nine community volunteers who serve on four committees, and 105 current members. Any business, organization, or individual may become a member. The Organization Committee is responsible for the annual budget, bylaws, policy and procedures, and recruitment of volunteers.
- In the areas of Promotions, ADA-sponsored events bring thousands into Downtown Albany. Events include Restaurant Week, the Jazz and Art Festival, a Chili Cook-off, Crazy Daze, Movies at Monteith, Halloween Trick or Treating and Costume Contest, Veterans' Day Uniforms on Display, Holiday Open Houses, Shop Small Saturday, Downtown Twice Around Parade and Tree Lighting, Breakfast with Santa, and a Free Holiday Movie and Food Drive. The ADA partners with other

organizations on additional events, including the Parks & Recreation Easter Egg Event, Parks & Recreation Procession of the Species, Family Tree Relief Nursery Diaper Drive, Rotary Wine Walk, Rotary Craft Brew Smackdown, Boys & Girls Club Brewfest, and the Veterans' Day Parade. The Veterans' Day Parade draws about 10,000 visitors each year.

- The Design Committee is responsible for the Downtown Flower Baskets, Downtown Cleanup, Holiday Lights, Wayfinding signage, EAT-SHOP-PLAY banners, and window makeovers for business owners. A new design-related activity will involve installation and maintenance of two Parklets, which have been used successfully in other communities to draw people downtown and encourage them to stay longer.
- The Economic Vitality Committee is responsible for quarterly merchant meetings, building owner meetings, workshops for business owners and employees, working with building owners to fill vacant spaces, and creating welcome packets for new businesses.
- The ADA has a contract with the City of Albany to manage the Parkwise Program.
- In 2015, Downtown Albany had a net gain of 13 new businesses and over 48 new jobs filled. In the first quarter of 2016, four new businesses have opened with 10 new jobs filled.
- In 2015, the ADA held 12 events that drew about 22,000 visitors.
- Volunteer hours in 2015 totaled 3,251 hours. In addition, staff works many late hours and weekends without compensation. If these jobs were performed by City staff, there would be higher costs for labor, benefits, and overtime.

Burriss reviewed the 2015/2016 ADA Operating Budget as detailed in the presentation. They receive TLT funds in the amount of \$44,600 (43% of Operating Budget) and Economic Improvement District (EID) voluntary assessment estimated at \$40,000 (39% of Operating Budget), as well as funding from memberships, donations, and other income. Additional TLT funds are received as a reimbursement and can only be used for Main Street programs.

Burriss explained that the ADA receives funding from the City in two ways – TLT to run the ADA office and TLT to run the Main Street Program. An increase of \$35,000 in Main Street funding is requested and would be used to increase the advertising budget, including advertising out of area and I-5 billboards; cover future increases in garbage service; add flower baskets associated with the new streetscape; and add design elements such as Parklets, flowers, and landscaping. ADA requests that the Main Street Program funding be changed from a reimbursement to a grant so it can be saved for large purchases like a watering tractor and additional Parklets. An increase of \$22,400 is requested for the ADA Operating Budget, which would be used to increase payroll in the amount of \$7,440, as detailed in the presentation, and cover increased garbage costs in the amount of \$15,500. Current staff has not had a raise in seven years, and the Executive Director pay is lower than the national average.

In response to questions from the committee, Burriss further reviewed the proposed Parklets, noting that the idea has been reviewed and approved by City Planning staff, City Police, City Council, the Central Albany Revitalization Agency (CARA) Advisory Board, and business owners. She provided additional information about the EID, a voluntary assessment and is sometimes not paid until a building is sold. She said the ADA membership fee hasn't been raised in five years, and the Board is considering a potential increase. She provided additional information about Parkwise and affirmed that is a self-funded program. She said the ADA is not currently doing any cross-promoting with the hotels, and there was brief discussion about potential cross-promotion potential and opportunities to extend ADA activities into multiday events to help increase TLT.

In response to questions, Economic Development Director Kate Porsche and City Manager Wes Hare updated the committee on the City's processes related to review and design of Monteith Riverpark and the City-owned lots east of the Senior Center, planned construction of Water Avenue, and CARA-funded downtown streetscape. Brief discussion followed regarding the need for cleanup efforts on Lyons and Ellsworth Streets.

Leland requested that the committee be provided with the ADA's annual budgets, as well as an itemized list of the additional items requested and the dollar amount for each.

Presentation – TLT Recipient: Albany Parks & Recreation Department (NWAAF, Trolley)

Parks & Recreation Director Ed Hodney gave a presentation on the two programs for which the Parks & Recreation Department receives TLT funding – Northwest Art & Air Festival (NWAAF) and the Trolley. The department has also been involved in the Collaborative Tourism Promotion (CTP) program; however, those funds were reallocated to help pay for contract sales at the Linn County Expo Center (Expo) and will not be spent unless that policy direction is received from the City Council. He will provide information on how CTP funds were used in the past, if requested.

Hodney said NWAAF is an annual three-day event that receives national acclaim. It began as an event featuring local artists and craftspeople drawing about 5,000 people; it has grown over the years and now draws as many as 60,000 people with concerts at the main stage drawing as many as 25,000 people. Last year, total expenditures were about \$350,000, not including expenditures included in the P&R budget such as administration and staffing. Funding for the event includes TLT (proposed \$152,100), sponsorships and donations, and in-kind services. Metrics in terms of impact on the community are provided in meeting packets. In a 2011 visitor exit survey, three percent of the sampling stayed in local lodging; and it was estimated that there was a \$3.5 million economic impact from the three-day event. The event brings more overnight stays depending on the act; however well-known acts are more expensive and difficult to get now as the economy has improved and there is competition with casinos to attract acts.

In response to questions from the committee, Hodney said the venue has a finite capacity. About 27,000 people attended the Joan Jett concert a couple of years ago, and that was difficult to manage. There is not the capacity to grow the event in numbers, but there are things that could be done differently to bring in more overnight stays.

Leigha Thomas, Director of Sales at Comfort Suites – Holiday Inn Express, stated that the hoteliers don't see a big difference in occupancy based on the performers; there are other activities, and there always seems to be an audience for the specific act. They did notice an increase two years ago when a pilot group came in because of the event. She noted that, as sponsors of the event, the hotels offer a lot of complimentary room nights and actually lose money over these two nights as compared to a typical August weekend. The hotels have agreed to comp even more rooms this year because they value their partnership with Parks & Recreation; however, they will have to look at whether they can continue to offer comps at that number in the future.

Hodney provided information on the Trolley, a replica early 20th century streetcar mounted on a 1981 motor home chassis. TLT funds support the operation and maintenance of the Trolley, with \$19,000 budgeted this year. Maintenance on the Trolley is expensive and variable. Replacing the Trolley with a new model to forgo some of the annual repair and maintenance expenses could be done for a cost of about \$110,000. The Expo hasn't taken advantage of the TLT-funded Trolley program. The Trolley could be used to provide many more trips than it currently does.

Hodney said that sports facilities are Parks & Recreation's number one potential driver of economic impact. The facilities at Timber-Linn Memorial Park have been upgraded with rebuilt playing surfaces which has paid off by increasing the number of tournament weekends. It would be possible to attract larger tournaments if the facilities were renovated to the level of what those tournaments are looking for. Replacing the 40-year-old lighting system would cost about \$750,000, and paved parking lots would cost about \$1,000,000.

Thomas said that the hoteliers completely agree that full use of the sports complexes would generate the most impact of any Parks & Recreation activity. She said tournaments typically look for a lower rate, but the hotels can be competitive and they appreciate that repeat business. She commented that the Salem Visitors Association is doing an incredible job of soliciting sports tournaments with Albany hoteliers benefiting.

Discussion followed regarding the CTP funds, including potential changes to the way those funds are administered and utilized. It was noted that current policy allows the funds to be used only to cover promotion expenses. The committee could make recommendations to the City Council regarding ways to utilize those funds and mechanisms to administer the program.

Reynolds asked if the NWAAF template could be used to build additional events. Hodney said that the City has the capacity to take a similar approach to new or expanded events to drive more economic activity to the community through Parks & Recreation, but doing so would require resources on the front-end.

Hodney said his number one issue is a lack of capital money to repair or replace existing facilities and equipment. The department's needs' list is at \$3.5 million and growing at about \$100,000 per year, which cannot be addressed with current revenue streams.

Presentation – TLT Recipient: Monteith House and Museum

Chet Houser, President of the Monteith Historical Society (MHS), distributed a brochure about the Monteith House and provided information about the history of Albany. In 1848, the Monteith brothers paid \$400 to buy the rights to what is now Downtown Albany. They dammed up the Calapooia River and used a race to run the grist mill that is now Monteith Riverpark. By 1853, the Albany Canal was finished, and remains of that water system can still be found in areas along Eighth Avenue and Jackson Street. By 1880, there were about 20 factories in town, including flour, beer, and ironworks, and the railroad came to town. MHS members believe it is their role to preserve the legacy of Albany.

Houser said that TLT funding is used for maintenance on the Monteith House. They also receive help from the Albany Visitors Association (AVA) in scheduling and coordination, brochures and printing, and paying their summer docent. The docent works four days a week for 13 weeks, interacting with about 640 visitors last year. The Monteith House has school visits each year totaling about 260 students, and about 1,250 participants in events including the Christmas Parlor Tour, the Trolley of Terror and VIP Experience, the Pioneer Christmas Party, Horse Drawn Caroling Rides, and the Oregon Birthday Celebration.

Houser said his wish list includes funding for an extra docent at Saturday Market exhibiting pioneer skills (\$200); having a docent document, photograph, and record artifacts in the new Past Perfect Software system (\$600); and paying a docent to staff the Monteith House two days per week all year (\$3,200). They recently replaced 1870 era furniture with furniture from 1854 that was donated by the great-great-granddaughter of one of the Monteith brothers. The Monteith House is the most historically accurate house in the state of Oregon.

Houser said that MHS is very happy with the Parks & Recreation Department's support, expertise, and oversight on contractors and repairs, and that they could not do the home tours and other major events without the help of the AVA. The Board has concluded there is not the volunteer help or enthusiasm from people to open their houses for the Home Tour this year, so they will instead have a guided Trolley tour through the downtown historic districts. MHS members feel they have a moral obligation to talk to kids about what it was like to be a pioneer family in Oregon.

Houser reviewed major capital expenditures made in the last three years with funds received from TLT and other accounts, including installation of a new security/fire alarm system; installation of a new roof; a new heat pump and heaters; repairs to windows, chimney, and front porch decking; exterior painting; and gutter system repairs.

In response to questions from the committee, Dala Rouse stated that the Monteith House is owned by the City and managed by the MHS. In addition to the list of requested items outlined by Houser which amount to about \$6,000, the MHS would like to change the process so that TLT funds set aside by the City for repairs to Monteith House could be used in other ways, such as paying a docent to staff the house more often. They would also request an additional \$1,600 per year for board insurance and liability insurance. Brief discussion followed regarding the MHS operating budgeting, money that comes from the AVA for items including docent salary, and funds that are currently managed by the City for maintenance of the City-owned Monteith House. Porsche affirmed that this committee can make recommendations for changes to the policy related to how the funds are allowed to be spent.

Porsche asked that the committee be provided with a list of the requested items with specific dollar amounts for each item.

Staff updates and issues

None.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Pierson reviewed discussions at the Budget Committee where it has been noted that virtually every City department is underfunded. Last year, TLT funds had gone up so significantly that the City Manager proposed, and the Budget Committee and City Council ultimately agreed, that TLT recipients would receive a three percent increase and the remainder would be put toward Fire and Police, including \$193,000 toward capital replacement. The City Council subsequently formed this committee to evaluate whether the funds should be used differently; the committee has a lot of flexibility in making recommendations to the current policy. He encouraged committee members to think about potential changes and be ready to discuss them during the deliberation portion of this process.

Discussion followed regarding the 2016-2017 budget process currently in progress. Porsche clarified that the expectation was that the committee's recommended policy changes would be considered for the FY 2017-2018 fiscal year, in part because recipients need time to plan and prepare for any changes in allocations. That said, all City Council and Budget Committee meetings are open for public comment and the Budget Committee can recommend changes to the City Manager's Proposed Budget, with the ultimate decisions to be made by the City Council.

The committee discussed potential uses of TLT, including economic development, emergency services, and capital replacement; the balance of in-reach activities and out-reach marketing to bring funds into the community; and current and potential City participation in activities and funding of the Expo.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Wednesday, May 25, 2016, 5:00 p.m., City Hall Municipal Room

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Pierson adjourned the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Submitted by,

Reviewed by,

Signature on File

Signature on File

Teresa Nix
Recorder

Kate Porsche
Economic Development & Urban Renewal Director