

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Special Meeting of the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee**

3:00 PM
September 26, 2024

Tibbetts Manor, 750 17th Ave.
NW, Issaquah

MINUTES

MEMBERS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Committee:

Russell Joe, Councilmember (Chair)
Heather Berry, Village Theatre
William (Billy) Rossman, Springhill Suites
Marriott (excused)
Julie Hartwig, Chamber of Commerce
John Parizek, Hilton Garden Inn

Administration/Staff:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic & Housing
Development Manager
Juliana da Cruz, Economic Development
Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public in attendance. Email public comment from Lindsey Pinkston, Issaquah Highlands Council, shared with Committee members previously. Her email is attached.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

HARTWIG motioned and BERRY seconded to adopt the minutes of July 17, 2024. PARIZEK made an amendment to correct the spelling of his last name (incorrectly spelled PARIZAK). Motion passed.

AGENDA ITEMS

a) **Budget Revenue Update (I)**

Presented by:

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic & Housing Development Manager

An updated budget PPT was presented and later added to the packet. Committee Members liked the trend lines and ability to look back on past year.

Future Funding Initiative (D)

Presented by :

All Commissioners

Committee members discussed how to proceed with 2025 initiative funding. With the desire to focus future funding to shoulder season of October – March/April, a discussion was held about the option to quickly do a call for initiatives for early 2025 events. Committee members agreed to focus 2025 funding for events and projects starting in October. Committee members mentioned the desire to include a requirement for applicants to collaborate directly with other organizations and/or hotels. The desire to promote the wider community and ability to market multiple events to encourage overnight stays should be aspects of the new application.

A draft application will be presented to discuss at the next meeting along with a potential timeline.

Visit Issaquah Report (I)

Presented by :

Visit Issaquah board members

Committee members reviewed the information in the packet. PARIZEK mentioned that website visits have increased this quarter and may be due to hotels using QR codes. Visit Issaquah responded to 13 RRP's requesting \$245k in grant funding. This Is Issaquah videos are being filmed now for promoting Issaquah.

REPORTS

Tourism Trends, Upcoming Events & Opportunities

Presented by :

All Commissioners

- Salmon Days next weekend; 500 booths, 75 food vendors
- Village Theatre Camelot show, shortened by 1 hour of typical show, very good production
- Village Theatre Legally Blonde coming in November – focus promotion on “making Issaquah pink”
- Hotels have been busy with last minute reservations; starting to slow down a but

City Council Report Out

Presented by :

Russell Joe, Council Member

- City Council will be at last Farmers Market this weekend – stop by their table
- Some City Council members attended the Chamber's Luncheon with Costco CEO
- Budget discussions this year will address the deficits and have to make cuts

2024 Schedule

Presented by :

Jen Davis Hayes, Economic & Housing Development Manager

November 20th meeting will focus on 2025 Funding Initiative. Committee members should think about topics of interest for 2025.

All LTAC members seats will be up for reappointment. Applications will be published, and interviews projected to be in mid-November. The term will continue at 2-years.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

The next meeting is currently scheduled for November 20, 2024.

From: [Jen Davis Hayes](#)
To: [Lindsey Pinkston](#)
Subject: RE: LTAC Initiative Contracts - City Point of Contact & Reporting Form
Date: Tuesday, September 17, 2024 2:35:00 PM
Attachments: [image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image013.png](#)
[image014.png](#)

Thanks Lindsey. I will share these comments with LTAC. The final decisions on application timing will be made in the next few months with LTAC. If LTAC asks us to do applications for Jan – April 2025, we would send applications out prior to January and make decisions asap in the year.

As LTAC goes this this change, we will do our best to ensure minimal impact on organizations. The change isn't just for change's sake, but to better align with the intent of the funding.

As always, appreciate your input.

Jen

Jen Davis Hayes, CEcD (she/her)
Economic & Housing Development Manager
jenh@issaquahwa.gov
425-414-4016 (cell/text)



#IssaquahLoyal

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From: Lindsey Pinkston <lindsey.p@ihcouncil.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 17, 2024 11:54 AM
To: Jen Davis Hayes <JenH@issaquahwa.gov>
Subject: RE: LTAC Initiative Contracts - City Point of Contact & Reporting Form

Hi Jen!

I had talked to Farel about this, but wanted to make sure it's on the radar still – with the priority being shoulder season, it's difficult to apply when the grant application doesn't come out until January and isn't decided until mid-February. It basically cuts out the Jan-Apr shoulder season.

We have two initiatives in March this year that we expect out of towners for (we moved LEGO Expo to March for this specific reason). I know there's no guarantee that we'd get LTAC funding anyway, but it seems counterintuitive to say we want to fund things Jan-April, but we won't make any grant decisions until mid-Feb.

Thanks
Lindsey

Lindsey Pinkston

pronouns: she/her/hers ([why?](#))

Executive Director

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From: Jen Davis Hayes <JenH@issaquahwa.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, September 17, 2024 11:42 AM

To: Robin Kelly <execdir@issaquahfish.org>; Julie Hartwig <jhartwig@issaquahchamber.com>; Corby Casler <execdirector@downtownissaquah.com>; Jarod Munzer <jarod@cougarmountainzoo.org>; Lindsey Pinkston <lindsey.p@ihcouncil.org>; Danielle (Dani) Franich <dfranich@villagetheatre.org>; Paul Winterstein <paul.winterstein@issaquahhistory.org>

Subject: LTAC Initiative Contracts - City Point of Contact & Reporting Form

Hello 2024 LTAC Initiative Recipients,

With Farel's departure from the City of Issaquah in August, I wanted to follow-up with his communication about how to proceed. I will be your point of contact this year to submit invoices, ask questions about your current contract, as well as submit the final report (attached). As you know, all initiatives need to be completed by December 31 and if at all possible, the final report and invoice should be submitted prior to mid-December to process timely payment. You can submit an invoice and final report any time your project/event is complete.

In addition, I wanted to provide an update about the change in 2025+ funding. As you know, this funding is generated by hotel & Airbnb stays in Issaquah and is intended to be reinvested to encourage more visitors. The "shoulder season" – October through April – are the months that less visitors visit Issaquah. Therefore, LTAC has decided to invest future funding for events and initiatives during this timeframe. We are still finalizing details about the criteria, but we do expect to have an application available in Q1 2025.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions about your current contract. Communications regarding the future funding focus will be shared later this year.

Thanks,

Jen

Jen Davis Hayes, CECD (she/her)
Economic & Housing Development Manager
jenh@issaquahwa.gov
425-414-4016 (cell/text)



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