

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH  
Lodging Tax Advisory Committee**

3:00 PM  
December 10, 2024

Tibbetts Manor, 750 17th Ave.  
NW, Issaquah

**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

*Committee:*

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

*Administration/Staff:*

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

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 PM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a) Minutes of September 26, 2024

BERRY made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. PARIZEK seconded the motion to approve the minutes. The motion was approved.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**Amendments to Rules & Regulations re: Alternate Position & Meeting Structure**

*Presented by:*

*Juliana da Cruz, Economic Development Coordinator*

The Committee reviewed a possible amendment to rules and regulations. This amendment would add an "old business" section to the format of the meeting and add alternate positions to the Committee. The Committee recommended that one alternate seat be created representing persons involved in activities authorized to be funded by LTAC revenues and one alternate seat be created representing persons required to collect the lodging tax. The Committee made changes to the proposed rules and regulations as follows:

**"SECTION 7. ALTERNATE MEMBER**

*The membership of the Committee may include 2 alternate members. One alternate shall represent persons involved in activities authorized to be funded or supported by revenues received under Chapter 67.28 RCW. The second alternate shall represent businesses required to collect the tax under Chapter 67.28 RCW. Alternate members are expected to attend all meetings as provided under Section 4 of these Rules. An alternate member's purpose is to serve in the absence of a regular LTAC committee member who represents*

*persons involved in activities authorized to be funded or supported by revenues received under Chapter 67.28 RCW.*

*When serving in the absence of a regular member who represents persons involved in activities authorized to be funded or supported by revenues received under Chapter 67.28 RCW, the Alternate will be counted towards a quorum, participate in debate and voting, and have any other rights of a Regular member. When serving in the absence of a regular member who represents businesses required to collect the tax under Chapter 67.28 RCW, the Alternate will be counted towards a quorum, participate in debate and voting, and have any other rights of a Regular member.*

*When the Alternate is not serving in the absence of a regular member they are encouraged to participate in discussion of agenda items but may not participate in debate of motions nor vote on motions.*

*The Alternate member will be appointed in the same manner as a regular member and will serve the same term as the regular member."*

PARIZEK made a motion to approve the amendment to the Rules & Regulations regarding alternate positions and meeting structure as discussed above. ROSSMAN seconded the motion to approve the amended Rules & Regulations as written. The motion was approved.

### **Budget Revenue Update (I)**

*Presented by:*

*Jen Davis Hayes, Economic & Housing Development Manager*

Jen Davis Hayes reviewed the LTAC budget from October 2024. The funds received in 2024 are higher than 2023.

### **2025 Funding Initiative Application & Process (A)**

*Presented by:*

*Jen Davis Hayes, Economic & Housing Development Manager*

To begin the conversation, Jen Davis Hayes reviewed the history of LTAC funding, including a pivot during COVID to support community groups when events were not happening due to the pandemic. LTAC has previously discussed changing the 2025 Funding Initiatives to realign funding to focus on overnight stays, shoulder season, requiring coordination with hotels, preferring multi-day events, and supporting destination stewardship efforts.

Per state requirements, there are three project types that are allowed to be funded by LTAC funds: marketing to attract visitors from greater than 50 miles away, operations of non-profit tourism related facilities, and marketing and operations of special events and festivals. The Committee discussed the importance of funding larger initiatives rather than small dollar advertising grants.

The Committee discussed having two separate application processes: one application for nonprofit operations of tourism related facilities and another application for the operations of special events and festivals. The applications should be substantially similar to previous years but may be simplified; the goal is not to make the applications to be more onerous. Because LTAC already funds marketing efforts with Visit Issaquah, LTAC decided not to invest further dollars in marketing efforts through initiative funding grants. LTAC will not be funding

marketing for events/efforts in the initiative funding grants this year.

The Committee agreed that shoulder season is defined October-April. Applicants must have an event/effort during this shoulder season to be considered.

The Committee agreed that applicants will be required to coordinate with a hotel(s) and submit the event to Visit Issaquah for the event calendar. Applicants will be required to obtain a special event permit.

The Committee discussed funding levels for the initiatives. LTAC discussed the value of increasing the funding levels to \$10,000 or higher to encourage larger multi-day events and encourage smaller events to coordinate among peer organizations to turn their small events into larger ones. LTAC agreed on the set funding levels of \$7,500; \$10,000; and \$15,000.

2025 Criteria for applications:

- Economic Impact of event/effort
- Capacity to produce event/effort (if you do not receive full funding, what would change about this event? Where else are you seeking funding? Do you have other investors in this effort?)
- DEI – Inclusive and welcoming event/effort
- Event/effort is proof of concept and articulates plans to evolve over time
- Event/effort is during shoulder season (October-April)

Other priority factors that may get an applicant extra points in review include:

- Demonstrated ability to generate overnight stays (multi-day event)
- Event is connected to the applicant organization's core mission
- Joint applications (multiple organizations collaborating on a shared effort)

LTAC discussed what would be required for reporting on the initiatives:

- State requirements:
  - Attendance
  - Overnight stays
  - Day tourists (50+ miles)
  - Visitors from another country or state
- LTAC requirements
  - 1 page narrative
  - Success/challenges
  - Changes required to original application

LTAC discussed the timeline for the 2025 applications. This application cycle will be for events taking place between October 2025-April 2026.

Applications will open in January, close in February, LTAC reviews applications in late February, City Council consideration scheduled for March, contracts be signed thereafter for efforts/events launch October 2025-April 2026.

## REPORTS

### **Tourism Trends, Upcoming Events & Opportunities (I)**

*Presented by:*

*All Committee Members*

*Christy Garrard, Visit Issaquah*

Christy provided a report out about Visit Issaquah and their success building a brand for Issaquah. Visit Issaquah won both awards and grant funding in 2024 and has big plans for advertising in 2025.

**City Council Report Out (I)**

*Presented by:*

*Russell Joe, Council Member*

City Council approved the 2025-26 budget, it was a difficult budget that included cuts to staff and programming. JOE reiterated the importance of this Committee’s work in contributing to an economic engine to fund all of the services that the City relies on.

**2024 Schedule (I)**

*Presented by :*

*Jen Davis Hayes, Economic & Housing Development Manager*

February meeting topic will be review of funding initiative applications. Future topics may include taking action on tools to measure economic impact, inviting Issaquah Arts or the Arts and EVC Commissions to discuss joint projects, or having a special meeting topic devoted to World Cup.

**2024 Funding Initiative Final Reports Submitted to Date (I)**

*For Reference Only*

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:36 PM.

The next meeting will be scheduled upon new member appointments in 2025. Doodle poll to follow.

**INQUIRIES**

Please contact Jen Davis Hayes at [jenh@issaquahwa.gov](mailto:jenh@issaquahwa.gov).

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*Note: Times listed for meetings topics are approximate and items are subject to being shifted from the original order.*

*(A) Action, (D) Discussion, (I) Information*