

TUMWATER LODGING TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
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CONVENE: 9:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Tumwater Councilmember & Chair Eileen Swarthout and committee members David Bills, Tumwater Area Chamber of Commerce; and Brian Reynolds, Olympic Flight Museum.

Absent: Satpal Sohal, La Quinta Inn & Suites.

Staff: Finance Director Troy Niemeyer and Senior Accountant Nissa Musselman.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS: Chair Swarthout welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members provided self-introduction.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: LODGING TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SEPTEMBER 21, 2022:

MOTION: **David Bills moved, seconded by Brian Reynolds, to approve the minutes of September 21, 2022 as published. Motion carried unanimously.**

2023 LODGING TAX APPLICANT INTERVIEWS AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATION: Chair Swarthout outlined the format of the presentations. Each applicant has five minutes to present their respective funding proposal followed by five minutes of questions and answers from the committee. Fifteen applicants are requesting a total of \$165,471.00 in funding from the \$190,000 available in LTAC funds for 2024.

TEAM TOMORROW LLC: Christen Greene, Founder, South Sound Block Party, thanked the committee for funding this year's block party. The event held on August 25-26, 2023 was a two-day music festival held at the Port of Olympia. The goal was to restore, preserve, and contribute to the historic and legendary Olympia area music scene. Nearly three-quarters of ticket buyers lived outside of a 50-mile radius. Approximately 45% of advance sales were from individuals living outside the region, reflecting a 10% increase from the first year. For every dollar spent in the music industry, \$12 is generated in the local economy in bars, restaurants, hotels, and other venues. Independent festivals, venues, and promoters are anchor businesses in the local community.

The average ticket price for the event was \$65 with single day tickets at \$35. Ticket sales did not achieve the forecast primarily because English singer Ed Sheehan performed in Seattle breaking attendance records of 84,000. COVID-19 also contributed with approximately 10 ticket

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holders unable to attend because of illness. During the Saturday event, smoke from wildfire also contributed to a decrease in attendance. The event sold approximately 2,000 tickets each day.

This year, the website featured seven local hotels and bed and breakfast venues in Olympia and Tumwater. Both cities provided LTAC funds. The website tracked more than 45 visits linking to the hotels, with host hotels selling out and no B&Bs available during the two-day event. Marketing included informal staff polls of local attractions to visit. Tumwater Falls was one of the featured areas to visit. Over the last two years, approximately 18% of VIP ticket purchasers lived outside the region. VIP tickets cost \$140 and include food, and side stage access for up-close viewing. 4 The Love Foundation, a non-profit partner provided \$14,000 in funding. The foundation provides backpacks for students, turkeys at Thanksgiving, and housing during a crisis. The family-friendly event features bands and food. Children under 12 years of age can attend free.

Marketing this year included an investment with Thurston Talk. QR codes were included on event posters and other advertising materials enabling the locations of those who scan the codes. The event uses direct to fan email lists that increased by 14% since last year. Marketing plans for the 2024 event include partnering with additional hotels and offering discount codes. It has been difficult to receive any response from local hotels. The event will continue to highlight more restaurants, local sites, and attractions. This year, the goal is soliciting more donations as staff coverage is expensive and infrastructure constantly increases in cost. One challenge is the amount of free music offered in the region.

Mr. Reynolds inquired as to the number of employees available to host the event. Ms. Greene advised that this year because of the lack of funding only 19 employees were available. The event relies on 45 volunteers.

Mr. Bills asked about the amount of ticket sales. Ms. Greene advised that ticket sales were approximately 2,000 tickets each day in addition to 250 guests. Many of ticket holders did not attend the event likely because of the heat, smoke, COVID, and the Ed Sheehan concert in Seattle. Promotion of the event includes advertising on Facebook, Instagram, Bands and Towns website (industry ads), Thurston Talk, other trade websites, posters, flyers, and partnering with other festivals.

**OLYMPIC FLIGHT
MUSEUM:**

Teri Thorning, Olympic Air Show Coordinator, Olympic Flight Museum, reported the application is for the 2024 Olympic Air Show held on Father's Day weekend, June 15-16, 2024 at Olympia Regional Airport in Tumwater. The funding request is for \$45,000 for performer

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fees and other incentives, such as lodging and vehicle rental, marketing, promotion, and operational costs.

The 2023 Air Show was very successful attracting over 9,000 individuals. An analysis of the electronic ticket sales revealed that 21.9% of patrons traveled over 50 miles to attend falling within the historical average of 18% to 22%.

This year's featured performer was a P-38 Lightning fighter manufactured by Lockheed. The American two-engine fighter was flown by the United States Air Force during World War II. Of the 10,000 manufactured, 26 survive today of which 22 are located in the United States. Ten of those fighters are air worthy. The special aircraft has a dedicated fan base.

Last year's LTAC funding not only helped to attract attendees, it helped to sponsor exceptional and popular aircraft and performers. Facing a mild weather challenge, attendance was not compromised because the Air Show was able to attract and host the fighter aircraft, performer, and several other performers and aircraft.

Extra programs were printed to handout to museum visitors. The programs promote Tumwater and the surrounding region continuously.

Ms. Thorning introduced Kyle Baxter, Manager of the Olympic Flight Museum. Mr. Baxter shared a video of an aerial view of the 2023 Air Show. The air show is the largest public event hosted in Tumwater. The air show resulted in over 200+ paid lodging nights for tourists, performers, and crewmembers. The museum takes advantage of local and national partnerships. The air show featured popular and renowned performers. Comprehensive marketing promotional campaigns before, during, and after the event featured Superheroes and Star Wars characters during the two-day event. Many fans dressed up in their favorite character costume. This year, the museum collaborated with Superheroes and the 501st Legion, founded to unite costumers with a penchant for Star Wars characters. The Star Wars craze is tremendous especially during Comicon. The feature this year attracted a huge number of fans.

Ms. Thorning thanked the committee for its previous support. The Olympic Flight Museum is looking forward to hosting the 24th annual Olympic Air Show.

Chair Swarthout said she attended the air show and was amazed at the number of people at the event.

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**TUMWATER ARTESIAN
BREWFEEST:**

City of Tumwater Parks and Recreation Director Chuck Denney reported the 2023 Tumwater Artesian Brewfest celebrated its ninth year at the Tumwater Valley Golf Course. He played a short video highlighting the 2023 Brewfest.

During COVID, Brewfest was cancelled with the event making a good comeback since then. The City of Tumwater participates in the Brewfest somewhat differently as the event celebrates the brewery history of the City through Olympia Brewery, which opened in 1896 and was responsible for establishing the town and employing hundreds of people through many generations. The brewery also provided the City's first volunteer fire department and helped the City's water system and parks system. With the closure of the brewery and the City's continued focus on craft brewing, distilling, and cider making, the City created the Brewfest to help recognize Tumwater as a City continuing its brewing and distilling heritage. The Brewfest is not a giant beer garden but rather brewers attend, serve their respective product, and share how the products are produced with visitors. The Brewfest speaks to Tumwater's history of the Old Brewhouse and recent efforts with South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC) to offer brewing and distilling curriculum. This year, 40 craft brewers served 138 different varieties of beer. Twelve cider makers participated, the largest number to date. Two local distillers also participated. SPSCC's Craft Distilling and Brewing Program participated by sponsoring a tent and sharing information on the program and how anyone can earn a degree in craft brewing and distilling and start a career in Tumwater. The Olympia Tumwater Foundation collaborated with the City by highlighting the history of the Schmidt Family and the Olympia Brewery. The event has many sponsors that continue to expand each year.

The Brewfest supports Special Olympics with profits from the event. Thurston County Special Olympics is an incredible organization. This year the Brewfest was able to contribute approximately \$4,000 to the organization, as well as approximately \$1,000 to the Tumwater Valley Panthers Special Olympics Golf Team.

The Brewfest is geared to those 21 years of age and older. The event features adult-oriented entertainment, such as an adult inflatable obstacle course, basketball, beer pong, cornhole, and a new section featuring the Brewfest Backyard featuring a variety of games. Attendees vote during the course of the event on the best beverage. Trophies are presented to second and third winners at the end of the event on the stage. For the last two years, Triceratops Brewery in Tumwater won first place.

Numerous bands are featured at the Brewfest each year.

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**VISITOR AND
CONVENTION BUREAU
OF THURSTON
COUNTY:**

Survey responses from all brewers and distillers attending the event continue to compliment the event with many citing the event as one-of-a-kind, best Brewfest they have attended either as a producer or a member of the public, best brewfest in the state, and the best organized and planned brewfest. The 2023 event grew by 19% in attendance totaling approximately 4,200 people.

Annette Pitts, CEO, reported the request is the same amount awarded last year of \$36,300. This year however, a supplemental optional project for consideration includes a digital programmatic display advertising campaign. The campaign promotes the new Craft District opening in Tumwater and drives visitation to Tumwater hotels during the event.

This year, the VCB produced a new Tumwater Community Guide, and introduced a new lodging tax award support program comprised of a suite of services offered to organizations receiving lodging tax awards. Each organization received social media promotion at no charge. Their events were included in the visitor email newsletter distributed to over 12,000 recipients and added to partner email newsletters. Organizations received free listings and promotion on the website and were offered geofencing support at no charge to help measure visitation to events.

Sports promotion continues through Sports Commission services.

This year, the VCB pursued social media promotion for the City of Tumwater. Many of the promotions were for lodging tax award recipients. The City of Tumwater was included in press trips when hosting travel writers to the area, as well as social media influencers. The City of Tumwater has been promoted through the visitor email newsletter and partnering email newsletter. The VCB also pursued digital programmatic display advertising for Tumwater to increase tourism in the City and the number of hotel room nights.

Several Tumwater Councilmembers spent time with staff to assist in determining a better way to promote the City on the VCB website through content development. It has been difficult when the VCB is tasked to be the tourism expert for the entire region. Assistance by the Councilmembers was appreciated leading to new content on the website about the City of Tumwater.

A new campaign, You Belong Here, is a promotion campaign targeting LBGTQ+ travelers. The VCB was able to track visitation from the campaign.

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The VCB utilizes a geofencing tool that links to smartphones. The VCB collects only 6% to 15% of actual data. Year-to-date, the City of Tumwater has had over 330,000 visitors to the City based on the 6% to 15% sample. Top points of interest include Brewery Park at Tumwater Falls, Valley Athletic Club, Olympia Regional Airport (Air Show), motel properties, golf course, and the Artesian Brewfest.

Digitally programmatic display is a digital ad for an event or place that links to the VCB website. When a visitor clicks through the website, the VCB can pixel their phones to identify when that specific phone is present in Tumwater, such as at hotels that can be measured and verified to provide information on the economic impact visitation has on the region just from digital programmatic display advertising.

Mr. Bills questioned how the VCB defines the City of Tumwater within the data points in terms of specific Tumwater hotels/attractions or geographic location. Ms. Pitts responded that media attribution through digital programmatic display is based on a geofence around the City boundaries, as well as geofencing of all attractions individually as points of interest visited. The benefits of geofencing provides more than the number of visitors, the information identifies how many visitors live 50+ miles from the City.

**TUMWATER VALLEY
GOLF CLUB:**

Todd Anderson, Tumwater Parks and Recreation Department, Recreation Manager, presented the funding proposal for hosting the WIAA High School State Golf Championships. The golf course competed and successfully won the bid in 2019 representing the first time the golf course hosted the tournament. To compete against Eastern Washington and larger communities, the golf course addresses every detail of the tournament. The funding request is for \$6,000 rather than \$2,000 as listed on the application to enhance the event by providing a dual wireless outdoor speaker system, table covers, signage, and banners. LTAC funds enhance each player's experience each year. Previous lodging tax funds were used to line Capitol Boulevard and Tumwater Valley Drive with state banners on the light posts to greet participants arriving at the tournament. A tunnel of champions was created leading to the first tee with signs listing all schools participating in the state tournament complete with a color image of each school's mascot logo. The 2024 tournament is scheduled the weekend before Memorial Day on May 21-23, 2024. Over a dozen volunteers support the tournament providing 75 hours of individual service.

Players are from over 60 small high schools in addition to their families. Players also complete practice runs at the golf course throughout the year bringing more visitors to Tumwater. Last year, the tournament booked 150 hotel rooms in Tumwater. Of the 61 participating high school divisions, two were located within 30 miles of Tumwater.

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Mr. Reynolds noted that although the funding request was inaccurate on the application, the funding request remains at \$2,000 as all the documentation referred to the \$2,000 funding request.

TUMWATER SOCCER CLUB:

Wayne Graham, Vice President, said LTAC funds offset costs for coordinating and running the 44th Annual Kick in the Grass soccer tournament. The tournament is coordinated entirely by volunteers with no paid staff. The tournament subsidizes player fees as the lowest priced recreational soccer club in the area by keeping costs low. The organization is a non-profit and any profit is returned to the Club. The annual tournament is the primary fundraiser. Costs include field rentals, equipment expenditures, referee fees, tournament costs, and awards. The Club purchases new field goals for soccer fields in the community. Scholarships are awarded to high school graduating seniors. The tournament is the longest soccer tournament in the state.

The Club was able to work through the pandemic and maintain consistency. This year, 21 more teams competed than last year in 132 games on 14 fields. All fields are located in Tumwater at the Capital Soccer Complex, Pioneer Park, and Tumwater High School. As the size of the tournament increases, more fields will be used creating more challenges as the focus is playing soccer in Tumwater. Although 5,300 participants may seem low, the average number of players also includes three additional visitors for each player to account for family and friends. Additionally, the number has increased since the pandemic because many aunts, uncles, and grandparents also attend.

Teams are located from across the state. The Club advertises Tumwater hotels on its website. The goal for the tournament is 100 teams predicated on field space and volunteer ability. Approximately 892 people stayed in local hotels last year. All hotel venues are in Tumwater. The Club advises local businesses of the event so they can prepare for extra customers.

Mr. Graham shared photographs of winning teams. The Club awards 1st and 2nd place medallions. This year, a drone was used to video all fields. He shared a video of the drone video.

Mr. Graham shared information on plans to develop two fields at the Capital Soccer Complex in Tumwater. This fall, the Club plans to begin installation of irrigation on two fields.

Mr. Bills asked whether the tournament draws teams from outside the state. Mr. Graham said the tournament accepts teams from other states, but other tournaments are scheduled concurrently as well. Teams that tend to travel out of state are premier and select teams that are focused

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on soccer opportunities. The Club focuses on a niche of those players that might not have the same skill level or cannot afford the higher-level clubs. Many of the teams are from smaller towns that lack soccer tournaments. The Club focuses on the recreational aspect of soccer but has attracted some select teams. When select teams participate, recreational teams benefit from the experience.

**WASHINGTON STATE
SENIOR GAMES:**

Diane Foster, President, Washington State Senior Games, said this year's event featured 24 sports from May to August. The goal is to keep seniors healthy and productive aged 50 through 100. The games in Washington began in 1997 with card games, billiards, and some walking. Ms. Foster shared several photographs of seniors participating in the games. Track and field events are held at Tumwater High School in addition to golf, racket ball, and tennis. Beach volleyball was added as a new competition. The City of Tacoma is the only venue available to accommodate the game. Cowboy Action Shooting competition involves pistol and rifle shooting at targets.

This year, the games utilized geofencing from the VCB to target larger events to generate information on where participants reside. Olympia High School expanded the geofencing boundary too large giving incorrect data as to the number of participants and families. The boundary included soccer fields during a tournament. This year's event is a qualifying event for the national games, which likely will increase participation. Over 500 people participated in pickleball. The game is increasing in popularity.

Mr. Reynolds inquired as to how seniors register to participate in the games. Ms. Foster reported the website includes information on the games as well as registration information. The National Senior Olympic Games website links to all state games. Many of the participants are from other states because of the reputation of the Washington State Senior Games.

Mr. Reynolds recommended including state contact information within the marketing materials.

Mr. Bills asked about the source of income from Program Service Fees. Ms. Foster said the income source is from entry fees paid by participants.

Chair Swarthout asked whether the games foresee offering a half marathon option. Ms. Foster said the games currently offer a 10K marathon. The state games match with the games offered at the national games. City of Tumwater police officers and utility crew are used for the 10K road races.

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**TUMWATER AREA
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE:**

A representative from the Tumwater Area of Chamber of Commerce did not attend the meeting to present the funding request.

**WASHINGTON CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING
ARTS:**

Jill Barnes, Executive Director, Washington Center for the Performing Arts, presented the funding proposal. The Washington Center hosted many good performances last season. After four reschedules, the sold out Stunt Dog Show was held along with the National Broadway Tour of Legally Blond, Blind Boys of Alabama, and other shows. Indigenous Performance Productions hosted *The Aunties*, a multimedia show of stories by indigenous matriarchs, which sold out with a second show added. The National Geographic Live Event was also featured. Although the Center has offered many shows since the pandemic years, three events cancelled for other reasons than COVID. Weather in Wyoming nearly caused the cancellation of another show.

Ms. Barnes noted that the theater/arts industry is still in pandemic recovery for a variety of reasons. After being shut down, the theater opened last season after the \$8.8 million renovation. She thanked the City of Tumwater for its support and participation. Contractors worked quickly to complete the renovation in four months. Many public tours were conducted of the newly renovated venue. She encouraged members to contact her for a tour of the facility.

Despite four months of renovation, the season hosted 181 performances and 393 performances at the venues of Kenneth J. Minnaert Center for the Arts, and Harlequin Productions, a recently established contract to operate the box office and front house services. Approximately 5,000 tickets were sold to patrons with Tumwater addresses with 10% of the Center's volunteers living in Tumwater.

Most marketing expenses are for digital marketing because of the effectiveness of those methods. The industry is also experiencing less last-minute ticket buyers, who can be targeted easier by digital marketing. Email newsletters continue to be informational with the mailing list expanding rapidly. The website is available 24/7 for ticketing. Print marketing continues to be important; however, some funds have been reallocated to materials reflecting the best return in investment. Approximately 21% of the advertising budget is radio promotion. Funds are also reserved for last-minute marketing opportunities.

Arts tourists spend twice as much as local counterparts. The Center is working with Experience Olympia and Beyond to receive more data on arts tourism. It may be possible to utilize geofencing data to substantiate that the Center is not competition for Seattle in terms of booking the same artist. Washington State is a thriving arts and culture

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ranked as #1 for the highest growth in the arts and culture industry. Goals are often difficult to assess given the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic. The Center is still in active recovery from the pandemic while focused on expanding. Based on a 2019 study, for every dollar spent by a patron, \$2.10 was returned to the local economy. Fifty-five to sixty-five percent of survey respondents dine out in the area before or after a show. The Center continues its partnership with Tacoma Arts Live by presenting Broadway events. This year, two performances of Stomp are scheduled.

As the Center continues to rebuild and experience transition since COVID, staff continue to assess consumer habits with the optimism that habits might begin stabilizing. Subscriptions are currently at 85% of the 2020 figures, which reflects more than the national average of 60%.

RECESS:

Chair Swarthout recessed the meeting at 9:29 a.m. for a five minute break.

**TUMWATER
DOWNTOWN
ASSOCIATION:**

Murray Smith said he has been with the Tumwater Downtown Association since 1999 when it was established. The 24th Annual 4th of July Artesian Festival at the Tumwater Valley Golf Course is the largest event held in Tumwater. The anticipated number of participants is approximately 20,000. In 1999, the festival hosted less than 5,000 people. The fireworks show is the only local fireworks show. The festival is focused on families and children. Live music is featured in addition to food vendors and activities for children.

LTAC funds support marketing efforts, hosting the event, and the fireworks show, which has increased in cost. Without sufficient funding, the festival would not be possible. The event is free to the public. One year, the organization sponsored a raffle for a television. The winner was a family from Shelton and winners of secondary prizes were from Aberdeen, Matlock, and Bremerton. The show draws attendees from other areas in the state. Parking is charged, which helps fund the cost of the festival.

Mr. Bills asked about the type of marketing pursued for the festival. Mr. Smith said the organization produces flyers and banners for streets. He is not familiar with expenses associated with other types of marketing.

Mr. Bills inquired about the identity of the event's sponsors. Director Denney said the festival is a sponsor-driven event in addition to LTAC funds. The City of Tumwater does not use taxpayer funds to pay for the fireworks show and other operating costs of the festival. The City promotes the event through the allocation of staff resources. Sponsors include Toyota of Olympia, Capital Collision, and other small

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businesses providing both cash and in-kind donations. Event sponsors receive recognition on signage and all social media marketing. The City has a substantial social media presence for the event on Facebook. The City cross promotes the event with sponsors by including a link on their respective websites.

FRED U. HARRIS
LODGE #70:

Chair Swarthout reported the proposal is the first submission to the City for LTAC funding.

The representative from Fred U. Harris Lodge #79 did not attend the meeting to present the funding request.

CAPITAL LAKEFAIR,
INCORPORATED:

Chris Ray, Office Manager, thanked the committee for considering the proposal for LTAC funds. She referred to marketing materials on how the organization markets the event and recognizes the City of Tumwater for its LTAC funding. She submitted a corrected copy of the budget form because the original budget included actual figures rather than projected figures.

Capital Lakefair was established in 1957. The non-profit organization has raised millions of dollars for local non-profit vendors and more than \$400,000 in scholarships for young women from area high schools. Capital Lakefair fills hotels in Thurston County during the event. The website includes information on lodging in the local area. The parade generates visitors from across the state, Oregon, and Canada. Float crews from other festivals stay at local hotels. Capital Lakefair travels to many festivals across the Pacific Northwest featuring the Capital Lakefair float. The City of Tumwater is promoted on float signage. The Main Stage includes performers who live in other areas who stay in local hotels. Vendor applications include hotel information. The festival includes traveling floats, drivers, and other festival officials representing different festivals outside the region.

Capital Lakefair hosts its Ambassador Club for Capital Lakefair princesses. Lakefair princesses serve 300 hours of community service within Thurston County.

Lodging tax funds would be allocated to float travel to other festivals to cover hotel costs for ambassadors, chaperones, and float crew. Costs include gas, car rentals, food, merchandise, and float decorations. Other expenses include office and storage rental costs, and association dues.

Ms. Ray said she is proud to be part of an organization that has so many hardworking volunteers supporting the event. She is the only paid staff member.

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Mr. Reynolds noted that the event has been held for 66 years, which speaks to a record for local events. Because the event was held during the pandemic, it also speaks to impressive efforts.

**TUMWATER CRAFT
MARKETING:**

City of Tumwater Communications Manager Ann Cook presented the proposal. The City received LTAC funding for marketing the Craft Brewing and Distilling Center prior to the development of the site as an idea promoting the redevelopment of the Brewery District to attract tourists to Tumwater. As efforts evolved, the City's initial partners included SPSCC and its brewing and distilling program and the relocation of Heritage Distilling from Gig Harbor.

The marketing of Tumwater Craft as an overall marketing umbrella for the City of Tumwater extend beyond craft beer, cider, and spirits to all types of crafts of local food, makers, and other crafters uniquely Tumwater. It speaks to placemaking and marketing a destination to include river walks and history tours.

The committee previously approved funding for Tumwater Warehouse District marketing. The funding assisted in developing a website with ownership of three URLs for visitors to easily locate and access the website. Ads were purchased for the Brewfest in magazines and newspapers in Portland to attract visitors. Banners were produced in addition to coasters that were provided to retailers for their tasting rooms, as well as t-shirts. The City attends recruiting fairs and offers familiarization (FAM) tours to planners visiting the area.

Moving forward, efforts continue on marketing the opening of the Craft District, delayed for several years due primarily by the pandemic. The City is developing logos specific to the Craft District and is preparing for the opening of the new Market Building on October 7, 2023 housing new stores, restaurants, an art gallery, and a taco truck. LTAC funds from this year will be allocated to marketing for banners, marketing assets, and paid advertising linking to overnight stays. Next year's LTAC funds will be allocated for a year-round campaign promoting Tumwater as an overnight destination featuring the Craft and Warehouse Districts, Olympia Tumwater Foundation, area recreation, makers markets, and art programs through Tumwater's Parks and Recreation Department.

City of Tumwater Volunteer Coordinator Brianna Feller reported on next year's marketing focus for online advertising through the City's Facebook page, Craft webpage, and the City's webpage to attract more attention. Funding was allocated for Facebook advertising and promoting more posts, advertisements in Experience Olympia and Beyond, Thurston Talk, Zip magazine, ads in The Olympian, News

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Tribune, Showcase Media, and the Stranger. Promotional materials include coasters, t-shirts, and stickers.

**OLYMPIA TUMWATER
FOUNDATION:**

Madeline Pennington, Assistant Director, and John Freedman, Executive Director presented the funding proposal.

Last year's LTAC funds of \$6,000 enabled the Foundation to work with a professional drone operator and geography company in Tumwater to develop a video of the Tumwater Historic District for social media short media clips and larger full-length videos for websites and YouTube. The video markets the Tumwater Historic District to travelers living outside the area. The Foundation's combined social media platforms have approximately 8,000 followers. The Foundation plans to collaborate with Experience Olympia and Beyond to promote the video across its social media and website.

Mr. Freedman shared that Ms. Pennington was hired in May. Ms. Pennington has a professional background in social media web design.

Ms. Pennington reported the video is currently in post production with final design elements to be added. Narration is in progress. The plan is pushing the video across social media and the website. She played a 60-second clip of the preliminary video.

LTAC funds next year will support the production of two promotional videos to market across the same platforms. The Foundation will work with Sky Bear Media, a local Thurston County Native American-owned company with experience producing similar projects in Thurston County. The first video will feature the history of the Deschutes River canyon broken into five segments for viewing as either one comprehensive video or separately on specific topics. The video will include information about the river canyon and indigenous people inhabiting and visiting the area (Nisqually, Squaxin Island, and Chehalis Tribes). Another segment will focus on Pioneer travelers from the Oregon Trail traveling to Tumwater featuring the early industrial areas of the areas along the river. Also included are current cultural uses featuring Tumwater Historical Park and Brewery Part at Tumwater Falls.

The second video will feature the history of salmon runs through the river canyon and the history of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife fish hatchery, returning salmon, and recent efforts to restore the Deschutes River estuary.

The Foundation designed a new website. The website receives 4,000 views a month. The Google listing generates 20,000 views and 13,000 searches specifically for attractions. The Foundation is interested in

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sharing social media marketing with the City of Tumwater, Thurston County, Daughters of the Pioneers of Washington, and Experience Olympia and Beyond for hosting on their individual websites. The goal is reaching travelers interested in visiting the area. Ads will be targeted to travelers by using demographic information using geofencing with the VCB for a market summary that reflects that top visitors interested in the area. Targeted ads will be directed to those travelers in those areas to encourage visits to the area.

Brewery Park at Tumwater Falls generates \$1 million in economic impact for Tumwater. The videos will generate more impact by bringing in more people into the area, increasing overnight stays, and increasing expenditures from visitors.

DESCHUTES RUGBY CLUB:

Thor Hoyte, President, introduced Chelsie Green, Club Secretary/Treasurer.

Mr. Hoyte reported the Deschutes Rugby Club is in its second year. During the first year, the Club impacted communities in South Puget Sound. Last year, the Club relied on the City of Lacey as a partner and sponsor of the club. The impact of the Club has expanded beyond the City of Lacey with one senior men's team last year to three senior teams of one men's team, one women's team, and a team in Yakima, Washington.

The Club offers D-1 rugby, the top level of rugby in the region. The Club plays in Seattle, SeaTac, Tacoma, and with teams from Portland, Oregon and Boise, Idaho. The Club utilizes VCB's hotel blocking to assist in housing players. The Club sponsors social events in all areas of the region. Chapman Cider Company in Tumwater is the newest sponsor. A cornhole tournament is planned at Capital Heating and Air as the company supports the American Cancer Society as its charity. The Club contributes a match to the Fred Hutchison's Cancer Research Center. The two organizations are joining to sponsor a cornhole tournament as a fundraiser for the organizations.

The Club is designed to rely on businesses and governments to help fund games rather than relying on participants. Rugby is an expensive game with socials, travel, fields, tournament costs, and other related expenses. It is encouraging that local governments in the region have contributed to the Club. The Club is sponsoring a Union Hall of Fame dinner (Washington, Oregon, Idaho) hosting approximately 300 people to the area staying in hotels across the three largest cities in the region. The event is the first event held in the region. The Club also sponsors food drives, clean-ups, and other community events to engage players. The Club is operated on the English style model. Most clubs are drinking clubs; however, the Deschutes Rugby Club sponsors

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responsible socials, wraparound services, and competitive rugby games. The funds requested of \$10,000 will be used to fund the cornhole tournament and other charitable events with Chapman Cider Company in its parking lot. The funds will be used for advertising, board rentals, and food and drink costs to raise funds for three cancer charities.

Mr. Reynolds questioned whether the Club requested support from the City of Olympia. Mr. Hoyt responded that the Club seeks funding from the three larger cities for events held in each jurisdiction.

**LODGING TAX
HISTORIC AND
CULTURAL FUNDING
FOR 2025 :**

Director Denney reported the City has historically divided lodging tax funds into categories designated as the “first 2%” and the “second 2%.” The first 2% has been used for the City’s historical and cultural programming through a contract between the City and the Olympia Tumwater Foundation and for maintaining the City’s historic homes (Crosby House & Brewmaster’s House), Union Cemetery, and the historic old brewhouse. To continue the practice, approval by the committee is required. He asked the committee to consider approval of lodging tax historical funds for 2024 of 2% for cultural facilities and programs.

RECESS:

Chair Swarthout recessed the meeting at 11:19 a.m.

RECONVENE:

Chair Swarthout reconvened the meeting at 3:00 p.m. A meeting quorum was confirmed.

**2024 LODGING TAX
FUNDING
RECOMMENDATION:**

Director Niemeyer tracked funding recommendations by each member for each applicant: Following consultation with City Attorney Kirkpatrick, members involved with any of the organizations are able to vote on a funding recommendation.

MOTION:

Brian Reynolds moved, seconded by David Bills, to recommend the City Council allocate \$189,993.00 in 2024 LTAC funds to the following organizations in the following amounts:

- 1. Team Tomorrow LLC - \$4,516**
- 2. Olympic Flight Museum - \$41,144**
- 3. Tumwater Artesian Brewfest - \$14,049**
- 4. Visitor and Convention Bureau of Thurston County- \$37,632**
- 5. Tumwater Valley Golf Club - \$2,000**
- 6. Tumwater Soccer Club - \$12,712**
- 7. Washington State Senior Games - \$13,046**
- 8. Tumwater Area Chamber of Commerce –N/A**
- 9. Washington Center for the Performing Arts- \$12,042**
- 10. Tumwater Downtown Association - \$21,408**
- 11. Fred U. Harris Lodge #70 – N/A**

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- 12. Capital Lakefair, Inc.- \$3,178**
- 13. Tumwater Craft Marketing - \$16,390**
- 14. Olympia Tumwater Foundation - \$6,189**
- 15. Deschutes Rugby Club - \$5,687**

MOTION: Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: Brian Reynolds moved, seconded by David Bills to allocate \$60,000 for historic buildings, \$60,000 for historic programs, and \$30,000 for the old brewhouse for a total of \$150,000 from the “first 2%” of LTAC funds. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT: With there being no further business, Chair Swarthout adjourned the meeting at 3:16 p.m.

Prepared by Valerie Gow, Recording Secretary/President,
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