



MEETING NOTES
Experience Chehalis
December 8, 2023 | 8:30 a.m.

Attendees: David James, Chip Duncan, Brian Wilkins, Eric Sonnenberg, Todd Chaput, Bill Duetscher, Michael Ervin, Christy Ervin, Joanne Schwartz, Jason Mattson, Annalee Tobey, Kate McDougall, Tony Baker, David Hartz, Muriel Wheatley

Community Updates

Todd Chaput, Economic Alliance/Discover Lewis County

- The Alliance is completing their first year managing the Discover Lewis County program.
- They have hired Arnett-Muldrow to develop a strategic plan for Lewis County tourism.
 - Arnett Muldrow is utilizing geofencing to collect visitor data so we can better target the marketing efforts.
- DLC holds monthly steering committee meetings and are looking at marketing and branding opportunities.
- They are planning a bowling tournament in Morton this March to raise money for DLC merchandise as LC LTAC funds will cover these types of expenses.
- DLC plans to continue growing local partnerships and will send quarterly reports to local partners and city councils.
- They are investigating a Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) to generate a tax of around \$2 per night for hotel rooms and campsites in unincorporated Lewis County to pay for tourism operations so LTAC funds can be funding strictly advertising and not operations.
 - AirBNB rooms are not taxable with this TPA.
- Packwood is currently not able to build additional hotels or even a grocery store because they do not have a sewer system which is limiting their development capabilities. There is a project in place to add sewers but the cost of the system has risen high enough that the project is on hold till more funding is attained.
- The Alliance will begin operating the White Pass Scenic Byway in January 2024.
 - The Byway covers 124 miles of US Highway 12 from I-5 at Exit 88 to Naches. It is a unique entity because it spans many towns as well as public lands including the US Forest Service, PUD, State Parks, National Parks, etc.
 - The marketing program currently has around 45,000 Facebook followers and they partner with many community groups and land agencies to carry out their program of work.

- They approached the Alliance to continue the program due to the retirement of marketing professionals and board members.

Tony Baker, Babe Ruth Baseball

- The Babe Ruth baseball program is struggling to keep a functioning board. They will not be able to continue if they cannot recruit a board of 8 people.
- The City of Chehalis manages a rec baseball program and could possibly manage a similar program.
- Meeting attendees recommended he contact the Chronicle and local radio stations to build support for this important community program and share the need for new leadership.

Joanne Schwartz, Chehalis Railroad & Museum

- The railroad is halfway through the busy Polar Express season. So far, they have entertained 3,000 guests.

Daivd Hartz - Book N Brush

- Book N Brush is holding an author event this weekend at McFiler's Chehalis Theater hosting five authors.

Committee Reports

David James, Promotion Committee

- We are producing a Santa Letter program again with children receiving a handwritten response to their letters. Letters can be "mailed" at Book N Brush, Totally Pawsome, and Market Street Ace.
- Downtown holiday bingo will kick off this month offering ideas for experiencing the holidays in Chehalis in the form of a bingo card. After obtaining, a bingo, guests downtown can turn in their sheet for a chance to win \$100 in local gift cards.
- An online historic walking tour option is being created that will complement our popular printed guide which is also being redesigned for reprint.
- We are discussing creating holiday prints and notecards featuring artwork that displays Chehalis during the holiday season.

Annalee Tobey, Executive Director

- Our new holiday decoration grant program has been very successful and many more businesses are creating festive storefronts for the holiday season.
- We are excited to welcome several new retail businesses downtown in the next couple months.
- As a reminder to business and property owners, trespassing forms are only good for 1 year, January-December each year, so businesses that wish to have one on file should fill out a 2024 form and submit it to the city.