

DATE OF MEETING April 25, 2022

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SUBJECT TOURISM NANAIMO SOCIETY GOVERNANCE MODEL UPDATE

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide Council with information on the Governance and Service Model for the Tourism Nanaimo Society.

BACKGROUND

The City of Nanaimo's Tourism Service supports programs and initiatives aimed at building the capacity of the local tourism industry, developing Nanaimo as a tourism destination, and marketing Nanaimo as a destination for tourists, business event attendees, and other groups of visitors. Nanaimo's Visitor Centre and its associated visitor programs are also operated as part of the service. The service operates under the Tourism Nanaimo brand, and relies on the active involvement of, and collaboration with, key tourism stakeholders including a range of tourism operators along with the Snuneymuxw First Nation, Nanaimo Hospitality Association (NHA), Vancouver Island Conference Centre (VICC), Nanaimo Port Authority, Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce, Nanaimo Airport Authority, and Vancouver Island University (VIU).

In 2017, the non-profit tourism agency, Tourism Vancouver Island (TVI), was contracted by the City to deliver Tourism Nanaimo. TVI was initially contracted under a one-year agreement; in 2018, this agreement was extended for an additional year. In 2019, the City held a competitive request for proposals process for a new five-year service delivery contract. TVI was the successful proponent. In December 2020, 19 months into the new contract, TVI ended its role as operator of Tourism Nanaimo, but remained in place to manage the Visitor Centre and deliver the associated visitor programs.

The withdrawal of TVI from Tourism Nanaimo compelled the City to hire an Interim Tourism Nanaimo Manager to oversee and administer the service. The withdrawal prompted the City, as well, to create a Tourism Service Working Group to work with and advise City Staff on:

- tourism recovery planning and destination marketing efforts for 2021; and,
- the development of a new, sustainable, Governance and Service Model for Tourism Nanaimo.

The Working Group included senior level representation from key organizations and sectors involved in promoting Nanaimo as a destination for visitors, and in providing tourism-related activities and services.

The Working Group, with the assistance of a consultant (Neilson Strategies) developed a *Tourism Nanaimo Governance & Service Model*.

On 2021-AUG-30, Council gave approval in principle to the *Draft* document, and directed Staff to seek endorsement of the framework from Snuneymuxw First Nation; Nanaimo Hospitality Association; Nanaimo Airport Authority; Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce; Nanaimo Port Authority and Vancouver Island University

The final *Tourism Nanaimo Governance & Service Model* (Attachment A) was endorsed by Council at the 2021-DEC-20 Special In Camera Meeting.

The key recommendation was to establish the Tourism Nanaimo Society (Tourism Nanaimo) as a non-profit, destination marketing and management organization that works with tourism industry stakeholders, governments and others to develop and market Nanaimo as a destination for visitors.

The mandate of Tourism Nanaimo is to:

1. develop and guide the implementation of the Tourism Nanaimo Destination Strategy, Business & Meetings Tourism Strategy and Sport Tourism Strategy.
2. create a destination brand that celebrates Nanaimo's uniqueness and appeals to targeted groups of visitors.
3. support, through investment and research, the development of a vibrant and sustainable tourism industry.
4. grow, through strategic marketing, collaboration with partners and careful brand management, the number of overnight visitors to Nanaimo.
5. strategically invest in destination development initiatives aimed at increasing the number of visitors to Nanaimo.
6. operate the Visitor Information Centre and provide visitor-related services.

Tourism Nanaimo is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of fifteen (15) voting directors with representatives from:

- City of Nanaimo Council – 2 members
- Snuneymuxw First Nation – 1 member
- Nanaimo Port Authority – 1 member
- Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce – 1 member
- Vancouver Island University – 1 member
- Vancouver Island Conference Centre – 1 member
- Nanaimo Airport Authority – 1 member
- Nanaimo Hospitality Association – 3 members
- Operators, managers and/or decision makers from the Transportation sector – 1 member
- Operators, managers and/or decision makers from the Tours & Attractions – 1 member
- Operators, managers and/or decision makers from the Arts & Culture – 1 member
- Operators, managers and/or decision makers from the Food & Beverage – 1 member

One senior manager from the City of Nanaimo is appointed as a Non-Voting Director.

The term of the appointment for a director is for two years. A director can be reappointed for two consecutive additional terms, for a maximum period of six years.

All board members serve without remuneration. Expenses incurred to conduct Society business may be claimed in accordance with Board policies.

Following endorsement by Council at the 2021-DEC-20 Special 'In Camera' Meeting, the City solicitor prepared the *Tourism Nanaimo Society Constitution, Bylaws and Statement of Directors and Registered Office* required by the *Societies Act*. The Tourism Nanaimo Society was officially incorporated on 2022-APR-08.

Funding

All interim management and consulting costs incurred by the City in operating Tourism Nanaimo since the departure of Tourism Vancouver Island, in supporting the Tourism Nanaimo Working Group, have been funded and will continue to be funded from the City's annual fixed contribution to the Tourism Nanaimo function of \$709,448 (2022).

CONCLUSION

With the registration of the Tourism Nanaimo Society Constitution and Bylaws (Attachment B), the following next steps are anticipated:

- Inaugural board meeting May 2022
- Recruitment for an Executive Director
- Identification of Office Space
- Approval of the annual tactical plan
- Regular Council updates (anticipated to be at least twice a year)

SUMMARY POINTS

- The City of Nanaimo's Tourism Service supports programs and initiatives aimed at building the capacity of the local tourism industry, developing Nanaimo as a tourism destination, and marketing Nanaimo as a destination for tourists, business event attendees, and other groups of visitors.
- The City's Tourism function was operated by Tourism Vancouver Island from 2017 to 2020.
- In 2021 Council established a working group to undertake a review of the Tourism function to make recommendations on governance and service model.
- The key recommendation was to establish the Tourism Nanaimo Society with a 15 member board comprised of key government and public sector stakeholders, the Nanaimo Hospitality Association and industry representatives.
- The Tourism Nanaimo Society has been incorporated and the inaugural Board meeting will be held in early May.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Tourism Nanaimo Society Governance & Service Model

ATTACHMENT B: Tourism Nanaimo Society Constitution & Bylaws

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