

City of Prescott
Tourism Advisory Committee



February 12, 2025 | 11:00 AM
201 N. Montezuma Street
Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Christensen called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Chair Christensen welcomed and introduced new Committee Member, Nick Medina, who was then sworn in. Member introductions followed.

2. ROLL CALL

Margo Christensen - Chair
Matt Brassard - Vice Chair
Robert Coombs - Member
Jim Dawson - Member
Dennis Gallagher - Member
Edd Kellerman - Member (Excused)
Autumn Kline - Member (Excused)
Ken Leja - Member (Absent)
Nick Medina - Member
Linda Nichols - Member (Excused)

3. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

- A. Approval of the January 15, 2025 Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

MOTION BY MEMBER GALLAGHER TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 15, 2025 MEETING MINUTES; SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR BRASSARD: PASSED (6-0)

- B. Presentation & Discussion Regarding Prescott Downtown Partnership Summer Concert Series.

Tourism Manager, Cristina Binkley, introduced One36 Consulting LLC agent, Audra Yamamoto, representing Prescott Downtown Partnership (PDP). Ms. Binkley reviewed the request from PDP for an additional \$15,000 to support the annual Summer Concert Series, raising the total Bed Tax sponsorship from \$75,000 to \$90,000. Currently, the 4th of July, Whiskey Off-Road, and the Summer Concert Series receive the most sponsorship funding from the Office of Tourism. This amendment would likely require City Council approval.

Ms. Yamamoto presented to the Committee, highlighting that 24-28 free shows are held each summer, totaling approximately 48-56 hours of live entertainment. The shows feature around 185 local musicians, with attendance ranging from 700 to 3,000 guests per show. PDP currently has over 3,000 social media followers and more than 1,100 text messaging subscribers.

Ms. Yamamoto explained that discovering new talent and cross-marketing to different demographic groups helps bands attract new followers, who in turn begin attending shows and supporting Prescott's local music venues and music events. The audience spans all ages, offering an alternative venue for the under-21 crowd and those who prefer not to attend live music events in bar settings.

Ms. Yamamoto shared the history of the Series, which has been an annual event for 20 years. Initially managed by the City of Prescott Event Coordinator, alongside the Fourth of July and other local events, the position was eventually eliminated, and event planning was contracted to outside organizations. The PDP took over the Series on behalf of the community. Year-round efforts include online auditions in October, with planning and logistics handled by volunteers. The series' operating costs are largely covered by a \$75,000 contract with the city, while additional operating, marketing, and administrative expenses, along with musician payments, are funded through sponsorships and partnerships secured by PDP.

Ms. Yamamoto also highlighted the various operating costs and noted that PDP faces a unique challenge, as the series does not generate revenue through ticket or alcohol sales. Funding is entirely reliant on the city and sponsorships. However, with the expansion of events and programs, securing the same level of sponsorships has become increasingly difficult.

Chair Christensen suggested a potential solution for restroom and trash services that may aid with expenses, with more details to be provided after a meeting scheduled later in the day.

Member Gallagher asked if \$500 per show for a musician's payment was typical for the Series.

Ms. Yamamoto confirmed that it was, explaining that in the past, payments varied, but they have since been standardized. She noted that most musicians perform in the Summer Concert Series for the benefit of the community, often receiving less than they would at other paying venues.

Ms. Yamamoto shared PDP recognition and awards, including the 2024 Best of Yavapai County Outdoor Event by Prescott Now and the Experience Prescott Tourism Award.

On behalf of PDP, Ms. Yamamoto presented the request for an additional \$15,000 in funding from the city for the Summer Concert Series.

Ms. Binkley asked for clarification on whether the funding request was a one-time or annual request.

Ms. Yamamoto confirmed that it was an annual request.

Member Dawson asked about the primary objective of the Series and how it aligns with the objectives of this Committee. He also recommended considering modifications to the concept or potentially reducing the total number of concerts, noting supply and demand concerns.

Ms. Yamamoto responded that when PDP took over the Series, they maintained the same frequency of concerts as before. However, she acknowledged that operational adjustments could be made if necessary.

Chair Christensen commented that the Series is considered a mid-week activity and aligns with tourism objectives. It can be promoted through writing, social media, and is in line with the Committee's goals.

Ms. Binkley added that the original number of 24 concerts was a contractual obligation, but it has since been adjusted to reflect what PDP can realistically accommodate.

Vice Chair Brassard recused himself, as he is both a member of the Committee and a member of the PDP.

Chair Christensen asked about the contingencies related to the budget.

Ms. Binkley responded that the funds had already been allocated to e-bikes and downtown beautification projects.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked how the budgeting would be affected.

Ms. Binkley explained that, due to ripple effects, other departments are also impacted by the budget allocations.

Chair Christensen asked about the possibility of waiting until the new fiscal year instead.

Ms. Binkley responded that the request could be presented as a new \$90,000 contract and asked Ms. Yamamoto if that would be acceptable.

Ms. Yamamoto confirmed that it was, as it would still help.

Member Coombs asked about the types of sponsors for the event.

Ms. Yamamoto replied that the top sponsor has been El Gato. She noted that the sponsorship level is not as high as the Bluegrass Festival, for example. She also mentioned that when PDP inherited the program three years ago, the sponsorship program had started from scratch and is still growing.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth requested clarification on the on-site management.

Ms. Yamamoto explained that a representative from PDP is present at the event to monitor and manage it overall.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth noted, for future reference, that Yavapai County also collects tax and recommended considering approaching the County for additional funding.

MOTION BY MEMBER DAWSON TO RECOMMEND COUNCIL APPROVAL OF A \$5,000 INCREASE TO THE SUMMER CONCERT SERIES FUNDING, WITH CONTINGENCY TO REVIEW OPERATIONAL COST MANAGEMENT SPECIFICALLY IN THE SPIRIT OF PARTNERSHIP AND SOLIDARITY: MOTION FAILED DUE TO LACK OF SECOND

MOTION BY CHAIR CHRISTENSEN TO RECOMMEND COUNCIL APPROVAL OF A \$15,000 INCREASE TO THE SUMMER CONCERT SERIES FUNDING, TOTALING \$90,000, EFFECTIVE IN FISCAL YEAR 2026. SECONDED BY MEMBER COOMBS: PASSED (5-0)

C. Presentation & Discussion Regarding Tourism Grant Application Review.

Ms. Binkley opened discussion, referencing the prior Committee meeting when discussion took place regarding the upcoming Tourism Grant cycle. The grants are designed to support non-profit organizations hosting events in Prescott, with the aim of encouraging overnight visitation through event marketing outside the Prescott area. The grants are funded by the city's Transient Occupancy Tax. Events may be eligible for up to \$5,000, depending on their rating and the number of successful applicants. These grants are available only to registered non-profit organizations.

Ms. Binkley explained that the purpose of today's discussion is to finalize the online fillable grant application and review any changes. She noted that the first two pages contain important dates, deadlines, and legal information for the applicant. The third page includes confirmation that the applicant has read through the information. Page four marks the beginning of the application itself, with a clear distinction between the legal information and the application section. Page five includes sections for contact information, the grant request, and the marketing budget.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth noted that the fiscal year should be adjusted to the corresponding fiscal year throughout the document.

Ms. Binkley shared that member feedback from last year was implemented within the new application. The room nights formula is now included at the beginning of the application. She mentioned that while it is possible to have a fillable formula within the application, the data entered may often be skewed, as attendance numbers don't always reflect overnight stays.

For some events, there are additional accommodation options, such as camping, short-term rentals, and hotels, but information about these stays is often difficult to obtain.

Ms. Binkley notified members that they would have until the following Wednesday to submit feedback.

This item was for discussion only. No formal action took place.

4. UPDATES

A. Staff Announcements & Updates.

Staff from the Tourism and Recreation Services Departments provided the following updates to the Committee:

- The City Manager has asked Tourism staff to conduct a survey about business licenses, to inform Council as they deliberate on whether to reinstate a business license program this spring. All businesses and non-profits are welcome to take the survey, available through the end of March on ParticipatePrescott.com.
- The Workforce Housing Committee (WHC) hosted a Town Hall meeting on January 30, 2025, with nearly 100 citizens and business owners attending to share thoughts, ideas and concerns. The WHC is collaborating with a consultant who is conducting a needs assessment, which will be presented to the Council in the spring. Additional information is available on ParticipatePrescott.com.
- The first annual Tourism Meeting took place at The Hazeltine, and as a result of the meeting, the venue has booked multiple events. Overall, a lot of great feedback has been received regarding the Tourism Meeting.
- A "Christmas in Color" campaign took place over the holiday season, designed specifically for individuals who are red/green colorblind. Seattle and the City of Prescott were the top two cities to offer the program. Sparklight supported the event. At least 32 people who attended appointments at their optometrist participated in the program. Information was obtained through geofencing.
- Discussions revealed that the band shell, once hauled by a semi-truck, is no longer an asset owned by the City and is now the responsibility of event promoters. This has led to a significant increase in stage costs. Staff are reviewing options to offset these costs, including renting or other alternatives. Previously, Recreation Services owned the band shell, but it was sold as part of a cost-reduction decision during the budget process five years ago. The unintended consequence has been higher event costs, and leasing or purchasing a stage is now being considered.

- Epic Rides, the vendor for the Whiskey Off-Road event, has requested to present directly to Council. They have been offered a spring Study Session date and staff are awaiting confirmation. They are seeking to bypass the Committee and present their case directly to Council. Additionally, TransRockies won the Request for Proposals (RFP) for a different event, a long-distance gravel ride scheduled for fall 2026 as an end cap for the season. The total cost for TransRockies is \$50k, with in-kind contributions deducted.
- The recent Go West Summit, an event connecting tourism suppliers with global buyers and media, took place with Tourism staff in attendance. Staff are now reaching out to contacts for their itineraries and requests and are starting to book regional representatives. There is potential to introduce these representatives to hotel owners. Staff are also working on bookings for the upcoming 2025 Arizona Wildland Urban Interface Summit.
- Recreation Services staff are working with Play Easy, an online network connecting sporting event organizers, destinations, facilities, and events across North America for all age groups. The goal is to be more creative in collaboration with schools and other organizations to bring in more sports events for 2026 and beyond.
- The city's Tourism social media following has grown to 11,000. The "Day in the Life of Prescott" reel was particularly popular. The opening of Parlor Donuts received a lot of engagement through video, and other posts, such as a poll about local coffee shops, also drove significant engagement.

This item was for discussion only. No formal action took place.

B. Committee Member Updates.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth and Committee Members provided the following updates:

- Chair Christensen announced she is currently undergoing certification training, which includes a deep dive into Star Analysis. This training focuses on next-level tourism analytics, event market analysis, feasibility studies, and more.
- Scholarships for the "2024 Western Heritage Keeper" were presented, with five recipients each receiving \$2,000. The scholarship recognized youth who demonstrated exceptional aptitude and interest in preserving and promoting Yavapai County's Western heritage through education, art, music, events, and projects that enhance the local Western lifestyle.
- Council participated in a field trip to Granite Creek Park during yesterday's Study Session, focusing on open space.

This item was for discussion only. No formal action took place.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chair Christensen adjourned the meeting at 12.32 p.m.


MARGO CHRISTENSEN, Chair

ATTEST:


MARIKAY WHISENAND, Staff Liaison