

City of Prescott

Tourism Advisory Committee

April 30, 2025 | 11:00 AM
201 N. Montezuma Street
Council Chambers, 1st 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, Tamara Burks, who was then sworn in. Member introductions followed.

2. ROLL CALL

Margo Christensen - Chair
Matt Brassard - Vice Chair
Tamara Burks - Member
Robert Coombs - Member
Jim Dawson - Member
Dennis Gallagher - Member
Edd Kellerman - Member
Autumn Kline - Member
Nick Medina - Member
(Vacancy)

3. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of the March 12, 2025 Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

MOTION BY MEMBER COOMBS TO APPROVE MARCH 12, 2025 MEETING MINUTES; SECONDED BY MEMBER GALLAGHER: PASSED (9 - 0)

B. Presentation & Discussion Regarding the Requirements and Timeline of Potential Propositions.

Tourism Manager Cristina Binkley provided an overview of the requirements and timeline related to potential propositions, referring to the memo included in the agenda materials:

1. Year 1 Fall – Decide to Pursue Proposition
2. Year 1 Winter – Form Political Action Committee with Statements of Organization
3. Year 2 January – Determine Financial Impact of Proposition
4. Year 2 February – Schedule 2x2s with Members of Prescott City Council

5. Year 2 March/April – Propose Initial Ballot Language to the Prescott City Council (or Circulate Petitions for a Citizen Initiative)
6. Year 2 Summer – Determine Marketing Strategy & Budget
7. Year 3 February & March – Official Ballot Language Presented and Approved
8. Year 3 March Public Outreach Begins
9. Year 3 August Primary Election

Member Dawson asked about the purpose of pursuing a proposition.

Community Outreach Director John Heiney explained that in recent budget discussions with City leadership, the issue of General Fund stress was raised, making this an appropriate time to consider new sources of revenue.

Chair Christensen noted that this topic has been under consideration for some time and emphasized that the current 3% funding level is insufficient to meet existing needs. She added that a dedicated group to lead the proposition effort has not yet been identified.

Mr. Heiney referred to the chart in the agenda packet and noted that Prescott remains at the lower end of comparable communities.

Chair Christensen noted that Prescott's line item for additional city contributions appeared to be zero.

Mr. Heiney responded that this could be due to the way Prescott defines its Transient Occupancy Lodging Tax (Bed Tax) Rates.

Member Dawson asked about the historical resistance from the hotel community.

Chair Christensen responded that she believes the hotel community would support a tax increase if it were community-led and properly presented.

Member Medina noted that Sedona has a 3.5% tax rate and asked how that compares to Prescott.

Ms. Binkley responded that various scenarios could be modeled with the City's Finance Department to show potential revenue outcomes.

Chair Christensen commented that a similar financial model was created several years ago.

Member Medina asked where funding shortfalls would have the greatest impact.

Chair Christensen responded that it would be tourism marketing and recreational amenities.

Ms. Binkley commented that staff would recommend reviewing language that coincides given the state does bed tax differently.

Member Dawson recommended starting with the end goal and working backward to develop a plan.

Mr. Heiney noted that three to four years have passed since the last strategic plan and suggested a new plan could serve as a solid foundation for this effort. He

explained that tourism marketing is often one of the last priorities in the budget, despite needing increased support.

Chair Christensen commented that both sales and bed tax revenues have been stagnant or declining, reinforcing the need for new funding sources.

Mr. Heiney commented that staff could assist with data and suggested that the Committee consider beginning the strategic planning process.

Member Coombs asked whether specific funding categories would need to be pre-identified.

Chair Christensen responded it would depend on the ballot language.

Vice Chair Brassard asked if every city requires voter approval for propositions like this.

Mr. Heiney explained that while not all cities do, the City of Prescott does require a vote. He added that city staff can provide information but are restricted from advocacy.

Member Gallagher reported that larger hotels in the area seem to understand the need for a bed tax increase.

Ms. Binkley asked whether the Committee wished to provide direction to staff.

Member Dawson proposed holding a planning meeting to assess current tourism funding.

Member Medina agreed with Member Dawson and suggested the planning meeting also explore other revenue streams.

Ms. Binkley asked whether inviting guest speakers would be useful.

The Committee generally agreed that an all-day, workshop-style meeting would be beneficial.

Member Kline suggested financial scenarios showing the effects of different tax percentage increases.

Member Dawson asked whether the Committee should serve as the steering committee or appoint another group.

Mr. Heiney referred to a recent public safety proposition campaign as an example of effective organization.

Vice Chair Brassard asked about the costs associated with running a campaign.

Chair Christensen asked if bed tax funds could be used for campaign materials.

Mr. Heiney responded that he would need to research that issue, noting past campaigns had used graphics and materials presented during public meetings.

This item was for discussion only. No formal action was taken.

- C. Presentation & Discussion Regarding the Upcoming Annual Update & Presentation to Council and Selection of Committees Members to Represent TAC at the Meeting.

Ms. Binkley informed the Committee that their bylaws require an annual presentation to City Council after the fiscal year ends. The presentation will review past accomplishments and outline future plans. She noted that while staff can support the effort, committee members must give the presentation.

Chair Christensen asked how long the presentation should be.

Ms. Binkley answered that 20 minutes had been allotted. She emphasized the importance of using the presentation to advocate for upcoming projects.

Mr. Heiney suggested developing a clear outline to help presenters prepare for the panel style discussion.

Chair Christensen suggested scheduling a practice session for the end of May. She recommended beginning the presentation with TAC's vision and mission, followed by the new strategic plan and upcoming goals.

Member Dawson proposed that the Chair and Vice Chair be the presenters.

Chair Christensen said she would be out of town, returning only three days before the Council meeting, but she was willing to present if the practice session could be held earlier.

Vice Chair Brassard and Member Gallagher volunteered to join the presentation team.

MOTION BY MEMBER DAWSON TO RECOMMEND CHAIR CHRISTENSEN, VICE CHAIR BRASSARD, AND MEMBER GALLAGHER REPRESENT THE TAC UPDATE TO COUNCIL ON THE COMMITTEE'S BEHALF; SECONDED BY MEMBER MEDINA: PASSED (9 - 0)

- D. Presentation & Discussion Regarding Tourism Grant Review and Award Selections.

Item 3.D was discussed following Item 4.B. The minutes reflect the actual order of discussion.

4. UPDATES

- A. Staff Announcements & Updates

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

- The announcement of the retirement of Recreation Services Director, Joe Baynes, was shared, with praise to his contributions to trail development and City amenities.

- Utility Billing was scheduled to move into the new City Hall on May 9, 2025 and reopen May 12, 2025. The first City Council meeting in the new Council Chambers was scheduled to be held May 13, 2025.
- Member Leja's resignation was announced, leaving a vacancy. The short-term seat would remain open until May 30, 2025.
- Experience Prescott was recently featured on the cover of *Wander AZ*, generating approximately \$50,000 in earned media value. Confirmation was provided regarding the coverage earned, not paid. The new website had begun generating advertising revenue, with 13 stakeholders participating, and the revenue could eventually cover the site's costs, being the revenue is a credit and not general revenue.
- The Airport runway project is ongoing. There are two pavement projects scheduled for FY26, with facility expansion planned for FY28.
- Recreation Services events included upcoming softball and baseball tournaments, the Pure Imagination Festival and a summer movie night.
- Three RFPs were in process for outdoor sports events expected to draw 100–200 participants each and generate 20–30 hotel room bookings per location. Potential events included a National Horseshoe Association event, girls volleyball tournament, and a women's martial arts conference.
- Coordination with local nonprofits was ongoing, with a recently booked Arizona Wildlands event.

This item was for discussion only. No formal action was taken.

B. Committee Member Updates

Councilwoman Fruhwirth and Committee Members provided the following updates:

- The "Boots on the Row" event is scheduled for September 22, 2025.
- Chamber of Commerce upcoming events included Historic Walking Tours, Chalk It Up, Memorial Day festivities, the Mountain Artists Guild Mother's Day event, and a wine festival.
- Phippen Museum activities included an upcoming youth art competition, Memorial Day programs, artist meet-and-greet sessions, and events for children.
- A "Meet the Winemaker" series and pop-up markets at the Grand Highland Hotel were upcoming. Staff noted that the Courtyard & Ballroom would be available for qualifying nonprofit events.
- The next Women in Business event was scheduled to take place at the Sam Hill Warehouse, instead of the usual location.

This item was for discussion only. No formal action was taken.

The Committee recessed for lunch at 12:05 p.m. and reconvened at 12:45 p.m.

3.D. Presentation & Discussion Regarding Tourism Grant Review and Award Selections (Continued)

Ms. Binkley explained to the Committee that the purpose of this meeting was to review the 26 submitted grant applications, a total consistent with previous years. Committee members were to review and pre-score each application in advance of the meeting, with the meeting to then include a review process held in open session, allowing for additional scoring based on group discussion and feedback.

Chair Christensen opened the discussion regarding grant applications and explained that members who submitted applications may need to recuse themselves during the review process.

Ms. Binkley reviewed the purpose of the grants, which are to support non-profit organizations hosting events in Prescott. Annually funded through the city's Bed Tax, the program aims to promote event marketing beyond the Prescott area and encourage overnight visitation. Grants of up to \$5,000 are awarded based on event rating and how many organizations successfully apply. The grant is available only to registered non-profit organizations. The grant process begins and opens in the spring, with funds allocated for the upcoming fiscal year for the City of Prescott (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026).

Vice Chair Brassard commented on the level of detail involved in reviewing the applications.

Member Dawson recommended establishing a maximum character limit for future applications to streamline the process.

Mr. Heiney responded that this approach has been attempted in the past but led to challenges in evaluating content.

Member Kline asked how projected event revenue ties into the application scoring.

Ms. Binkley explained how revenue projections are used in scoring, noting their impact on funding decisions. She elaborated on the consideration of factors such as placed versus earned media, community benefit, and the cultural or historical significance of events.

Discussion regarding the grant applications included the following highlights:

13th Annual Hopefest

Proposed for 9/20/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
8,000 Projected Attendance
\$141,000 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts
79% from local zip code

37th Annual Cowboy Poets Gathering

Proposed for 8/7/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
4,000-5,000 Projected Attendance
\$48,282 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts
Zip code numbers appear to be the most accurate with screening methods

Expected room nights slightly above average

47th Annual Whiskey Row Marathon

Proposed for 10/11/25, \$5,000 Grant Request

5,000 Projected Attendance

\$31,927 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

Long standing well planned marathon event

Member Kellerman recused himself from the 51st Annual Phippen Museum Western Art Show & Sale discussion.

51st Annual Phippen Museum Western Art Show & Sale

Proposed for 5/24/25, \$5,000 Grant Request

17,000-20,000 Projected Attendance

\$60,161 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

Event must occur within the next FY, errors noted but qualifies

19th Annual all Corvette Car Show

Proposed for 9/27/25, \$5,000 Grant Request

9,300 Projected Attendance

29,050 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

Alliance Southwest Championship

Proposed for 7/10/25, \$5,000 Grant Request

2,730 Projected Attendance

Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts Not Provided

One of the last events that fell under the old grant structure

Tournaments related to hotel cancellation concerns noted

Arizona Philharmonic Eighth Season

Proposed for 5/3/26, \$5,000 Grant Request

2,260 Projected Attendance

\$33,118 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

508 room nights anticipated

Art in the Pines 6th Annual Prescott Plein Air Festival

Proposed for 8/27/25, \$5,000 Grant Request

3,000 Projected Attendance

\$18,706 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

Chalk it Up Prescott

Proposed for 4/18/26, \$5,000 Grant Request

2,000 Projected Attendance

\$7,150 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

Festival of the Trees

Proposed for 11/19/25, \$5,000 Grant Request

3,500 Projected Attendance

\$22,170 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

453 room nights anticipated
Positive collaboration with AZ Christmas City efforts

Vice Chair Brassard recused himself from the NYE Whiskey Row Boot Drop discussion.

NYE Whiskey Row Boot Drop

Proposed for 12/31/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
18,000+ Projected Attendance
\$553,500 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts
Last year received eight minutes of national airtime;
Tremendous positive impact from the event

Prescott Area Artist Studio Tour

Proposed for 10/3/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
13,000-15,000 Projected Attendance
\$50,937 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts
Monetary marketing \$50k

Member Coombs recused himself from the Prescott Chamber of Commerce Foundation Bluegrass Festival discussion.

Prescott Chamber of Commerce Foundation Bluegrass Festival

Proposed for 6/20/26, \$5,000 Grant Request
12,000 Projected Attendance
\$17,000 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

Prescott Film Festival

Proposed for 7/16/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
2,500 Projected Attendance
\$44,000 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts
State film tax credit is helpful with the city's film commission

Prescott Fine Art & Wine Festival

Proposed for 8/2/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
13,000 Projected Attendance
\$11,635 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

Prescott Highland Games & Celtic Faire

Proposed for 9/26/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
4,500-5,500 Projected Attendance
\$22,750 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

Prescott Indian Art Market (PIAM)

Proposed for 9/20/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
2,500 Projected Attendance
31,200 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts
Additional marketing funds from the City were established over 100 years ago, designated in perpetuity for Sharlot Hall Museum and utility expenses, but not for maintenance-related items.

Prescott Shootout

Proposed for 3/21/25, \$3,500 Grant Request
2,500 Projected Attendance
Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts Not Provided
Volleyball tournament; new to grant process

Member Gallagher recused himself from the Prescott's Doc HolliDaze discussion.

Prescott's Doc HolliDaze

Proposed for 8/16/25, \$3,500 Grant Request
250 Projected Attendance
\$8,000 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts
Impressive first time event; marketing efforts with potential for growth

Riddle Rally for Veterans

Proposed for 3/14/26, \$5,000 Grant Request
2,000 Projected Attendance
\$6,000 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts
Appears to be a new event

Solstice Flute Camp and Concert

Proposed for 8/17/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
260 Projected Attendance
\$14,200 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts
First year applicant

TCB Curates/Decompositions & Whale Fall

Proposed for 11/7/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
910 Projected Attendance
\$26,000 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

Watson Lake Car Show & Swap Meet

Proposed for 8/2/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
4,000-6,000 Projected Attendance
\$11,014 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

Wildlights & Animal Sights

Proposed for 11/28/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
1,850 Projected Attendance
7,800 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts
Christmas season through 1/3/26

Yavapai Fair

Proposed for 9/4/25, \$5,000 Grant Request
65,000 Projected Attendance
142,500 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts

Yes Explorers Challenge

Proposed for 5/9/26, \$5,000 Grant Request

500 Projected Attendance
\$15,000 Estimated Monetary Value Marketing Efforts
Concept but may be more appropriate for the school district

This item was for discussion only. No formal action was taken.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chair Christensen adjourned the meeting at 2:39 p.m.

ATTEST:

Margo Christensen, Aug 27, 2025

MARGO CHRISTENSEN, Chair

Arley Tucker

Arley Tucker, Staff Liaison