

Signed

# City of Prescott Tourism Advisory Committee



February 11, 2026 | 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.

### 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 (Arrived at 11:01am)
- Nick Medina - Member
- Michael Pantalone - Member

### 3. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of the January 14, 2026 Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

**MOTION BY MEMBER KELLERMAN TO APPROVE JANUARY 14, 2026 MEETING MINUTES; SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR BRASSARD: PASSED (9 - 0). MEMBER KLINE ABSENT FOR VOTE.**

B. Presentation & Discussion Regarding City Entrance Signs and Message Boards.

Director of Economic Initiatives Heiney introduced the agenda item regarding City entrance signs and message boards and turned the discussion over to Member Pantalone.

Member Pantalone proposed installing "Welcome to Prescott" signage at the five major entrances to the city, highlighting key brand identifiers such as "Arizona's Christmas City" and "World's Oldest Rodeo." He described a clean and simple design focused on "What, When, and Where" messaging to promote upcoming events to both residents and visitors. He suggested the possibility of monthly or annual sponsorships to offset costs or generate revenue and noted the concept could be implemented in phases over a three-year period.

Member Coombs expressed support for the idea and agreed that sponsorship opportunities could be beneficial.

Chair Christensen asked whether there were additional ideas from the Committee and noted that costs and labor would be associated with the project. She questioned whether implementation would be feasible in FY27.

Mr. Heiney explained that the signage would be considered a capital expense and that FY27 funding may be challenging. He stated that staff could research costs, potential locations, and other requirements and return to the Committee with additional information. He noted that staff would take direction from TAC before presenting the concept to Council for approval and that no formal action was required at this time.

Member Medina expressed concern regarding marketing return on investment and questioned whether sponsorships would be appropriate. He stated that he was uncertain whether the signage would produce measurable benefits and suggested funds might be better allocated elsewhere.

Mr. Heiney responded that establishing ROI metrics would be helpful in evaluating the project's effectiveness.

Member Medina also stated that funding for the signage would likely be a city expense rather than a TAC expense.

Member Pantalone referenced an estimated monthly cost and reiterated that the overall goal would be to welcome visitors and communicate current information about the city.

Member Dawson noted that the proposal represents a media allocation within the City's welcoming strategy and stated that significant analysis would be required, particularly regarding state and local roadway regulations. He questioned whether the boards would be static or changeable and emphasized the need to consult external entities regarding legal requirements. He added that driver view time would be limited and that the project would require considerable resources to develop, suggesting it may be more appropriate as a longer-term initiative when funding allows.

Chair Christensen stated that she supports the welcoming concept but questioned whether the signage would qualify as tourism promotion if visitors are already entering the City. She asked whether funding would come from Bed Tax revenues or the General Fund.

Member Kline asked whether there are currently "Welcome to Prescott" signs at City entrances.

Mr. Heiney stated that there is one existing sign and that staff is currently researching ownership.

Member Kline commented that welcoming signage like the Las Vegas model could be beneficial.

Councilman Ruby suggested that signage could potentially be considered an in-kind contribution under the Special Events Funding Policy.

Mr. Heiney asked for direction from the Committee.

Member Dawson reiterated that staff could evaluate statutory requirements, consult with outside experts, develop conceptual options, and determine associated costs and potential placement within an upcoming fiscal year budget.

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

#### C. Presentation & Discussion Regarding Utility Bills at Sharlot Hall.

Director of Economic Initiatives Heiney presented the discussion regarding utility bills at Sharlot Hall Museum and provided historical context. He explained that the city has maintained an agreement with the Prescott Historical Society since 1917 to provide certain services, including payment of utility bills at Sharlot Hall. He noted that City Council reviewed and approved the current contract in 2023, effective July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2028, consistent with the longstanding historical agreement.

Mr. Heiney stated that the expense is currently paid through Bed Tax funds, with a typical allocation of up to \$10,000 annually, though expenditures rarely reach that amount. For FY26, the total to date is \$1,858.85, which remains well below the budgeted amount. He added that the item may return to Council for future consideration.

Executive Director and Acting Curator of Sharlot Hall Museum Stuart Rosebrook distributed historical supporting documents and expressed appreciation for the Museum's longstanding partnership with the City of Prescott. He noted that the relationship dates to 1907, referencing Sharlot Hall's first fundraising event at the Elks Theatre for the Governor's Mansion, and reiterated that a formal agreement has been in place since 1917.

Mr. Rosebrook stated that the agreement describes the arrangement as irrevocable and permanent and confirmed that the City's responsibility is not to exceed \$10,000 annually for water and electric utilities. He emphasized that this funding, in addition to Tourism Annual Marketing Support and TAC grants, is important to Museum operations and that the organization values its partnership with the City, particularly with major upcoming events.

Member Dawson asked where the agreement references the language “irrevocable and permanent”.

Mr. Rosebrook indicated it appears at the bottom of page three.

Member Dawson further asked whether the updated 2023 agreement reinforces that language and whether the City Attorney could review the matter.

Mr. Heiney stated he was unsure and unable to answer at that time.

Vice Chair Brassard noted that Bed Tax did not exist in 1917 and questioned whether the expense should instead be paid from the General Fund.

Chair Christensen stated that while there is no question regarding the importance of Sharlot Hall, the primary issue is determining the appropriate funding source. She referenced the Bed Tax ballot language, which identifies funding for tourism promotion and development of tourism and recreational facilities, and suggested the General Fund may be more appropriate.

Member Medina agreed and raised a broader question regarding the distinction between maintenance and promotion.

Member Coombs also expressed the opinion that the General Fund should cover the utilities and questioned whether similar requests could arise from other museums.

Member Kline asked for confirmation that museums receive additional marketing support outside of TAC grants.

Mr. Heiney confirmed that a modern contract exists, with marketing support currently capped at \$10,000.

Vice Chair Brassard asked when the utility payments began being funded through Bed Tax.

Mr. Heiney stated staff could review financial records to determine the timeline.

Chair Christensen suggested that the funding source may have shifted approximately 20 years ago when the Bed Tax was established.

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

#### **4. UPDATES**

- A. Discussion & Presentation from Staff Regarding Marketing, Airport, Sales & STR, General Tourism Updates, Grants, Recreation Services, and Council Liaison Update.

Tourism Coordinator Arley McMains presented Experience Prescott website analytics and noted there were no Arizona Office of Tourism co-op updates at this time. She stated the social media report was delayed but will be distributed to TAC once finalized.

Tourism Manager Kelly provided Sales and STR updates through November, reporting total taxable activity down just under 3% and Bed Tax down 1.95%. He stated visitation through 2025, including CoStar and STR data, reflects total trips down approximately 2%, while visitor days, average length of stay, and total visitor spending increased, with total spend reaching approximately \$106 million and average spend up 4%. Average transaction size remained consistent. Monthly STR data showed ADR down 3.7%, occupancy down approximately 1%, and revenue down 3.7%.

Chair Christensen asked whether the STR data reflected only Prescott or included Prescott Valley and surrounding areas.

Mr. Kelly confirmed the data reflects Prescott only. He also shared that staff will host a FAM tour March 12–13 for three Australian and one New Zealand representatives in partnership with the Arizona Office of Tourism, with local site visits including Watson Lake and the Copper Note.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth provided the Council Liaison update, noting the America 250 Liberty Bell will be in Prescott this weekend. She stated a proclamation was read in Council Chambers on February 10, 2026, and will be read again on February 14, 2026, and encouraged businesses to decorate storefronts in a patriotic theme. She also reported that the Rodeo Fairgrounds Master Plan is underway, with a public meeting held February 2, 2026. She explained that amendments to the rodeo lease agreement are being considered to allow the City to expend \$15.3 million in state funding without triggering Gift Clause concerns, and that facility-related contracts, such as sound systems, will be forthcoming.

Member Coombs thanked Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth for her assistance with the Liberty Bell event.

Mr. Heiney provided TAC Grant updates, stating Council reviewed the Special Event Policy during a Study Session and that refinements will be made before returning to TAC for approval and direction.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth added that updated ordinances for city committees were approved, establishing a foundation of 11 members and revising the Council representative requirement to one member of the general public, as Councilmembers are unable to vote.

Mr. Heiney reviewed the TAC Grant process and upcoming deadlines.

Chair Christensen asked whether the March 5 grant meeting is required.

Mr. Heiney clarified it is optional but strongly encouraged.

Member Dawson asked about scheduling alignment with TAC meetings.

Mr. Heiney stated staff has maintained consistency with prior years.

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

B. Presentation & Discussion Regarding Updates from Committee Members Related to Business & Tourism in Prescott

Member Dawson inquired about the proper procedure for providing future Committee Member updates.

Mr. Heiney explained that open-ended announcements may present Open Meeting Law concerns and requested that special event updates be submitted in advance for inclusion on the agenda.

Member Dawson also shared observations from a recent visit to Portugal, noting it as an example of overtourism and stating Prescott can grow strategically without reaching similar visitor levels.

Member Kellerman announced an upcoming exhibit and sale.

Chair Christensen reported that visitation and business activity appear to be rebounding following a recent government shutdown, after experiencing slower months.

Member Medina confirmed business has been slower as well and noted an upcoming Valentine's Dinner event at Prescott Pines Inn.

Member Gallagher highlighted a Teddy Roosevelt program scheduled for February 27 focusing on the Rough Riders, the Teddy Roosevelt Library in Medora, North Dakota, and related America 250 programming. He also announced a Route 66 Centennial event planned for May 2 at Hazeltine and noted a special America 250 window display at the Center this weekend.

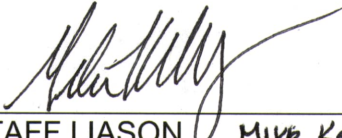
Member Coombs reminded the Committee that the Liberty Bell and Valentine's Day events are occurring this weekend, with multiple related activities taking place.

Member Pantalione shared that he met with representatives from the Arizona Sports & Entertainment Commission and the Arizona Sports Hall of Fame Commission regarding a potential future Arizona Sports Hall of Fame location. He stated Prescott was suggested as a possible site and was received positively. He also noted discussions with Cress Insurance Group leadership about potentially establishing a Prescott office in coordination with the Hall of Fame concept, with further exploration anticipated following the Hall of Fame induction ceremony scheduled for April 9, 2026.

***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 11:59 a.m.



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STAFF LIASON *MIKE Kelly*

*Margo Christensen*

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MARGO CHRISTENSEN, CHAIR