



Mission: Promote the City as a destination
to increase tourism and business development

Committee Members: Bill Boyce, Chair, Tim Higgins, John Casey, Barbara Smith,
David Kwok, Andrew Hutchison, Andrea Keikkala
City Staff: Ben Wolters, Julie Pulliam

**SPECIAL MEETING
December 4, 2017
CHANGE OF MEETING LOCATION
Ducleaux Cellars
West Valley Business Park
19219 68th Ave. S. Suite M-110
Kent, WA**

**AGENDA
4:00 p.m.**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Speaker(s)</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Time</u>
1.	Welcome & Introductions Ducleaux Cellars Owner	NO	Bill Boyce Toby Turlay		2 min.
2.	Approval of September 25, 2017 Minutes	YES	Bill Boyce		2 min.
3.	Budget Update	NO	Ben Wolters		5 min.
4.	JayRay Presentation - VisitKent.com	YES	Bridget Baeth		35 min.
5.	Vacant LTAC Position	NO	Ben Wolters		5 min.
6.	Ask – Washington Open Invitational Golf Tournament - \$12,800	YES	Jeff Ellison Chief Executive Officer		10 min.
7.	Ask – First Washington \$5,000	YES	Erin McCallun		10 min.
8.	Next Meeting				
9.	Adjournment				

Approval Pending

Date: September 25, 2017
Time: 4 p.m.
Place: Centennial North & South
Attending: Committee & Chair; Bill Boyce, Andrew Hutchison, Andrea Keikkala, Barbara Smith, Tim Higgins
City Staff & Guests; Ben Wolters, Julie Pulliam, Michelle Wilmot, Erin Buck, Colin Campbell, Jason Thomsen, Bridget Baeth, Florin Mehedint, Ryan Millard, Mike Raven

Agenda: Called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm

1. Welcome & Introductions & Corrections

Welcome and introductions
Move item #5 to item #7

2. Approval of the June 26, 2017 Minutes

Andrea Keikkala moved to approve the June 26, 2017 minutes and Tim Higgins seconded, motion passed 6-0.

3. Budget

Ben presented the budget as printed in the packet, showing the operating budget as well as the Lodging Tax Revenue shown from month to month. Wolters explains that the YTD Revenue is 8% above 2016. It is expected for \$300,000 in revenue by the end of 2017, which would mean \$20,000 in additional revenue if the current pace is kept. There is also the potential of three new hotel locations in the next three years, Holiday Inn Express, Extended Stay and the City Sale of the Naden Site, which has tremendous interest to the hotel market.

4. JayRay Presentation- VisitKent.com

Site re-designs:

JayRay redesigned the existing site to inspire Kent as a choice, and to tell the story that goes beyond the businesses, and into the community. The new site encourages overnight stays, offering a three day itinerary to nearby places in Kent. The re-design targets lowering the site bounce rate of 87%, which measures viewers who leave the site after looking at the first page. By using simple and clean presentation, JayRay hopes to reduce that number, and keep visitors on the Visit Kent site.

Word Press is the software used to design the new website; it includes its own search engine optimization which will help Kent be found as an option for food, dining and hotel stays. A search bar at the top of the page will also be added, a feature that the previous site did not have. This will help visitors better pinpoint the information that they need. Viewers can now enjoy a mobile responsive site as well, which means the page will adjust in size and dimensions specific to the type of device being used (laptop, I-Phone, Tablet).

The addition of an events calendar will be used on the new website; this calendar can import from your own personal calendar, as well as be used for re-occurring events. The re-design will also be integrated with TripAdvisor to pull in hotel and restaurant

Approval Pending

listings. Using TripAdvisor allows information to be current and up to date as they manage things like closures, address changes and hours. TripAdvisor is also a fair way to display rankings for businesses based on customer reviews and quality. They use an algorithm that accounts for the number of reviews against the quality of reviews, and generates a rating for the establishment.

Website Demo/Templates:

The new site offers interactive templates that allow you to hover, search and include moving photos, as well as the integration of photos from social media. Another interactive addition is through an active map that shows viewers close attractions in the area of Kent, such as the Space Needle and popular cities such as Portland, Oregon.

The integration of Trip Advisor will be displayed through cards that will be listed based on the ranking established by TripAdvisor. The cards will populate in order and the viewer will be able to see things like ratings, addresses, hours and photos.

Feedback: The committee feedback focused on the algorithm used by TripAdvisor for hotel rankings. The worry is that there would too much faith placed on reviews that could easily be skewed with inaccurate and false statements. JayRay representatives assured the committee that these reviews would be the average of all reviews and represent current market best practices.

Bill Boyce would like JayRay to research more information on how TripAdvisor calculates their ratings, and how they account for outliers and possible false reviews. This information will be emailed to members in the coming weeks, in preparation for the Visit Kent website going live on October 16th.

5. Vacant LTAC Position

Wolters explains the vacant position at the Marriott Town Suites and plans to reach out to new management. Wolters also will reach out to the new General Manager with Ramada Inn, as there may be two vacant positions to fill. Wolters will report the finding of the vacancies at the next meeting.

6. Next Meeting Date December 4, 2017

Bill Boyce announces the next meeting date of 12-4-17, to allow for personal holiday schedules as well as tourism schedules.

Next Meeting

December 4, 2017 @ 4 p.m.

Meeting adjourned

5:15 p.m.

Submitted

Julie Pulliam, LTAC Secretary

Lodging Tax Operating Fund
as of October 31, 2017

	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Adjusted Budget	2017 YTD	2017 Est. Actual	2018 Adopted Budget
Beginning Fund Balance	371,803	394,516	472,260	469,386	469,386	415,200
Revenues						
Lodging Tax	279,466	293,347	280,500	256,757	284,000	286,110
Miscellaneous Income	411	1,512	500	3,687	4,000	500
Total Revenues	279,878	294,859	281,000	260,444	288,000	286,610
Expenditures						
Services & Charges	10,000	10,311	16,560	5,588	16,560	17,190
Marketing	144,977	166,191	168,000	157,279	168,000	168,000
Projects & Events	23,665	25,000	75,000	25,000	25,000	15,000
Chamber	18,500	18,500	18,500	13,875	18,500	18,500
ShoWare Branding & Marketing	60,022	(13)	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
Total Expenditures	257,164	219,989	338,060	261,741	288,060	278,690
Change in Fund Balance	22,713	74,870	(57,060)	(1,297)	(60)	7,920
Ending Fund Balance	394,516	469,386	415,200	468,089	469,326	423,120

Lodging Tax Revenue by Month

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Variance	% of Change
January	12,759	13,395	13,336	16,651	17,552	18,474	922	5.3%
February	10,621	10,886	12,550	13,424	14,410	15,163	753	5.2%
March	14,020	11,641	13,004	13,870	16,517	17,130	614	3.7%
April	12,828	13,023	14,787	14,512	17,505	19,187	1,682	9.6%
May	14,285	14,764	16,742	17,421	18,210	21,895	3,685	20.2%
June	13,681	14,664	15,636	17,213	21,337	21,174	(163)	-0.8%
July	15,267	17,290	20,058	22,598	23,960	25,904	1,944	8.1%
August	5,202	23,152	26,947	34,809	33,870	36,793	2,923	8.6%
September	25,468	28,734	33,976	38,364	38,142	39,246	1,104	2.9%
October	25,742	31,628	35,047	37,780	39,611	41,791	2,180	5.5%
Year to Date	\$ 149,873	\$ 179,177	\$ 202,084	\$ 226,642	\$ 241,113	\$ 256,757	\$ 15,644	6.5%
November	19,629	19,525	24,710	29,028	31,007			
December	18,469	18,916	22,583	23,796	20,474			
Full Year	\$ 187,971	\$ 217,618	\$ 249,377	\$ 279,466	\$ 292,594	\$ 256,757	\$ 15,644	5.3%
% Change:	2.8%	15.8%	14.6%	12.1%	6.4%			



**Kent Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
2017-2018 Funding Request Application**

The Lodging Tax Advisory Committee's Mission:

Promote the City as a destination to increase tourism and business development.

Guidelines for applying for grants from the City of Kent's Lodging Tax Advisory Committee

Who may apply?	Youth and amateur sports associations, schools, teams Community/regional events organizations, business/trade associations, event associations and individuals. Approved Tourism Facilities.
How to submit?	Complete and submit applications on line, or at a Lodging Tax Advisory Committee Meeting, or mail a completed original grant proposal form plus two copies to the address below.
Where to submit?	City of Kent 220 4 th Ave. S. Kent, WA 98022 Attn: Julie Pulliam
When are the deadlines?	July 1, 2018 and September 1, 2018 with funds to be distributed as requested in approved application.
What is the grant size? Lodging	Between \$250.00 and \$5,000.00, however, the Tax Advisory Committee reserves the right to establish any grant amount it sees fit, regardless of the amount applied for.
Where can I direct questions?	Call Julie Pulliam at 253-856-5702

Each grant will be judged against specific criteria. The committee will review the extent to which the proposed project is consistent with the strategic goals of the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee and shows potential for tourism and hotel stays.

OBJECTIVES:

The Lodging Tax Advisory Committee's 3 Strategic Goals

- Creating Partnerships
- Branding Kent as a Destination
- Sports Commission

1. Who else is funding this project? Funding comes from player entry fees and numerous sponsorships.
2. What is the total budget for this project? Total budget between the pro-am and championship is \$205,000.
3. How does your project fit with the goals of the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee?
 - Creating Partnerships
 - Branding Kent as a Destination
 - Sports Commission

~~This event brings a professional golf event to Meridian Valley Country Club in both a two day pro-am and a three day 54 hole championship. Golf is promoted heavily including a military clinic on Saturday morning. The event is promoted to and brings players from five states to Meridian Valley Country Club – Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska.~~

4. How many night stays do you anticipate generating from your project?
 Seventy-seven of our 165 players in the championship are from more than 50 miles from Kent and all will need to stay a minimum of 2 nights with 75% staying 3 nights. This will total 211 room nights when added to our 22 staff nights we anticipate 233 room nights.

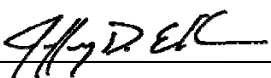
Project Name: Washington Open Invitational

Project Background: The Washington Open Invitational is a 54 hole championship conducted since 1923 by the Pacific Northwest Section PGA of America. Players compete in a two-day pro-am involving 145 players followed by the three day championship with 165 players. The event supports the Folds of Honor Foundation (www.foldsofhonor.org) and has raised over \$60,000 each of the last two years for this important charity. In addition to the lodging revenue players are only engaged at the course for about 6 hours of their day and will spend their time in the many restaurants in Kent as well.

Project Leader: Name and Title Jeff Ellison, Chief Executive Officer

Contact email jellison@pgahq.com

Contract phone 360-456-6496

Signature 

Other individuals involved in writing and/or implementing this grant:

Name: _____	Title: _____	Contact: _____
Name: _____	Title: _____	Contact: _____
Name: _____	Title: _____	Contact: _____

Amount requested: \$ **12,800** _____

DEADLINE FOR APPLYING (please circle one): July 1, 2018 or September 30, 2018

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On a separate page(s), briefly describe the project you are proposing in two parts. In the first part, please briefly (in 250 words, or less) provide an overview of your project, (1) including how the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee's goals will be met, (2) how the funds will be used and how you will be able to track hotel stays and what your methodology for tracking will be. Catalogs, pictures or brochures are appropriate to demonstrate equipment, supplies or other items(s) requested.

In the second part, please specifically address the following in your proposal:

How many room nights do you expect to collect? Have you asked for money in the past? What were the results? How many overnight stays did the event create?

Where and when will the project take place? Please include start and completion dates?

What will benchmark the project's progress?

Please limit your entire application response to two pages.

FINAL REPORT

If your request is granted for funding from the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) you will be expected to provide at the next LTAC meeting after your event a full report on your final project with the number of stays created. And a completed 2015-2016 Event or Tourism Facility Lodging Tax Expenditure Report Form.

Attached: Form

Approved for funding _____

Declined funding _____



PGA

Pacific Northwest Section

Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC)

The Washington Open Invitational is a 54 hole championship conducted since 1923 by the Pacific Northwest Section PGA of America. PGA professionals and top amateurs from throughout the Northwest compete in a two-day pro-am involving 145 players followed by the three day championship with 165 players. The event supports the Folds of Honor Foundation (www.foldsofhonor.org) and has raised over \$60,000 each of the last two years for this important charity. The 2017 championship was the fifth straight year Meridian Valley Country Club has hosted the event and two year remain on the contract. We hope to continue our relationship with the membership at Meridian Valley and the support of these funds will naturally assist in that endeavor. In addition to our strong relationship with Meridian Valley many of our sponsors, such as Perfect Drive, Pollard Chiropractic, Skis Painting and Reber Ranch are Kent based businesses. Their support is instrumental in the success of the event.

The room nights will be tracked through a direct survey of our players at registration immediately prior to the event. We have great success collecting very specific data on not only room nights but specific hotels utilized.

Funds provided through this program will assist us with operational costs and will be spent directly with Meridian Valley Country Club for the use of their facility. Our 2018 costs at Meridian Valley will be Course Access \$9,000; Driving Range \$2,000; and also for staff lodging \$1,800.

We have direct access to 1,200 PGA professionals in five states and as appreciation for receiving this funding we will be happy to partner with the city to distribute visitor information to our membership. Not only are these 1,200 PGA professionals likely visitors to the Kent area, each represents on average 400 families that visit their golf course and rely on their PGA professional when planning golf and other travel.

Seventy-seven of our 165 players in the championship are from more than 50 miles from Kent and all will need to stay a minimum of 2 nights with 75% staying 3 nights. This will total 211 room nights when added to our 22 staff nights we anticipate 233 room nights. Additional room nights will be associated with the pro-am competition.

This is our first request for funding.

The event will be conducted at Meridian Valley Country Club, 24830 136th Ave SE, Kent, with activities scheduled over May 18-23, 2018. Our success is measured by our participation – we've been full the last few years; by our donation to charity - \$60,000 each of the last two years and the engagement of our PGA Professionals with the members of Meridian Valley Country Club.



September 25, 2017

City of Kent
Lodging Tax Advisory Committee members
Kent, WA

Attn: Ben Wolters BWolters@kentwa.gov and Julie Pulliman, jpulliam@kentwa.gov

Dear City of Kent's Lodging Tax Advisory Committee,

FIRST Washington (formerly *FIRST* Washington) strives to inspire students in grades K-12th to pursue careers in science and technology by engaging them in exciting, after-school robotics programs. Over 11,000 Washington State students comprising of 1,034 teams compete across all four programs. Of these teams, 629 compete in *FIRST* LEGO League (FLL, 4th-8th grade) and 146 compete in *FIRST* Tech Challenge (FTC, 7th-12th grade).

Founder Dean Kamen, a noted inventor, was worried that our youth were too obsessed with sports heroes and movie stars. Believing that scientists and engineers should also be role models, Kamen set out to create a way to inspire kids to be big thinkers. In *FIRST* Washington's four age-appropriate programs, industry mentors, teachers and parents team up with students not just to build robots, but to build self-confidence and respect, and to teach youth the skills to be our next generation of innovators and community leaders. Evaluations show *students who take part are 50% more likely to go to college and twice as likely to pursue science or engineering.*

Back for the fourth year, we are thrilled to bring the *FIRST* LEGO League and *FIRST* Tech Challenge State Championships to ShoWare Center in Kent on Sunday, February 11, 2018. This event will bring over 1,000 students in grades 4th-12th to Kent and help promote the city's tourism. Students and their families will be travelling to Kent from all of the state. While we do not know specifics as of yet due to the competition schedule, we are confident that we will have many teams from Central and Eastern Washington along with teams from Northwest and Southwest Washington who will advance to these state championships.

FIRST Washington is requesting \$5,000 from the City of Kent's Lodging Tax Advisory Committee to financially underwrite the *FIRST* LEGO League and *FIRST* Tech Challenge State Championships at ShoWare Center. *FIRST* LEGO League and *FIRST* Tech Challenge teams are all meeting and preparing for their exciting seasons of [Hydro Dynamics](#) and [Relic Recovery](#) respectfully.

By the first week of December, we will have information on our website sharing hotel options for teams and families who advance to the FLL and FTC state championships at ShoWare. We will also share information about activities that teams and families can take advantage of during their stay in Kent.

21238 68TH AVE S
KENT, WA 98032
(253)236-9327
FIRSTWA.ORG

With your consideration, *FIRST* Washington is one-step closer to engaging more children of South King County in the sport of science, technology and teamwork. Thank you for your consideration. We have enjoyed working with Tim Higgins and his team at ShoWare over these past three years and look forward to working with them again this year. Should you have further questions about *FIRST* Washington or this proposal, feel free to contact me at erin@firstwa.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erin McCallum".

Erin McCallum
President
206-619-1525 (mobile)