

# **INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, SMALL BUSINESS, AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

## **Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the 2024 Interim**

**July 31, 2024**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The second meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Tourism, Small Business, and Information Technology was held on July 31, 2024, at 1:00 PM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Kim King, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### **Present were:**

Members: Representative Kim King Co-Chair; Senator Max Wise Co-Chair; Representative Phillip Pratt Co-Chair; Senators Gary Boswell, Shelley Funke Frommeyer, Jason Howell, and Mike Wilson; Representatives Chad Aull, Shane Baker, Ryan Dotson, Daniel Fister, Deanna Frazier Gordon, Chris Fugate, Nima Kulkarni, Savannah Maddox, Candy Massaroni, Shawn McPherson, Rachel Roberts, Sarah Stalker, Ashley Tackett Laferty, Nancy Tate, Timmy Truett, Bill Wesley, Richard White, Nick Wilson, and Susan Witten.

Guests: Representative Richard White, House District 99; Jason Slone, President and CEO, Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council, Inc.; Joy Brown, Executive Director, Morehead-Rowan County Tourism; John Sims, Jr., Fleming County Judge/Executive; Van Alexander, Mayor, City of Flemingsburg

LRC Staff: Janine Coy, Austin Johnson, and Sasche Allen.

### **Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2024, meeting was made by Representative Fister, seconded by Senator Wilson, and approved by voice vote.

### **Update on Morehead and Rowan County**

The discussion focused on the workforce development and tourism of the Morehead and Rowan County area. Jason Slone, President and CEO of Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council, Inc., gave an update on the area's workforce shortfalls, industrial development, and Kentucky Product Development Initiative program projects, which includes two build ready sites and two land acquisition projects with a total return on investment of \$143 million. Joy Brown, Executive Director of Morehead-Rowan County Tourism, detailed various tourist attractions and outdoor

recreation opportunities including Daniel Boone National Forest, Cave Run Lake, Kentucky Folk Art Center, Cave Run Story Telling Festival, and Rudy Fest Bluegrass Festival. She discussed the progress of area projects certified through the state's Trail Town initiative, increasing hospitality and dining accommodations, and improvements to the area's visitor center. In addition, the Executive Director said there was an increase in economic impact of \$2 million as a result of receiving American Rescue Plan Act funds and encouraged the members to maintain the one percent state transient room tax.

Chair King commended the speakers' collaborative regional approach to economic development and tourism needs.

Answering a question from Representative Dotson, Ms. Brown confirmed there is an agreement in place with the Army Corps of Engineers that would permit a water feature with the use of an additional partner.

Representative Tackett Laferty said she was impressed after a recent visit to the Morehead area. Mr. Slone made comments about livability improvements in the area.

Replying to Representative Wilson, Ms. Brown confirmed that the area lake is owned by the Army Corp of Engineers. The surrounding area trails are owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

### **Local Tourist and Convention Commissions Legislative Discussion**

John Sims, Jr., Fleming County Judge/Executive, and Van Alexander, Mayor of Flemingsburg, discussed KRS 91A.360 that pertains to the membership of tourist and convention commissions. Proposed changes to the statute include removing "jurisdiction" and replacing it with "county or city".

Answering a question from Senator Boswell, Mr. Sims confirmed any appointed member would have to be approved by either the mayor or judge executive. The appointed individual would still have to reside within the respective county.

Representative Fister said other boards and commissions' appointment processes should also be reviewed.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:34 p.m.