**Bellingham Whatcom County Lodging Association**

**Membership Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, February 22, 2021**

**Zoom Call**

**Presided by:** Dana Weber, President

**Call to Order:** 4:02 p.m.

**Adjourned:** 4:53 p.m.

**Members present:**

Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism

Best Western Plus Bellingham

Chrysalis Inn & Spa

Holiday Inn Express Bellingham

Hotel Bellwhether

Inn at Lynden

Four Points by Sheraton Bellingham

Holiday Inn & Suites Bellingham

Bellingham Chamber of Commerce

NW WA Fairgrounds

**Ex Oficio Members Present:**

Washington Hospitality Association

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Ashley Thomasson, Lydia Place**

* Lydia Place helps provide emergency shelter to families in need. Their mission is to make sure no children are staying in cars
* Families needing assistance has more than doubled since the pandemic began. Prior to March 2020, they were helping 45 families, now up to 96 families
  + Of those families, 45% have lost their income due to the Coronavirus Pandemic
* Lydia Place works closely with the Opportunity Council / Worksource to find employment for the families
* They are currently awaiting more housing options to open.
* For more info, or to see how you can help, contact Ashley at [ashleyt@lydiaplace.org](mailto:ashleyt@lydiaplace.org)

**Sandy Ward, Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism**

* $12 million funding going to WTA (Washington Tourism Alliance) to help fund campaigns out of pandemic.
* TPA agreements with Bellingham, Whatcom County and interlocal, have been drafted
  + March 8, 2021 is City hearing
  + March 9, 2021 is County hearing
  + March 11, 2021 notice will go out
  + March 22, 2021 Public Hearing at approximately 7:00pm
* Sandy is requesting properties to give testimonials for Public Hearing. Please contact Sandy for more info.
* In order for assessment to begin July 1st, 2021, everything needs to be to WA Dept of Revenue by 4/16/21. Unfortunately at this point that does not seem likely.
  + This would delay beginning of collection assessment until 1/1/22 at the earliest.

**Amy Spain, Washington Hosptiality Association**

* WHA is currently working on quite a bit of legislation to help hotels and restaurants in need. This includes B&O tax reductions, getting vaccines prioritized and much more. For more info, contact Amy to see how we can help.

**Other Business**

* + Karen Kildall Occhiogrosso from the NW WA Fair mentioned they will be having music on 3/5-3/6. Whatcom Health Department has given ok and is watching to see how things go.
  + Guy Occhiogrosso from the Bellingham Chamber brought up possible sales tax increases may be coming. More info to follow.
  + Sandy Ward asked Kristen Keltz about updates on Tulip Festival. Since this is considered Agro-tourism, capacity limits not enforced, but social distancing/masks mandates still apply. Some events will not happen, such as Mount Vernon street fair, which has been delayed till October 2021. Online ticket sales have started and more info can be found on the Tulip Festival Website [www.tulipfestival.org](http://www.tulipfestival.org).
  + Dana Weber mentioned updates on other events through June that have been cancelled, including Linuxfest, Ski to Sea and WWU Graduation as Virtual only.

**Meeting Adjourned**

**Next Meeting: *Monday, March 22nd, 2021 via Zoom, 4-5pm***