

**CITY OF KALAMA
CITY COUNCIL MARKETING WORKSHOP
MARCH 7, 2007**

Mayor Pete Poulsen opened the meeting at 6.05 pm. Councilmembers present were Adam Smee, Dominic Ciancibelli (arrived at 6:18pm), Chuck Hutchinson(arrived 6:27 pm), Donald Purvis, and Bud Gish. City staff present were Director of Public Works Carl McCrary and Clerk/Treasurer Coni McMaster. Members of the audience are listed on the sign in sheet.

Mayor Poulsen introduced Merry Swanberg, marketing specialist for the Port of Kalama. Ms. Swanberg stated that this will be a very informal workshop where she will learn what it is the City wants to accomplish and their expectations. Does the City want to recruit new businesses or bring more business to the existing business. Obviously, with the planned downtown project, the commercial area is being focused on. She believes that Kalama has a very rich history, but people from other areas are really unaware of where Kalama is. Kalama also has a cultural heritage that needs to be promoted. She asked what marketing is already being done in Kalama?

Former Chamber President Shanara Schmidt noted that the Chamber has a marketing committee. They created a logo and produced hats and t-shirts which are sold throughout the town. In 2006 the Chamber had a "rack card" printed and distributed along the coast and I-5. Ms. Swanberg asked how the return on the cards is figured. It is still new and the Chamber is working on determining the results.

Mayor Poulsen stated that he would like to see the City get the Kalama name out there. The tourism fund is funded by the hotel/motel taxes it receives, which with one motel is not a great amount of money. These funds can only be used for tourism functions, but are really limited to promotion costs by state laws. He would like to see the City get some radio or TV advertising for more exposure. Ms. Swanberg stated that what makes Kalama unique needs to be determined. This could be one thing or several different things. It was noted that the current business economy here is very tough, and it seems that many residents shop outside of town. There needs to be more local support of the businesses. There is no area in the downtown for the City to expand to, to provide more areas for commercial growth. Getting the business community involved will be a key to successfully marketing Kalama. Improving customer service, staying open later hours, working to support each other, and getting attention will be important. Most local businesses are owned by local people and not large corporations. Small businesses don't have the financial strength of franchise corporations. Competition can be good for business and if they encourage one another with a little give and take, all the businesses can prosper.

There was much discussion over the hour on many items. Design criteria for the downtown has always been a desire, but with many different eras already represented throughout the town, it would be hard to pick just one style. There are also some costs and some red tape regarding historical buildings and preservation that create more hassles for the building owners. It was noted that some kind of motto needs to be developed to help draw locals to the downtown. "Dine Downtown" was suggested, but it was conceded that something more positive would be better. Bringing in "branded" products or franchises was tossed out. While many feel that franchises like McDonalds would be bad for the small businesses, there is the pull that these familiar names have that draw people. It was suggested that if Kalama can

market its charm, a franchise isn't necessary. Another option would be to get something more trendy, or a little different. Marketing the community beyond the special events is important. You can get people here for an event, but it is the atmosphere and the customer service that will draw them back. The new casino south of town will have more traffic flow on I-5, and Kalama needs to be able to pull some of that traffic off the freeway.

Ms. Swanberg noted that there are many types of free publicity and with a small budget, the City should concentrate there. Public access television and radio or travel magazines may work. She thanked the Mayor and Council for allowing her to participate in this and provided the Council with some handout materials. There is still a long way to go to figure out what way Kalama needs to go. Mayor Poulsen asked Ms. Swanberg if she is willing to come back, and she indicated she would. She now has information that she can use to begin. The one question the City will need to answer is: What is unique about Kalama, or what do want Kalama to be known for? Another workshop will be scheduled in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Poulsen adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m. These minutes are not verbatim. A copy of the tape can be made available for listening.

/s/
Pete Poulsen – Mayor

/s/
Coni McMaster - Clerk/Treasurer