

1. Call to Order

Chair Janice Larson called the meeting to order at 7:34 am.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Chair acknowledged our presence on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded $t\acute{m}x^w\acute{u}la\lambda x^w$ (land) of the syilx / Okanagan people who have resided here since time immemorial. We recognize, honour, and respect the syilx / Okanagan lands upon which we live, work, and play.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Minutes of October 23, 2024, unanimously approved.

4. Airport Update

Tonja Molina, Manager, Senior Manager of Commercial & Business Development, Kelowna International Airport

Christie Judson, Business Development & Community Relations Manager, Kelowna International Airport

The airport representatives gave an update on air service, airport infrastructure and 2025 initiatives. YLW is the largest municipally owned airport in Canada which is a unique advantage. It is the 10th busiest airport in Canada. There has been a 103% passenger recovery rate since the pandemic. Terminal expansion, 5-star hotel and parkade developments are in the works.

See attached presentation

Discussion: Combined inbound and outbound travelers are at 2.3 million.

Advantages of a municipally owned airport include partnership leveraging and intergovernmental grant funding.

Personal, tourism, and business-related travel constitute approximately 1/3 each of the total volume.

There was a dip in passenger numbers in June/July/August, however total passenger numbers were up compared to the year before. This may have also been affected by the WestJet strike.

Tourism accommodation changes don't seem to have impacted the number of airport travellers.

Visitor spending is on par with last year, hotel and AirBnB occupancy were up slightly as well.

Fires were less impactful this year related to travelling here during the summer and may have affected numbers.

Some grant funding was received for timber for the new building projects.

YLW spends their funding on the areas that will have the most impact related to strategic priorities and supporting the regional economy. They've seen success in working with large partnerships and co-op funded campaigns with industry and airport contributions.

Innovation highlights include self-baggage tagging, new security methods looking at best-practices, and sustainability efforts have been significant. LED upgrades, renewable T-cell supply, geothermal heating and cooling, solar plant for combined operations building, electric vehicles, rooftop units

converted from natural gas to electric, an organic waste program, and a glycol mitigation program. They won an award in environmental leadership recently.

Tourism opportunities for families of post-secondary students could be packaged and partnerships developed with the institutions.

Communications from groups like the Advisory Committee and its members about their business needs and data sharing are good ways to keep in touch with YLW.

The airport also plays an important role in the Not in my City program to eradicate human trafficking. All airport employees are trained to recognize and alert if they suspect a human trafficking occurrence. There's an annual campaign and refresher course to keep awareness high. This resource is available to all.

5. *Preparing for Major Events: Next up, the 2025 Montana's Brier!*

Chris Lewis, Director of Destination Development, Tourism Kelowna

The Brier is one of the largest curling events in the world and we're excited to be hosting the 10-day event here in Kelowna this winter. The Canadian Country Music awards and Country Music week will be happening here next fall.

See attached presentation

Discussion: The event has a significant televised presence and will provide an economic boon to our communities. There will be plenty of opportunities for collaboration with this event. We need to engage the community to get the word out and get people excited about the benefits of living, working and playing here. All sectors can participate such as post-secondary students during reading break, local producers, hospitality industry, etc. What leaves a good feeling at an event or location is also seeing progressive sustainability consciousness aspects. Visitors can find information about surrounding communities and their businesses on the Tourism Kelowna website curling page.

Collateral materials are available to get younger people involved as well. Contact sara@tourismkelowna.com for collaboration or partnership opportunities.

6. *COEDC Activity Update*

Krista Mallory, Manager, EDC

The COEDC has had a very busy year and is tracking well on our goals. A year-to-date update showed that we're attending and supporting businesses and events at a rate of ~1 every 1.5 days! Our newsletter reaches a significant audience, and digital marketing is going strong. One priority was focusing on talent and workforce development and running our Okanagan Young Professionals program in-house has been a great shift to continue building on those successes. We'd like to highlight a workforce profile project that we're applying for funding for next year's programming. Our goal is to look at the workforce we have and skills that are here now, who's retiring in 5-10 years, and identify what industries and training programs we need going forward. Our OKGo campaign has been updated and includes a new sector with indigenous businesses. We held 2 manufacturing meet-ups and 2 familiarization tours in the tech/aerospace and education sectors this year.

See attached presentation

Action Items for Advisory Committee: hosting themed events during the Brier, marketing about that ahead of time, sponsorship opportunities, setting up a themed display in your place of business, promoting future regional events during the Brier to entice attendees to return.

7. New Business

- Thank you to past-Chair James Calissi for his years of service on the Advisory Committee and Executive.
- Kelowna Chamber has appointed new CEO George Greenwood.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 am.
