

Salem Cultural and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board

**Laura Tesler**

Occupation: Biologist

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Ward: 2

Date Applied: 4/1/2017 8:39:58 PM

Business Name:

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Supplemental Answers:

**Have you attended a meeting of the Cultural and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board? If yes, how many?**

Yes I have attended many meetings of the TOT Board in the past. I have attended 4 or 5 TOT meetings themselves and then I have attended several City Council Budget hearings where the TOT funds were discussed.

**Please list the citizen advisory committees, civic, charitable or other organizations upon which you have served including the dates and length of service.**

Salem City Council, Ward 2 representative, 2006-2014 Salem Budget Committee, 2006-2014; Boards and Commissions, 2013-2016; other various task forces and committees as needed and appointed Salem Arts Association Board of Directors, 2015- present Oregon Chapter Wildlife Society, President-Elect, 2017-present; Legislative Committee Chair 2015-2017 American Fisheries Society, Hutton Committee Chair 2015-present

**What do you believe you can contribute to the Cultural and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board?**

I believe I bring a mixture of common sense, unbiased approach, knowledge of TOT spending limitations and applications and a willingness to listen, communicate, and be transparent in TOT funding decisions. TOT dollars are limited and should be carefully applied using established rules and ordinances to guide dispersal to eligible parties.

**In your opinion, what do cultural amenities such as Bush House, Deepwood Estate, Historic Elsinore Theatre or the Hallie Ford Museum of Art contribute to our community and quality of life?**

These amenities bring in revenue to Salem businesses and more importantly, bring cultural appreciation to Salem residents. These institutions bring accessible art and cultural programming to a wide and diverse spectrum of residents both young and old. Most importantly they often bring in many visitors to Salem who will spend money in and around the Salem area making a ripple effect that spreads far beyond TOT contributions.

**In your opinion, are there any opportunities in Salem to improve its image as a tourism destination?**

There are many opportunities to improve Salem as a visitor destination and many of the cultural amenities are designing their programming to attract different types of visitors that may have been overlooked in the past- such as families, millennials, and minorities. There are many exciting ideas to increase arts programming to appeal to visitors along with festivals, art fairs, and historical applications.

**Please explain your interest in serving on the Cultural and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board.**

I am interested in the correct, fair, and equitable dispersal of funding to non profit groups in the Salem community who are eligible to receive them. I am interested in encouraging fresh ideas that will appeal to a different and perhaps non traditional type of visitor. New times require new ideas.

**What is your understanding of the role of the Cultural and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board?**

The role of the TOT Board is to administer funding from the Tourist Occupancy Tax that is collected from visitors who book hotel rooms in Salem. Naturally these funds should stem from the groups who receive funding to assist with operational costs to stage events. A small part of these funds is for "start ups" and there are many new undiscovered opportunities there I feel.

**Please provide a short biographical statement (150 words or less)**

I bring a multitude of experience to this position. I was on Council for 8 years- I understand how the main City budget works and I also understand how the TOT Board functions. I currently sit on the board of one of the amenities who receive TOT funding (and I would of course declare conflict of interest on any decisions concerning that board). I live in Salem, am vested in Salem, and I like the direction Salem is going and want to be active in keeping that momentum going.