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City of Duluth - Communications Office

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SUBJECT: The City of Duluth Proposes 2020 Tourism Tax Allocations

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

The City of Duluth Proposes 2020 Tourism Tax Allocations

[Duluth, MN] As part of the ongoing application process set forth by Mayor Emily Larson in 2017, the City of Duluth proposes next year's tourism tax allocations. Interested applicants were encouraged to apply through the City's website earlier this year, as well as provide a report for organizations that received prior funding from tourism taxes.

"I am proud that we have implemented a thoughtful review process that has included formal submissions for 2020 and a review of impact for entities funded in 2019", said Mayor Emily Larson. "This is the third year we have done a process – before that, it was simply an individual and closed recommendation process made by the mayor. There was no formal request for financials, impact or organizational plan. I'm proud of how we've changed that."

To improve transparency on how allocations are made, this formalized process has improved the City's ability to better understand the need for tourism dollars, while allowing organizations the opportunity to apply for funding, and requiring past recipients to report back on that funding's impact. Recipients have also been asked to participate in Community Days – designated days where Duluthians have an opportunity to enjoy these attractions at free or reduced costs. It is important to the City, and our partners in the tourism industry, that the community can see the benefit that tourism dollars have on our community.

Overall, 22 recipients are proposed to receive tourism tax funding in 2020. Of that, seven of those are obligated to receive funding from things such as contracts, state law, or debt service. There are three new recipients proposed for next year: the Duluth Area YMCA for lifeguard services on Park Point, Ecolibrium3 for marketing and signage in Lincoln Park during the Twin Ports Interchange project, and Zeitgeist for a new bike-share program.

A proposed tourism tax allocation resolution will go before the Duluth City Council at their agenda session this Thursday, November 7th, 2019. Pending a vote at their meeting on Tuesday, November 12th, 2019, these allocations would be distributed to recipients for 2020.

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