



Agenda Date: 1/24/2006
Agenda Placement: 9B

NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Britt Ferguson for Nancy Watt - County Executive Officer
County Executive Office
REPORT BY: Britt Ferguson, Assistant County Executive Officer, 253-4406
SUBJECT: Ratification of Letter Supporting Conference and Visitor's Center Domain Name Application

RECOMMENDATION

County Executive Officer requests the Board consider ratification of a letter to the Tralliance Corporation, supporting the application by the Napa Valley Conference and Visitor's Bureau to be awarded the internet domain name: "Napa.Travel."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Napa Valley Conference and Visitor's Bureau (NVCVB) recently requested that the County endorse their request to be awarded the internet domain name "Napa.travel," as well as other ".travel" domain names. Because of the deadline for applying for this domain name, the Assistant County Executive Officer sent a letter endorsing NVCVB's request, with the proviso that Board ratification would be required. Based on that letter, NVCVB has been awarded the "Napa.travel" domain name.

Subsequent to sending a letter in support of NVCVB's request, County staff learned that the "Napa.travel" domain name is the only one which requires endorsement by the Board of Supervisors. In addition, the Board can change which agency is designated to receive the "Napa.travel" domain name at any time.

Thus the issue before the Board is whether to ratify the Assistant County Executive Officer's letter in support of NVCVB's request. Alternatively, the Board could ask another tourism-related entity to submit an application and endorse that application, or not endorse any application. In the latter case, the "Napa.travel" domain name would be available on a first-come, first-served basis to any travel industry agencies or firms.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Recently, a new internet domain name classification has been established: ".travel." Use of this classification is restricted to people, organizations, associations and private, governmental and nongovernmental agencies in the travel and tourism industry. Until December 30th, there were two ways in which an organization in the tourism industry could obtain a ".travel" domain name: (1) for "pure" place names, like "Napa," a tourism marketing organization could be given the right to the domain name, if the application was endorsed by the highest local elected body; (2) for all other possible ".travel" domain names, names would generally be awarded on first-come, first-served basis (and no endorsement from a local elected body is required). Since January 1, 2006, all ".travel" domain names are awarded to organizations or businesses associated with the tourism industry on a first-come, first-served basis; no local governing body letter of endorsement is required. The Tralliance Corporation acts as the registry for ".travel" domain names.

Toward the end of 2005, the Napa Valley Conference and Visitor's Bureau (NVCVB), contacted the County and asked for a letter of endorsement, supporting their application for the following domain names: NapaValley.travel; NapaCounty.travel; Napa.travel and LakeBerryessa.travel. Because there was insufficient time to obtain Board direction on this matter prior to the December 30th deadline, the Assistant County Executive Officer sent a letter to Tralliance Corporation endorsing NVCVB's request, subject to ratification by your Board (copy of letter attached).

Based on that letter, NVCVB has been awarded the Napa.travel domain name. Staff has learned, however, that the other domain names requested by the NVCVB are not considered "pure" place names and thus are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, to eligible applicants with no requirement for a letter of endorsement from the County. As of January 5, according to Tralliance Corporation staff, the NapaValley.travel domain name had already been applied for by some other organization or company. The other domain names listed above had not been applied for by NVCVB or anyone else.

At this point, then, your ratification of the Assistant County Executive Officer's letter would, effectively, only endorse the NVCVB's request for the Napa.travel domain name. According to Tralliance Corporation staff, your Board can change your endorsement at any time, and the domain name will then be reassigned.

As noted above, the Napa.travel domain name would be awarded on an exclusive basis to whoever the County endorses. So your Board will need to consider whether the NVCVB is the organization you want to have that exclusive right. In addition to the fact that the NVCVB was the only entity to make this request of the County, there is some logic in awarding this domain name to them since both the County and the City of Napa contract with the NVCVB for visitor and tourism marketing activities and the NVCVB's marketing activities encompass the entire County. Other potential applicants might be a chamber of commerce, an industry trade association or even a city. County staff have contacted all of the cities in the County to make them aware of this agenda item.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A . Letter Regarding NVCB's Domain Name Request

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Maiko Klieman