



November 17, 2021

11:30 a.m.

MINUTES OF MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING

THE WOODLANDS CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The Board of Directors for The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau (TWCVB) of Montgomery County, Texas held their Board Meeting on November 17, 2021, at The Woodlands Township located at 2801 Technology Forest Boulevard, The Woodlands, Montgomery County, Texas, 77381 at 11:30 a.m. The roll was called and those in attendance were:

Present: Bruce Rieser, Chairman
John Anthony Brown, Vice Chairman
Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, Director
Jeff Jones, Director
J.J. Hollie, Director
Ted Harris, Director
Cameron Klepac, Director

Absent: Fred Domenick, Secretary/Treasurer
Jenny Taylor, Director

Staff Present: Nick Wolda, TWCVB President; Bret Strong, TWCVB Legal Counsel; Elizabeth Eddins, TWCVB Executive Director; Ashley White, TWCVB Marketing Director; Josie Lewis, TWCVB Director of Sales; Laura Haces, TWCVB Tourism Specialist; Amber George, TWCVB Marketing Specialist; Ashley Fenner, TWCVB Sales & Servicing Specialist; Monique Sharp, The Woodlands Township Assistant General Manager Finance & Administration; Tuan Nguyen, The Woodlands Township HelpDesk Analyst

Attendees: Cindy Decker, Vice President, Business Intelligence and Market Strategy for HoustonFirst;
Ana Cosio, The Woodlands Resident

1. Pledge of Allegiance;
 - Chairman Bruce Rieser led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge to the Texas flag.
2. Call to order and adoption of Agenda;
 - Chairman Bruce Rieser, called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. and called for the Adoption of the Agenda for this meeting that was developed and duly posted as required by law.
3. Public Comment;
 - None.

4. Receive, consider and approve Minutes from September 15, 2021 Special Board Meeting;

Motion by Vice Chairman, John Anthony Brown, seconded by Director Cameron Klepac to approve the Minutes from September 15, 2021 Special Board Meeting. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

5. Receive, consider and act upon the Financial Report through September 2021;

- Chairman Bruce Rieser, called on The Woodlands Township Assistant General Manager Finance Administration, Monique Sharp. In terms of revenue, the total year to date budget for September was \$2,016,046 comparing to the actual revenue of \$1,115,955, resulting in an unfavorable variance of \$900,092 coming from the Supplemental Hotel Occupancy Tax of \$339,020 and the operating transfers' \$411,366 unfavorable variance. The organization is running a favorable variance in expenditures so there has been no need to transfer funds from the Township. In terms of expenditures, the year-to-date budget was \$2,062,386 with an actual of \$1,135,155 resulting in a favorable expenditure variance of \$927,231 due to timing differences. The end fund balance for September 2021 is \$1,405,194. The Hotel Occupancy Tax collections year to date total through October 2021 was at \$4.8 million, showing a 0.5% above what it was budgeted. This was expected as hotels recover from the previous year. Discussion followed. Ms. Sharp indicated a favorable trend and positive forecast.

Motion by Vice Chairman, John Anthony Brown, seconded by Director Ted Harris to accept the CVB Financial Report through September 2021. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

*Dr. Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, Director, arrived during this item at 11:38 a.m.
J. J. Hollie, Director, arrived to the meeting during this item at 11:41 a.m.*

6. Receive, consider and act upon a presentation by Cindy Decker, Vice President, Business Intelligence and Market Strategy for HoustonFirst;

- Elizabeth Eddins, Executive Director, introduced Cindy Decker. Ms. Eddins stated that as part of Visit The Woodlands' partnership with HoustonFirst/ Visit Houston data and analytics review of the Houston and The Woodlands area are available upon request.
- Ms. Decker offered a thorough presentation accounting for the impact of Covid-19 on Houston's corporate, leisure, air travel and international visitation. Discussion followed.
- Ms. Decker stated that The Woodlands has seen a faster recovery than most surrounding areas of Houston.
- Ms. Decker informed the board of directors of possible sporting events to come within our region and/or possible bids.

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Ted Harris to accept the report presentation by Cindy Decker, Vice President, Business Intelligence and Market Strategy for HoustonFirst. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

7. Receive, consider and act upon the request to negotiate a contract for Destination Marketing and Management Reporting Software;

- Ashley White, Marketing Director, provided a presentation to request to negotiate a contract for Destination Marketing and Management Reporting Software.
- Mrs. White explained the software will provide Visit The Woodlands with in-depth information on visitors to The Woodlands, allowing the organization to make educated decisions related to sales and marketing efforts.
- Mrs. White mentioned the software was competitively bid to three similar vendors, with Voyage by Madden Media being the recommended vendor. Discussion followed.

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Ted Harris to approve negotiation on a contract for Destination Marketing and Management Reporting Software with Voyage by Madden Media, not to exceed \$50,000. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

8. Receive, consider and act upon the 2022 Media Allocation Plan;
- Elizabeth Eddins, Executive Director, provided a strategic Media Plan for Visit The Woodlands' 2022 placements.
 - Ms. Eddins stated Visit The Woodlands' marketing approach for 2022 has been established to align with key strategic initiatives – continuing to strengthen brand recognition and voice, showcasing the value of Visit The Woodlands and optimizing overall marketing spending.
 - Ms. Eddins stated the Marketing Department has worked in conjunction with the Sales and Tourism Departments to plan campaigns at optimal times that will best support Visit The Woodlands staff efforts and create the most impact for The Woodlands. Creative campaigns will be activated across numerous channels, targeting both domestic and international leisure travelers as well as meeting planners and businesses.
 - Ms. Eddins stated Visit The Woodlands will work with the Marketing Committee to develop robust marketing campaigns to amplify The Woodlands message further. These items combined with additional support from the agency and enhanced reporting will allow Visit The Woodlands to take advantage of opportunities and provide ROI on marketing investments.
 - The budget allocations for 2022 will be Leisure 55%, Meetings 27%, Cooperative 12% and International 6%.
 - Chairman Bruce Rieser, stated that the plan was well done but directed staff to add an additional \$250,000 to Media Plan. Chairman Rieser stated that it was time to push the message and efforts more aggressively and that only comes with advertising.

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Ted Harris to approve the 2022 Media Plan with an additional \$250,000. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

9. Receive, consider and act upon the 2022 staff travel and participation in support of Sales, Marketing and Tourism efforts outside of The Woodlands;
- Elizabeth Eddins, Executive Director, presented the 2022 Sales and PR tradeshows and travel for Visit The Woodlands.
 - Ms. Eddins stated these tradeshows offer Visit The Woodlands staff an opportunity to meet face-to-face with meeting planners and convention decision makers. During these appointments staff highlights the convention amenities that The Woodlands offers. These personal connections help guide business to The Woodlands hotel properties.
 - Ms. Eddins stated Sales, Marketing and Tourism missions could include but are not limited to the ones presented.
 - Ms. Eddins stated that the increase in number and frequency of Convention sales shows was due to the addition of a new Sales Manager staff position.

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Cameron Klepac to approve and authorize staff travel and associated expenditures to include but not limited to the events presented in the 2022 Travel and Tradeshows Plan and in the adopted 2022 Budget. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

10. Receive, consider and act upon the 2022 Visit The Woodlands Board of Directors Meeting Schedule;
- Elizabeth Eddins, Executive Director, presented the dates for the 2022 Visit The Woodlands Board meetings.

Motion by Chairman, Bruce Rieser requested that this item be tabled and brought back at the Annual Board Meeting on January 11, 2022. No vote.

11. Staff Initiative Reports;

- The Sales Department is currently working on 19 leads and 12 Cvent leads, in-person Sales Advisory Committee meeting, and Texas Electric Cooperative Site Tour, from which The Woodlands booked two events. The department continues preparations for a HelmsBriscoe FAM event on September 28th, a hospitality hotel program, the annual All Hotel Partner meeting, and an end of year FAM event. Upcoming tradeshow include TSAE “New Ideas Conference” in September, TACVB “Sales Blitz” in October, “Connect Texas” in October, “IMEX America” in November and “Destination Texas” in December.
- The Marketing Department continued to push advertising with co-op placements with Around Houston and The Woodlands Waterway Marriott. International placements (in Spanish) include “City Magazine” and “Food & Travel Mexico.” Website updates include new content to partner’s information, new tracking to features such as “buy tickets,” “book your climb,” and others. The department continues updates to the “Emergency” microsite on the Visit The Woodlands website. This microsite includes weather alerts, hotel availability, Township news, Covid-19 information and related to help residents and visitor during emergency situations. Lastly, the department updated the Hotel Map collateral, photography for the Embassy Suites, area restaurants and public art.
- The Tourism Department staff assisted and attended the TACVB “2021 Annual Conference” in Conroe, Texas. The department continues to work in partnership with Visit Houston with the “Around Houston” program and “Houston’s Marketplace.” Upcoming tradeshow include “2021 IPW” in Las Vegas.
- Congratulations to Amber George, Marketing Specialist, for receiving the coveted TDM Certification. Visit The Woodlands received several following awards at the 2021 Texas Association of Convention and Visitors Bureau Annual Conference to include “Judges Choice for Convention Promotion,” first place for Convention Promotion, first place for Video. Partner awards include “Travel + Leisure:” Top 10 Resorts in Texas for The Woodlands Resort.

Motion by Vice Chairman, John Anthony Brown, seconded by Director Cameron Klepac to approve the Staff Initiative Reports. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

12. Recess to Executive Session to discuss matters relating to real property pursuant to §551.072, Texas Government Code; deliberation of economic development negotiations pursuant to §551.087, Texas Government Code; discuss personnel matters pursuant to §551.074, Texas Government Code; and to consult with the Corporation's attorney pursuant to §551.071, Texas Government Code;

- Chairman, Bruce Rieser, shared that it would not be necessary to recess to Executive Session.

13. Reconvene in Public Session;

- It was not necessary to reconvene in Public Session.

14. President’s Report;

- Nick Wolda, President, expressed the importance of staying relevant as a destination and thanked the Board for allowing The Woodlands brand to grow stronger every year.
- Mr. Wolda stated that a new administrative analyst had been hired for Visit The Woodlands and she would be starting November 30, 2021.

15. Board Announcements;

- Bret Strong, TWCVB Legal Counsel announced the Strong Firm will host their annual fundraiser event at The Woodlands Skating Rink, where all funds will be donated to Montgomery County services. Mr. Strong mentioned the Ironman has sold out in standard entries, which will increase Hotel revenue.
- Chairman Bruce Rieser, reminded all of the Lighting of the Doves event.
- Cameron Klepac, Director, wanted to mention the Holly Jolly Jingle event at The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. The event is solely programed by young artist/musicians from Conroe I.S.D. December 2, 2021 at 7 pm at The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion.
- Ted Harris, Director, informed The Woodlands Mall LED Christmas tree has been installed in the courtyard, and play lights to the rhythm of music.

16. Agenda items for next meeting;

- None.

17. Adjournment.

Motion by Director Cameron Klepac, seconded by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs to adjourn.
Motion carried by unanimous vote. Adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

DocuSigned by:

Fred Domenick

D3E280357D3C4BD...

Fred Domenick, Secretary/ Treasurer
The Woodlands CVB Board of Directors

1/13/2022

Date