



November 18, 2020

11:30 a.m.

MINUTES OF MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 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 18, 2020 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
Fred Domenick, Secretary/Treasurer
Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, Director
J.J. Hollie, Director
Ted Harris, Director
Jenny Taylor, Director
Cameron Klepac, Director

Absent: Kevin Viteri, Director

Staff Present: Nick Wolda, TWCVB President; Bret Strong, TWCVB Legal Counsel; Elizabeth Eddins, TWCVB Assistant Director; Ashley White, TWCVB Brand Development Manager; Josie Lewis, TWCVB Convention Development Manager; Sonia Guerrero, TWCVB Administrative Analyst; 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

Attendees: Ana Cosio, Resident of The Woodlands

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;

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick to approve the agenda. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Agenda adopted.

Vote: 8 - 0 Passed

Other: Director Kevin Viteri (ABSENT)

Chairman Bruce Rieser called the meeting to order at 11:34 p.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 August 19, 2020 Regular Board Meeting;

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Vice Chairman John A. Brown to approve the Minutes from August 19, 2020 Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 8 - 0 Passed

Other: Director Kevin Viteri (ABSENT)

Chairman Bruce Rieser explained that the Minutes from the August 19, 2020 Regular Board Meeting are in the Board packet for all to evaluate.

5. Receive, consider and approve Financial Report through September 2020;

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Ted Harris to approve the Financial Report through September 2020. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 8 - 0 Passed

Other: Director Kevin Viteri (ABSENT)

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 was \$2,518,724 comparing to the actual revenue of \$1,411,038, resulting in an unfavorable variance of \$1,107,686 due to COVID-19 impact on hotel collections. In response to this, the Visit The Woodlands Board and staff have adjusted the expenditures accordingly. Looking at expenditures, the year to date budget was \$2,567,552 with an actual of \$1,413,097, resulting in a \$1,154,455 favorable expenditure. The Hotel Occupancy Tax report showed a year to date decrease of 55 percent. Discussion followed.

6. Receive, consider and act upon an update to the 2021 Visit The Woodlands budget;

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Vice Chairman John A. Brown to approve staff to revise operational spending of Visit The Woodlands in 2021 based on a 40% reduction of the collection of hotel tax from the original 2020 Budget Projections. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 8 - 0 Passed

Other: Director Kevin Viteri (ABSENT)

Nick Wolda summarized that the 2021 budget was presented with a 15% reduction from the previous year. This was approved during the July Board meeting and subsequently approved by the Township Board during the August Township Board meeting. Hot tax collections were down 53.6% through October 2020, and projections are anticipated to be down through Q1 of 2021. After a few months of recovery planning, staff revised the 2021 budget presented in July and is recommending a 40% reduction going into next year, compared to 2020. The Sales Department's budget will be reduced from \$287,000 to \$237,000, the Marketing Department's budget will be reduced from \$1,424,000 to \$594,000 and the Strategic Partnership's budget will be reduced from \$315,000 to \$290,500. Being conservative with the budget during the pandemic will allow the organization to better plan going into Q2 and Q3 of 2021. A PowerPoint was presented with a summarized budget for Sales, Marketing and Tourism Department initiatives for 2021. Discussion followed.

7. Receive, consider and act upon a membership to the Texas Hotel Lodging Association group listing partnership;

No action was taken on this item.

8. Receive, consider and act upon the 2021 Media Placement Plan;

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Vice Chairman John A. Brown to approve the 2021 Media Plan for Visit The Woodlands as presented at a cost not to exceed \$430,000. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 8 - 0 Passed

Other: Director Kevin Viteri (ABSENT)

Ashley White provided the background on 2020 Media efforts. After the Board directed staff to halt all advertising efforts in March 2020, the Marketing Departments was able to capitalize on reactivating some advertising efforts during the summer in alignment with the three-phase "Covid Recovery Plan." Due to a reduced marketing budget, Visit The Woodlands will not be using an Agency of Record for media planning or creative services in 2021. This will be handled in-house by Visit The Woodlands staff, with a small budget being allocated for creative production. Staff recommends the approval of the proposed 2021 Media Plan which is broken down into four major components: Leisure, Meetings, International and Co-op advertising efforts. A PowerPoint was presented summarizing each component.

9. Receive, consider and act upon the 2021 staff travel and participation in support of Sales, Marketing and Tourism efforts outside of The Woodlands;

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Director Ted Harris to approve the Visit The Woodlands President and Chairman of the Board to authorize staff travel and associated expenditures to include but not limited to the events presented in the 2021 Travel and Tradeshow Plan and in the adopted 2021 Budget. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 8 - 0 Passed

Other: Director Kevin Viteri (ABSENT)

Elizabeth Eddins explained that in previous year's staff has been increasingly active participating in sales and tourism shows outside of the region to promote The Woodlands. Staff created a list of proposed tradeshow and media/PR travel for 2021. Many of the tradeshow and missions have not been announced due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. Sales, Marketing and Tourism missions could include but are not limited to the ones presented in the Board packet. Chairman Rieser asked for staff to prepare a list of the shows previously paid for and circulate to Board members. Chairman Rieser asked for staff to develop a list of potential travel for Q1 2021 and present it in January 2021. Discussion followed.

10. Receive, consider and act upon the 2021 Visit The Woodlands Board of Directors Meeting Schedule;

Motion by Vice Chairman John A. Brown, seconded by Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick to approve the 2021 meeting schedule of the Visit The Woodlands Board of Directors. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 8 - 0 Passed

Other: Director Kevin Viteri (ABSENT)

Nick Wolda presented the proposed Board of Directors Regular and Special meeting dates for 2021. The meetings will occur the following days:

- Tuesday, January 12, 2021 (Annual Meeting)
- Wednesday, February 17, 2021
- Wednesday, March 17, 2021 (Special meeting if necessary)
- Wednesday, April 21, 2021
- Wednesday, May 19, 2021 (Special meeting if necessary)
- Wednesday, June 16, 2021
- Wednesday, July 21, 2021 (Special meeting if necessary)
- Wednesday, August 18, 2021
- Wednesday, September 15, 2021 (Special meeting if necessary)
- Wednesday, October 20, 2021
- Wednesday, November 17, 2021 (Special meeting if necessary)
- Wednesday, December 15, 2021

Each meeting will occur at 11:30 a.m. in The Woodlands Township Board Chambers, 2801 Technology Forest Boulevard, The Woodlands, Texas 77381. All dates and times are subject to change.

11. Staff Initiative Reports;

Motion by Vice Chairman John A. Brown, seconded by Director Jenny Taylor to approve the Staff Initiative Report. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

Other: Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick (ABSENT)
Director Kevin Viteri (ABSENT)

Josie Lewis provided a report on the Sales Department. The Sales Department hosted a virtual "FAM" event at The Woodlands Resort with 15 planners in attendance. The Department created three virtual hotel site tour videos, with one completion and two in the works. Staff attended "MPI International Houston" event and staff was able to connect with 15 meeting planners. The Department has hosted monthly virtual Advisory Committee Meetings since Q2. The "Show your badge" program has doubled in participation thanks to Ashley Fenner who oversees sales and servicing for Visit The Woodlands. She has worked in conjunction with the Marketing Department updating resources for planners on how to stay safe while visiting during the pandemic. Staff will have a welcome booth at the "Copa Rayados Internacional" event in November. The Sales Department will participate in Destination Texas virtual event, in the Texas Association of CVB's Sales Blitz in 2021 and will continue to host virtual hotel site tours throughout the end of the year. Next, Ashley White shared an update on the Marketing Department. The Marketing Department reactivated advertising efforts in June 2020 with post-Covid messaging in alignment with the three-phased "Covid Recovery Plan." Advertising efforts in June included a reach of 0-100 mile radius focused on "day-trippers," efforts in mid-late summer included a reach of 100-200 mile radius focused on "overnighters and weekenders," efforts in the fall and holiday months include a reach of 200 plus mile radius and focuses on "vacationers." Through social media, staff has been able to partner with micro-influencers to promote The Woodlands. Ashley White presented a live demo of the new Visit The Woodlands website. The Visit The Woodlands website was re-launched in June 2020 as an "open-for-business" tactic. Q3 website statistics include over 48,000 unique users (up 12%), over 132,000 page views (up 52%), 2.26 pages per session (up 37%), 1:30 average time on site (up 14%), bounce rate down 24% and 576 hotel booking referrals from the new booking engine. Next Elizabeth Eddins and Laura Haces presented the Tourism Department update. Staff participated in a Mexico "FAM" in partnership with Visit Houston and included six journalists from Mexico. Staff has been collecting visitor profile data in partnership with Market Street The Woodlands. Staff continues to service weddings and leisure travelers. Staff participated in the second part of the "Film Friendly" certification webinar to continue to update The Woodlands Film Commission. Staff continues to update locations and is working on a flyer to better promote TWFC. Visit The Woodlands received the following MARCOM awards that honor excellence in marketing and communication. Platinum award for "Summer Getaway Giveaway," Gold award for "The Woodlands Resort Virtual Hotel Tour" and Gold award for "The Woodlands Destination Video."

Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick excused himself from the meeting during this item at 12:45 p.m.

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 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. Receive, consider and act upon 2021 legal services for The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau;

Motion by Vice Chairman John A. Brown, seconded by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs to approve The Strong Firm for The Woodlands Convention and Visitor Bureau's legal counsel for services in 2021 and authorize the President to execute a contract in connection therewith. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

Other: Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick (ABSENT)
Director Kevin Viteri (ABSENT)

Nick Wolda explained that this item included no changes from previous years. Staff recommends that the organization continues to engage with The Strong Firm for legal services in 2021.

15. Receive, consider and act upon a Host Venue Agreement between Visit The Woodlands and The Woodlands Township;

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Jenny Taylor to approve the Host Venue Agreement between Visit The Woodlands and The Woodlands Township. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

Other: Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick (ABSENT)
Director Kevin Viteri (ABSENT)

Nick Wolda mentioned that this item will serve as a ratification to enter into an agreement to approve the Host Venue Agreement. These are in-kind or sponsorship service requests for park usage that have come traditionally to the township. The Township Board has reviewed and approved the agreement included in the packet.

16. Receive, consider and act upon a Service Agreement between The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau, known as Visit The Woodlands, and The Woodlands Township;

Motion by Director Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, seconded by Director Ted Harris to approve the Service Agreement between The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau, known as Visit The Woodlands, and The Woodlands Township. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 7 - 0 Passed

Other: Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick (ABSENT)
Director Kevin Viteri (ABSENT)

Nick Wolda explained that included in the package is the proposed annual funding service agreement and noted that staff will update the funding number to reflect what the Board approved during this meeting.

17. President's Report;

None.

Chairman Rieser excused himself from the meeting during this item at 1:02 p.m.

18. Board Announcements;

Director J.J. Hollie invited everyone to participate in the virtual Taste of The Town that will run throughout the month of January 2021. Visitwoodlandschamber.org for more information. Lighting of the Doves will take place November 21, 2020 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. in The Woodlands Town Green Park. Also, the Ice Rink will open for its 2020 season on November 20, 2020 through January 18, 2021. Director Ted Harris announced that the construction of The Woodlands Mall courtyard has finished and Shake Shack will open on November 19, 2020. Director Jenny Taylor announced that Market Street The Woodlands will premiere the "Tree lighting" virtual ceremony on November 20, 2020. Market Street is offering a "Safe Santa" option which includes the guests' choice of visiting with Santa Clause by an exclusive appointment or visiting virtually. Also, various restaurants are offering different meal options for the holidays. More information at shopatmarketstreet.com. Director Cameron Klepac provided an update on The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. The Pavilion hosted a movie night in October 2020, with successful attendance and a survey conducted. Similarly, they will host another movie event during the holiday season. In conclusion, the Pavilion is projecting 20 event dates in 2021.

19. Agenda items for next meeting;

The next Visit The Woodlands Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 11:30 am

20. Adjournment.

Motion by Director Jenny Taylor, seconded by Director J.J. Hollie to adjourn. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

Vote: 6 - 0 Passed

Other: Chairman Bruce Rieser (ABSENT)
Secretary/Treasurer Fred Domenick (ABSENT)
Director Kevin Viteri (ABSENT)

DocuSigned by:

Fred Domenick

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

1/13/2021

Date