

April 24, 2019

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 April 24, 2019 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
Don Norrell, Director
J. J. Hollie, Director
Kevin Viteri, Director

Absent: Fred Domenick, Secretary/Treasurer
Brian Boniface, Director

Staff Present: Nick Wolda, TWCVB President; Bret Strong, TWCVB Legal Counsel; Elizabeth Eddins, TWCVB Assistant Director; Ashley White, TWCVB Brand Development Manager; Sonia Guerrero, TWCVB Sr. Administrative Assistant; Laura Haces, TWCVB Tourism Specialist; Mariana Almanza-Cook, TWCVB Sales and Servicing Specialist; Amber George, TWCVB Marketing Specialist; Josie Lewis, TWCVB Convention Development Manager; John Powers, The Woodlands Township Assistant General Manager of Community Services; Monique Sharp, The Woodlands Township Assistant General Manager Finance & Administration

Attendees: Jenny Carattini-Wright, TWAC Interim Dev. Director; Jane Minarovic, Inspire Film Festival Director

I. 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 Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown, seconded by Director J. J. Hollie to approve the agenda. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Agenda adopted.

Vote: 5 - 0 Passed

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 act upon the Proclamation for National Travel and Tourism Week;

Motion by Director J. J. Hollie, seconded by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown to approve a Proclamation for National Travel and Tourism Week from May 5-11, 2019. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 5 - 0 Passed

Chairman Rieser presented a proclamation. Elizabeth Eddins explained that travel and tourism is an asset to The Woodlands, for this reason, the organization will celebrate National Travel and Tourism Week 2019 from May 5-11 with the theme "Travel Matters." In addition, the organization will host games, giveaways, and live drawing from Judith Dollar at Market Streets Spring Fine Arts Show. For more information go to visitthewoodlands.com/NTTW.

5. Consider and approve Minutes from February 20, 2019 Regular Board Meeting;

Motion by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown, seconded by Director Kevin Viteri to approve the minutes from February 20, 2019 carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 5 - 0 Passed

Chairman Bruce Rieser explained that the minutes from the February 20, 2019 Board Meeting are in the Board packet for all to evaluate.

6. Consider and approve Financial Report through February 2019;

Motion by Director Don Norrell, seconded by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown to approve the Financial Report through February 2019. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 5 - 0 Passed

Chairman Bruce Rieser called The Woodlands Township Assistant General Manager Finance and Administration, Monique Sharp, to the podium to present. The total year to date budget was \$422,069 that compares to the actual revenue of \$466,522, resulting in a favorable variance of \$44,453. There was a favorable variance of \$79,860 for operating transfers due to the Supplemental Hotel Tax being less than projected in February 2019. In terms of expenditures, there was an unfavorable variance of \$44,117 because of a timing difference. The CVB had an ending fund balance in February of \$1,516,856. The Supplemental Hotel tax revenue for March 2019 was \$38,577 over from March 2018, with an actual of \$828,427.

7. Receive, consider and act upon an update for the Inspire Film Festival;

Motion by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown, seconded by Director Kevin Viteri to approve the Inspire Film Festival update. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 5 - 0 Passed

Elizabeth Eddins introduced Jane Minarovic, Inspire Film Festival Director. Mrs. Minarovic thanked the Board for being a supporter of the festival, now in its 3rd year. The 5-day festival included 14 documentary full-length films and 17 short films centered around the theme "Game Changers." The festival focused on the film "The Interpreters," which included 20 soldiers and interpreter veterans who traveled to The Woodlands from across the country. Location of venues included Market Street, The Woodlands Township / Pavilion Event Center, Waterway Square, Cinemark Market Street and Tinseltown. For 2019, the festival had 3,817 seats filled, \$322,697 funds raised, 127 volunteers and 146 room night stays. Mrs. Minarovic announced for the year 2020 the theme of the festival will be "Visionaries," as well as focusing on finding a marketing firm to promote in surrounding areas and continue working with local organizations to host additional events.

8. Receive, consider and act upon an update for The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival;

Motion by Director J. J. Hollie, seconded by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown to approve The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival update. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 5 - 0 Passed

Elizabeth Eddins introduced Jenny Carattini-Wright, The Woodlands Arts Council Interim Development Director. Mrs. Carattini-Wright showed a presentation with photos of the festival. The 2-day festival was successful and included a Spotlight on Mexico, over 200 artists, 4 music stages, about 7,500 tickets were purchased, 11,000 estimated attendees, with 4,000 volunteer hours and around 400 volunteers. The new Spotlight on Mexico drew new visitors, new sponsorships and media attention from Houston and surrounding areas. The organization collected over 6,000 zip codes, received about 135 surveys and 75 room night stays. Conclusive results will be included in future statements, as this is only a preliminary report. For the year 2020, The Woodlands Arts Council Board is looking into presenting a Spotlight on Italy, Japan or Canada. Elizabeth Eddins added that having a Spotlight on Mexico is a helpful promotional tool for future Mexico travel missions.

9. Receive, consider and act upon the selection of a vendor for the Visit The Woodlands Website;

Motion by Director J. J. Hollie, seconded by Director Kevin Viteri to approve Simpleview as a vendor for the Visit The Woodlands Website. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 5 - 0 Passed

Ashley White explained that the website is Visit The Woodlands primary marketing tool. It plays a key role in fulfilling both the organizations mission and goals. Staff issued a Request for Proposal in March 2019 with a submission deadline of April 5, 2019. The goal was to improve website user experience, increase conversions, improve functionality and ease of use for staff, reduce costly upgrades and maintenance and generate responses that allows for viewing across platforms. Staff answered questions to 18 interested companies and received 12 proposals by the submission deadline. Six staff members independently reviewed and scored each company based on: 1) Website Content Management System functionality and development capabilities, client services, support and training. 2) Creativity and applicability of proposal.

3) Staff qualifications and prior experience with tourism destinations or tourism agencies and references. 4) Service fees / costs-initial and ongoing. 5) Technical compliance with website and CMS RFP requirements. Simpleview is a leader in the Destination Marketing Organization industry having implemented Simpleview CRM for over 300 DMO's. Founded in 2001, Simpleview holds offices all over the U.S., including Mexico, Canada and the United Kingdom. Simpleview offers Customer Relationship Management platform, CMS, web design, digital marketing, business intelligence, mobile and social capabilities, marketing automation, revenue generation, software as a service technology platform, among others. Simpleview is the recommended vendor. They are able to handle the scope of the project and bring the organization to the next level. The cost is not to exceed \$100,000 as approved by the Board of Directors in the 2019 Budget. The website is projected to launch Q4 2019.

10. Receive, consider and act upon the 2020 Budget Planning Process;

Motion by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown, seconded by Director J. J. Hollie to approve the 2020 Budget Planning and Process. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 5 - 0 Passed

Nick Wolda explained that staff is seeking input from Directors on initiatives for 2020. A proposed budget will come back to the Visit The Woodlands Board at the May 15, 2019 meeting. After the Visit The Woodlands Board approves the 2020 Budget, it will be presented to The Woodlands Township Board of Directors for final approval. Budget allocations in all departments are reviewed annually and are subject to reallocation based on adopted mission and strategic goals of Visit The Woodlands.

11. Staff Initiative Reports;

Motion by Director J. J. Hollie, seconded by Director Kevin Viteri to approve the Staff Initiative Reports. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 5 - 0 Passed

Josie Lewis, Visit The Woodlands Convention Development Manager, started with a recap from Rendezvous South 2019. The department welcomed 35 Meeting Planners, 100 industry professional attendees, conducted 19 one-on-one appointments, hosted transportation and opening night ceremony at Glade Gallery and followed up by email, hand written thank you notes and Linked-In connection to every planner. The Lunar Planetary Science Conference 2019 received 1,775 hotel room nights in the reserved block, a total revenue of \$390,025 and \$35,102 in HOT tax. During the first quarter of 2019, the department conducted 6 site tours, distributed 43 organic leads, received and distributed 64 CVENT leads, distributed 1,492 welcome bags, serviced 22 groups, received 10 incentive fund requests - worth over \$1.4 million in business and representing over \$126,000 in HOT tax. Attended TACVB Sales Blitz and Symposium, ASAE XDP and TWACC Economic Outlook Conference 2019. Ashley White, Visit The Woodlands Brand Development Manager, began by presenting efforts conducted the first quarter of 2019; the new Visitor's Guide, the new Meeting Planner Guide, the new Tear Off Map, the second edition of the Insider's Guide, the artwork implemented in postcards for marketing purposes and a window cling at Market Street displaying the Insider's Guide artwork and an event calendar. The new book program was fulfilled as "Good Night to The Woodlands" books were distributed to hotel partners. In conjunction with the Township, the department welcomed TV station KTRK in March to promote a special feature on The Woodlands.

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;

Recessed to Executive Session at 12:42 p.m.

13. Reconvene in public session;

Reconvened in Public Session at 1:09 p.m.

14. Receive, consider and act upon Visit The Woodlands Travel and Business Development Guidelines and Procedures;

Motion by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown, seconded by Director J. J. Hollie to approve the Visit The Woodlands Travel and Business Development Guidelines and Procedures. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Vote: 5 - 0 Passed

Elizabeth Eddins mentioned that the Travel and Business Development Guidelines and Procedures were reviewed to satisfy the evolving direction, initiatives and strategic mission of the organization, with the guidance of the legal firm of record The Strong Firm. In this review, travel, business meals, entertainment and site visits could be conducted to allow the client, media, or planner to better experience what The Woodlands has to offer. The organization will be able to maintain a competitive standard when compared to other DMO's.

15. Receive, consider and act upon updates to the Visit The Woodlands Bylaws;

Chairman Bruce Rieser moved to table this item.

16. President's Report;

President Nick Wolda welcomed Laura Haces as the new Tourism Specialist for Visit The Woodlands. Her focus will be in leisure markets. The 2019 Memorial Hermann IRONMAN Texas North American Championship takes place April 27, 2019. Staff commended Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown as participant. The 2019 Houston Tourism Summit takes place April 25, 2019. Mr. Wolda attended Destination International's 2019 CEO Summit in Asheville, NC, with over 300 CEO's from across the country. Staff is optimistic about hosting the Summit in The Woodlands in the following years.

17. Board Announcements;

Director J. J. Hollie announced that The Woodlands Area Chamber of Commerce is proud to partner with the U. S. Chamber of Commerce to host the 2019 Cyber Security Series on May 29, 2019 at The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel & Convention Center. This event is open to the public and offers free admission.

18. Agenda items for next meeting;

Chairman Rieser mentioned that next Special Board meeting set for May 15, 2019 at 11:30 a.m. is to be determined. Items for next meeting include updates to the Convention and Visitors Bureau, known as Visit The Woodlands, Bylaws.

19. Adjournment.

Motion by Vice Chairman John Anthony Brown, seconded by Director J. J. Hollie to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.

Vote: 5 - 0 Passed

Adjourned at 1:19 p.m.



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

5/15/19

Date