



## LODGING TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

**DATE:** August 3, 2011  
**TIME:** 8:30 am  
**LOCATION:** Gig Harbor Civic Center, Executive Conference Room  
**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sue Braaten, Tom Drohan, Kathy Franklin, Jennifer Kilmer, Mary DesMarais, Councilman Derek Young, Warren Zimmerman  
**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jannae Jolibois, Wade Perrow  
**STAFF PRESENT:** Laureen Lund  
**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mona Sarrensen

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Meeting was called to order at 8:35am by Derek Young.

Derek wanted to discuss the item of application process for grants where someone could apply for lodging tax money. We still give money to CVB etc for different purposes. At least having the process there. Warren says this is standard procedure for other groups to apply for money to bring. Warren says he intends to apply for it next year.

2001 that change was made. Derek said it could be introduced at council. Warren said he has the opportunity to apply in 2012. Derek said it would be easier to have a process in place for someone who maybe is not connected. Jennifer said we would need to think through what we want to invite. Jennifer is concerned that it might get out of control. Who could apply? It could get messy. Jennifer said alternatively Laureen is already helping all of those groups. Derek said that the auditor has looked very closely at what we do now and no objections from them. Derek does not see a lot of groups asking. Laureen said we would have to define a dollar amount. Derek said we will look at it for our meeting in early 2012.

Derek said lets look at the budget and Laureen's draft Marketing Plan. Derek said he would like to discuss the Tacoma CVB again. Jennifer said she wants to look at again, they just had their membership meeting and they are going to work with Voluntourism program. Sue wanted to tell everyone that the TPA fund collects \$14K from our two hotels. Sue reminded everyone that that money is enough.

Jennifer questioned if members would still get all benefits and Laureen had confirmed that with Tammy. Kathy Franklin passed out some information about what we will not

get if we do not support this group. She had a long conversation with Tammy and she could stay on the board but \$5000 is not that much for what we get – the money is really just a way to be part of the big picture. She did not think that we should become isolationist. Sue Braaten thinks Laureen's time is better spent here in Gig Harbor. Sue feels her Rodeo rooms came from their efforts not from TRCVB. This is what frustrates Sue.

Kathy agreed that the CVB is not perfect, but it's a growing process and she does not feel it's a bad thing. Tom Drohan said he works as closely with them as possible. Jennifer said they do have a lot of staff. Sue said for her it's hard to see how many staff they have without seeing the benefit. Mona Sarrenson says we rarely get leads that fit her property. Sometimes there are some that fit. And we don't get feedback. Sue complains that they need to communicate with them better. Jennifer what is the success rate for anyone in Pierce County. Derek said one of the problems is the hotels are concerned about direct issues = lack of return. On the other hand the other part we see is it enough for us to make a financial commitment to the indirect benefit. Tom agreed – the indirect is valuable but you can't track it. It's difficult to quantify. How much do you think it's worth at this point.

Tom says we have to bridge the gap somehow. Jennifer says if we cut it off it's not going to help that relationship. But it will pay off over time to be on board. Kathy says we exude adversarial pheromones. We can work on this issue. We're angry. Sue feels she has tried to work with Tammy. Kathy says she sees negativity in conversations. We need to step back and look at what has been done and how we can move forward.

Laureen looks at it like purchasing an ad.

Jennifer said we would like to see a bright line – tourism is nebulous. It's difficult to track. We have to accept it's difficult to track marketing. Jennifer says look at it from Laureen's perspective. Warren says how little hotels are getting in return. But are you getting benefit through your membership. Kathy says it's where our expectations are – if you think you are going to 50 nights based on what the investment is then it will never be good. Kathy does not go into it with those expectations. Sue said what is the requirement back to us.

Derek the reality is none of us are wrong. It's a contribution to a larger effort that we can't really expect a direct benefit. Making the conversation more difficult in this economy.

Laureen explained her proposal for the revenue – budget. And the proposed marketing plan. Gig Harbor direct marketing campaign. Laureen said her proposed plan is exciting since the last couple of years have been pretty lean.

Sue says she does take it personally. Kathy made a motion that we include \$5000 to be a partner with the TCVB. Jennifer seconded and we would expand the budget to \$203K

Discussion – Tom said if we do that want the group to change our positioning to change with them. Kathy says we need to not be angry and work on that. TRCVB sees us as angry. Kathy says we need to just couch everything we say in a positive we - gonna get more if we comment in a nicer. Jennifer says a strategy – what do hotels think if we say this year we do \$5000 with something specific. Beyond website and visitor guide etc. If we came into them and said here is what we care about and what we want to maximize. Try to get some personalized attention around that. Sue we have told them that and have tried – we are very specific what we are looking for? Jennifer says if we really focused our efforts with them for 2012. We are evaluating.

Derek noted that they are well aware that we had voted not to fund. Kathy said if we took a more positive approach and then if we see a positive result. We can adjust higher. Mona Sarrenson said its interesting that they have not called her. Mona said their focus is to get business for our business.

Call for a vote – motion passes. 4 – 2

Discussion – on Kitsap. Jennifer brought up the kitsap – Sue said again she is directing here staff to focus there. Warren mentioned the new chamber group again. He thinks the publication will not happen again this year.

Derek says he does not trust this organization and is uncomfortable. Everyone agreed that we should e a member of the Kitsap VCB. Jennifer moved that we remain open to funding efforts in Kitsap County as an advertising expense for 2012 – not a motion.

Derek sais that if Wade does not want to participate and if that's the case then Mona should be replaced. We would need to do this in short order. Sue mentioned we don't see Jannae either. Mona will talk to Wade and Kathy will take to Jannae and try to figure out who wants to be on the committee. We need to get a good rounded committee and make sure everyone is represented with a vote, especially the Inn at Gig Harbor.