



LODGING TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

DATE: January 5, 2012
TIME: 8:30 am
LOCATION: Gig Harbor Civic Center, Executive Conference Room
MEMBERS PRESENT: Sue Braaten, Tom Drohan, Mary DesMarais, Kathy Franklin, Laureen Lund, Councilman Derek Young, Warren Zimmerman
MEMBERS ABSENT: Jannae Jolibois, Mona Sarrensen
STAFF PRESENT: Rob Karlinsey, Karen Scott
OTHERS PRESENT: None

Meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by Derek Young.

Discussion on open board position, 1 application received from Tom Drohan (Tom left room): Derek suggested that Laureen Lund contact Jannae Jolibois since she has not been present during 2011 asking if she'd like to remain on board. Laureen suggested Sue Braaten ask if Lindsey Munson if she would like to take the open position if vacated by Jannae. In regards to the application for open position, Laureen stated she felt Tom Drohan brings a different view to the committee and is passionate. Sue stated, "He is one of the two things to do in Gig Harbor and he has added value to this board." Continuing, Sue suggested that we look at the websites www.tripadvisor.com and www.yelp.com. She said hotels can go on and respond to negative comments on these websites. Tom was voted in.

Discussion took place about long range planning: Laureen asked to hear from committee on thoughts of reserve fund use. She stated some discussion has taken place in city hall about possible capital projects in addition she had a discussion with council on 2015 US Open event. Laureen requests feedback for this, looking for a lot of lead time. Derek added, his reaction is to start thinking about the benefit to hoteliers. He continued to say he has heard council discuss dollars going to other projects, for example, the sewer lift station project (public restroom). Laureen reminded (informed) the committee that we did spend dollars on restroom once. Derek suggested to having a plan in place. Kathy Franklin expressed concern about the general public finding a place to stay during the US Open and that many hotels have dedicated rooms for that event (not including the Maritime however). Tom stated he will embrace the Open one month before the event. He does not feel it is reasonable planning. Derek suggested spending money advertising Gig Harbor off of the Open, suggesting a bigger presence that we normally would do, contributing to an event like this. Sue suggested promoting Gig Harbor for a return visit. Kathy said she felt the town will receive residual benefit from the Open. Tom suggested looking at strategy for peripheral benefit from the Open and everyone agreed.

In summary, Laureen stated she felt good about the 2012 budget. Kathy added, she'd heard good things from several industries. Derek says that good things are happening with job numbers.

Tom reminded the committee that he had made visitor podium kiosks for the dock in the summer and still had them. He never used them but is hoping to and feels the concierge thing has more depth to plug people into the community in hopes of building the return visits. He would love to have some help or have someone manage a quality concierge podium at the park, acting as a host for the community. Derek suggests emailing ideas to Laureen and she'll compile them and talk about them at the next meeting. Laureen offered to meet with Tom, including Mary DesMarais, to talk about the kiosk idea.

Discussion moved to vote on open LTAC position. Again, Tom was the only applicant. Motion was made by Kathy to nominate Tom for committee. Mary and Sue second the vote. Vote passed unanimously.

Derek suggested time change for meeting to 9 am. Tom suggested 8:45 am. Laureen said that consistency is key because it is a published meeting. Consensus was made for meeting time of 8:45.

Discussion turned to Tammy Blount at the Tacoma Regional Convention + Visitor Bureau and her soon to be open position. Kathy said they will be using a headhunter to fill the position. Derek said the Washington Tourism Alliance (the committee in which Tammy serves as president of the board) has a call out for the position Tammy will vacate. The committee asked Laureen to forward WTA newsletters to them.

Warren Zimmerman requested more time discussing the strategic planning and goals for the LTAC going forward for through year. Warren asked if the committee was going to have a plan. He continued by saying he doesn't know why he comes to the meetings. Laureen reminded Warren that the LTAC had developed a long term strategic plan and an annual marketing plan. The annual marketing plan is what guides the work. Derek reiterated that the request today for ideas on reserve fund is for some long term planning ideas that mesh with the marketing plan in place and the request to get those ideas emailed to Laureen for discussion at our next meeting. Option may include leaving it there, spending it on some capital improvements, or maybe now is the time for a big marketing push to get heads in beds. All LTAC members asked to email ideas to Laureen.

Warren stated he sees an opportunity for Main Street, using the chamber and really doing some future planning. He feels that we are really lacking in long range planning opportunity. Laureen repeated the entire focus is the marketing plan that is revisited and modified each year, and annual report given year end. Sue added the main objective is heads and beds and we cannot really deviate from that. Derek suggested if Warren has some ideas as to where to spend the money, for example working with the Historic Waterfront Association, if he has some ideas as to

where we can support them to email them to Laureen for discussion at next meeting. Sue stated that the main two contributors are not in the 'Main Street' district. Laureen added that she works with 'Main Street' every day. Derek said if there is something 'Main Street' or the Chamber wants to do suggest it to Laureen. He continued, "It makes no sense to fund these from this fund rather than general fund because this fund is so much more restrictive." Derek did say that the kiosk may actually be a general fund expense rather than an event that brings heads in beds. Laureen suggested a community council of Uptown rep, downtown rep, and asked that the Chamber may spear head. Tom stated that the Chamber luncheon networking is a good opportunity and suggested a roundtable take place at the networking luncheon. Warren offered to talk to each head of group and invite them to a unique roundtable focusing on specific event planning.

Tom asked Karen for the marketing plan sent to him by email.

Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 5th, at 8:45 am in the Executive Conference Room, City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Scott, Marketing Assistant