



LODGING TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

DATE: January 9, 2014
TIME: 7:30 am
LOCATION: Gig Harbor Civic Center Executive Conference Room
SCRIBE: Maria Tobin
MEMBERS PRESENT: Sue Braaten, Mary DesMarais, Tom Drohan, Kathy Franklin, Lindsey Munson, Councilmember Tim Payne, Mona Sarrensen, Warren Zimmerman
MEMBERS ABSENT: Jannae Mitton
OTHERS PRESENT: Karen Scott, Ted Smith, Maria Tobin

INTRODUCTION

Councilmember Tim Payne called the meeting to order at 7:38 am. Presented to the committee was a packet including October Lodging Tax Report, informative handouts on Go West Summit and Washington Tourism Alliance Summit, 2014 Events Calendar draft, 2013 Yearend Marketing Summary Report and Plan for 2014.

1. October 2013 lodging tax results

- a. Tim commenced the discussion with the excellent year Gig Harbor has had overall with lodging taxes collected. Most months had double digit increases closing out October for an overall taxes collected increase of 18% for the year. This was credited due to a great year of weather, marketing efforts and positive collaboration with the LTAC committee.
- b. On a side note, it was brought to the attention of the committee that both Tom Drohan and Jannae Mitton had terms that were to expire in January 2014, renewed their membership with the LTAC committee.

2. Go West Summit scheduled for February 24th-27th and Two Nations for March 9th & 10th, 2014

- a. Karen advised the committee that Gig Harbor is on the agenda to meet with the entire group of 250 tour operators from all over the world to include Europe, Asia and Australia. They will be coming over on the Argosy cruise ship and will have Tom Drohan as their guide. The large group of tour operators will be porting at Jerisich dock. Upon their disembarking, they will board a coach to visit and tour the Harbor History Museum; further on to Heritage Distillery Company, to finish off with small bits provided by the Heritage at the INN of Gig Harbor.
- b. The following day is an evening off for the group. Karen and the hoteliers will attempt to capitalize on the group's free hours in the evening by inviting them back for another excursion. Mary suggested putting out a Gig Harbor restaurant list. Karen advised that there is one already in process and Karen will also be producing a one-sheet information handout on Gig Harbor for each tour operator. A quick link to the restaurants on the website was added as suggestion. Tim also suggested a welcome video from the Mayor.

- c. Karen suggested that she could make a page specifically for Go West that could be accessed from www.gigharborguide.com homepage. Karen stated that she will also be meeting with all of the downtown restaurants and making them aware of the Go West Summit and how important it is to accommodate these tour operators to create a lasting first impression. Warren suggested Uptown should be on the tour as well.
- d. Tim asked about the need for LTAC to meet before the Go West summit. The hoteliers and Karen confirmed that they are already meeting on a regular basis to discuss Go West.
- e. Two Nations- Karen informed the group that she will attend March 9 in Portland and 10th in Seattle to represent Gig Harbor. The theme of Two Nations for 2014 is Canada and U.S.
- f. WTA –Karen advised the group that Washington Tourism Alliance is inviting people to attend Tourism Day, the 28th of January. Karen will be attending this event.

3. Video progress update and new advertising for 2014

- a. Karen advised the group that there are three interested parties in the video production. Tim inquired if an interview process with LTAC and the production companies was possible. Karen said that she will provide samples and information to present at the next April 3rd meeting. Ted Smith suggested St. Johns Episcopal Church did an excellent video that may be used as a model and that it was also very affordable (found on Vimeo). Tim suggested that information on each production team be provided ahead of time to the LTAC committee so that an educated decision can be made. Guidelines should also be provided to the production teams so that comparisons can be made apples to apples. Tim suggested that the LTAC committee have some input on the requirements and guidelines for the video production. Tim requests that input and draft RFP be cc'd to everyone.
- b. Karen suggested there be two separate videos; one for a 3-minute and another for the 15 and 30 seconds. The idea is to make it potentially fit all the hotels by keeping the video content in the middle same but, the video would vary at the beginning and end to appeal to each hotel and/or organization who wishes to use the video.
- c. Tim also asked that the LTAC make all suggestions and discussions cc'd to everyone, so as to make quarterly LTAC meetings more efficacious.
- d. Karen informed the group of Gig Harbor's latest marketing campaigns which includes print ads in both Groups Today and 425 magazines using the slogan "Gig Harbor, Gorgeous!" and a redesigned ad to make it more eye catching to the reader.

4. Website updates second quarter 2014

- a. Karen informed the group that website coding is in need of upgrade from our web developer, Sitecrafting, in order to keep the sites functioning. The municipal website and tourism site share code, that code will have to be re-written. This allows us the opportunity to freshen and update slightly. Because it will be done in conjunction with www.cityofgigharbor.net, it will be a cost savings to LT; Karen would like feedback from the group on any website suggestions to be emailed to her. Mary suggested the calendar of events be revamped because it is cumbersome and the hard to find specific events. Karen advised that due date for website inputs are due by the next LTAC meeting on April 3rd, 2014.

5. Trolley returns 26 May 2014/ Event Listing for 2014

- a. It was reported to the group that the Get Around Gig Harbor Trolley will begin its service on Memorial Day 2014 and serve Gig Harbor tourists and citizens alike throughout the summer months. Karen informed the committee that \$25K is budgeted from marketing dollars to assist in subsidizing the trolley. To keep the cost for ridership at \$.50 per ride, the community must still collectively commit to \$15K in contributions. Mary stated the Gig Harbor Waterfront Alliance has tentatively committed \$2500 and Warren said the Chamber of Commerce has discussed possible \$6K. Tim suggested that the committee be provided with a 2013 report on contributions, and when available, a 2014 list of contributions.
- b. Karen passed out a rough draft of the 2014 events press release and asked members to review and revise if needed.

6. Distribution of Yearend Report 2013 and Plan 2014

- a. A hard copy of the 2013 Yearend Report and 2014 Plan were supplied to the LTAC for review. Karen also passed out to the hoteliers their respective rack cards for updates for the 2014 rack card printing.
- b. Tim advised the group that he has connections to Danny Sink, the 2015 US Open Director, and Tim is aiming to meet with him and possibly have him come to meet with LTAC. Other very viable possibilities for Gig Harbor include talks about a passenger ferry from Seattle to Gig Harbor and creating a satellite location for West Sound Wild Life Refuge in Gig Harbor within the next six months, an excellent possible attraction to Gig Harbor.

7. Tacoma Regional Convention & Visitor Bureau Annual meeting

Kathy asked if anybody has information for the TRCVB Retreat on January 30th & 31st please get that to her.

8. Meeting adjourned at 8:48 am and the next LTAC meeting is scheduled for April 3rd at 7:30 am at the Gig Harbor Civic Center.

Respectfully submitted,



Maria Tobin, Marketing Assistant