



LODGING TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

DATE: July 1st, 2014
TIME: 7:30 am
LOCATION: Gig Harbor Civic Center, Executive Conference Room
SCRIBE: Maria Tobin
MEMBERS PRESENT: Jannae Mitton, Kathy Franklin, Warren Zimmerman, Mary DesMarais, Councilmember Tim Payne, Tom Drohan, Lindsey Munson, Tom Drohan, Mona Sarrenson
MEMBERS ABSENT: Sue Braaten
STAFF PRESENT: Karen Scott, Maria Tobin
OTHERS PRESENT: Bennish Brown, Jeff Ross

INTRODUCTION

Karen Scott called the meeting to order at 7:35 am in the Executive Conference Room. Presented to the LTAC were the following handouts: lodging sales tax figures through April 2014; a presentation summary from the Tacoma Regional Convention + Visitor Bureau; Biennial budget ideas for 2015-16; and the Hotel-Motel Fund General Ledger Sheet for May 2014. The meeting opened with Bennish Brown, President of the TRCVB, presenting to the LTAC a summary of the TRCVB's strategies and activities for 2014.

1. **Presentation from Bennish Brown of the Tacoma Regional Convention + Visitor Bureau.**

Mr. Brown presented to the LTAC a 15-minute presentation on the Jan – June Funding Activity Update from the TRCVB. The TRCVB has begun to hold destination summit meetings so that the TRCVB can ensure that the goals for the TRCVB are better aligned with its stakeholders. Mr. Brown informed the committee that thus far in 2014, the TRCVB has booked 480 hotel rooms in Gig Harbor, and in addition, the TRCVB has assisted Pierce County in hosting four large association meetings to include the 2014 Contemporary Historical Vehicle Association, Taste of Technology Conference and the Crown Victoria Annual Car Club Meeting. In 2014, The TRCVB has also brought several decision making groups to Gig Harbor including WSAE and the Go West Summit.

Mr. Brown further reported that at this time he believed regional advertising to be the most efficacious when focused on the Alaska Airlines inflight magazine and the 2014 Tacoma+ Pierce County Visitor Guide. Mr. Brown also brought to the committee's attention that the new Visitor Information Center, inside the Tacoma Convention Center, had its grand opening last week.

Ms. Scott wanted to acknowledge Mr. Brown for putting together the Destination Readiness Committee and the two volunteer tours with Tom Drohan and Destiny Harbor Tours. The tours have allowed volunteers to see Gig Harbor and know more about its attractions and history by way of water.

Mr. Brown concluded his presentation by calling out the official landing page for the US Open 2015 for ticket holders, www.usopen.traveltacoma.com. Ms. Scott mentioned that in the fall they would try to get the TRCVB back out to present to the City Council.

Also up for discussion was exploring the possibility of chartered boat/ferry service from the Narrows Marina to Gig Harbor to draw people from the US Open to Gig Harbor. Tom Drohan said that he is also looking into possible boat services to be provided by Destiny Harbor Tours and/or Argosy Tours.

Councilmember Tim Payne re-confirmed that the main strategy of the group in regards to US Open should be media attention and he inquired whether a media consultant would be needed to facilitate the greatest possible media exposure. Further discussions took place regarding US Open 2015 strategizing details.

2. Budget planning for 2015-2016

Ms. Scott passed out the Hotel-Motel General Ledger for May of 2014 and the lodging sales tax figures that show that sales tax collected through April 2014 are up by 10%. Ms. Scott advised the group that she will be submitting budget figures to the City Administrator by July 31st. Ms. Scott asked that everyone provide any feedback to be considered for budget. Ms. Scott informed the group that she feels the Paddlers Cup, Garden Tour, and Film Festival have the potential to bring Gig Harbor lodging, as a whole, more heads in beds. Kathy Franklin and Mona Sarrensen expressed that they don't feel that the Garden Tour presently brings in overnight guests, but agreed that while they may not presently produce overnight stays, there is a potential for them to overnight guests. Mary DesMarais offered up that the Wine and Food Festival may in the future become an overnight event to also attract lodging business to Gig Harbor.

Councilmember Payne contributed that he feels sports tournaments have the potential to bring in year-round overnight stays into Gig Harbor. He suggested an athletic center that could combine the Little League property, City Park and the Sportsman Club. He also stated that the committee should be aggressively going after an effective network of sporting fields and/or a large sporting facility with adjacent retail centers and hotels. There is also a potential for 20 acres of space for a sporting facility in Gig Harbor.

Ms. Scott advised the group that she is focusing on some niche marketing for this upcoming budget and she believes building up the Paddlers Cup, distilling interests, quilt and craft groups, and possibly the Film Festival would benefit lodging in the off-season. Ms. Scott advised the committee that Tacoma South Sound Sports who works with the Paddlers Cup is a viable asset that also substantiates continued

funding. Both Councilmember Payne and Ms. Sarrensen suggested increasing budgeted dollars in advertising focused on Alaska Air.

Discussion also took place about the effectiveness of the webcam on the website.

3. Update on Skansie House. Vote on purchase for furnishings for VIC at Skansie House

Ms. Scott moved to approve funds originally allocated for computers in the 2014 Hotel-Motel Budget, but were actually able to be purchased in the last fiscal year, to furnish the Skansie House VIC. **** Ms. Sarrensen seconded the motion and a voice vote was taken and carried unanimously.

4. Distribution of 2014-2018 Tourism Strategic Plan

Ms. Scott had previously distributed the 2014-2018 Gig Harbor Tourism Strategic Plan via email. She had asked for any input on the strategy before it will be presented to council for adoption on July 14th.

5. Upcoming events:

The LTAC was advised that there will be a US Open presentation by Pat McCarthy with Pierce County at the August 11th City Council Meeting at 5:30 pm at the Gig Harbor Civic Center.

6. Meeting adjourned at 8:58 am and the next meeting was scheduled on September 9th, 7:30 am Gig Harbor Civic Center

Respectfully submitted,



Maria Tobin
Tourism & Communications Assistant
City of Gig Harbor