



THE WOODLANDS

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Special Meeting

August 25, 2009

9 a.m.

MINUTES OF MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THE WOODLANDS CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The Board of Directors for The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau (TWCVB) of Montgomery County, Texas held their Special Meeting on August 25, 2009 in The Woodlands Township Board Room at 10001 Woodloch Forest Drive, Suite 600, The Woodlands, Montgomery County, Texas. The roll was called and those in attendance were:

Nelda Blair, Chairman

Peggy Hausman, Vice Chairman

Lloyd Matthews, Treasurer

Claude Hunter, Secretary

Karen Hoylman, Director

Fred Domenick, Director

Don Norrell, Director

Nick Wolda, President

Also in attendance were Bret Strong, Legal Counsel for the TWCVB, The Strong Firm; Steve Sumner, Vice President of Operations & Public Safety; Casey Snyder, TWCVB General Manager; Kelly Overbeck, TWCVB Business Development Manager; Julie DeGuerre, TWCVB Event Manager; Sharon Swaim, TWCVB Marketing Assistant, Rachel Christensen, Marketing Intern.

Agenda Item No. 1 Adoption of Agenda: Chairman Blair called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. and called for the adoption of the Agenda for this meeting that was developed and duly posted as required by law. A motion was made by Director Hunter to adopt the Agenda and seconded by Director Hoylman and carried by unanimous vote.

Agenda Item No. 2 Public Comment: There was none.

Next Agenda Item No. 3: Consider and approve expenses related to producing the 27th Annual Lighting of the Doves:

President Wolda offered that in March 2009 TWCVB sent out a competitive bid request for production of winter events to several event producing companies. After close review of the returned bids it was determined that Spectrum Events would produce the events.

The 27th Annual Lighting of the Doves Festival (LOTD) officially kicks off the 2009 holiday season in The Woodlands. This event brings several thousand people to The Woodlands to see Santa Claus, enjoy the opening of The Ice Rink and The Woodlands Winter Wonderland, as well as bringing the world's holiday traditions to life at International Winter On The Waterway (iWOW).

LOTD and iWow Statistics: (Survey Results from previous years)

- Combined attendance 12,000+
- 47% attended from outside South Montgomery County
- 49% planned to spend \$25+
- 75% rated the festival as excellent or good
- 2009 sponsorship goal is \$25,000 and we are at 60% right now

Kelly Overbeck, TWCVB Business Development Manager, and President Wolda are currently pursuing businesses for sponsorships. The Community Associations is a sponsor this year but that sponsorship will go away in 2010 as the Transition of both organizations is completed.

2009 Approved Budget for Lighting of the Doves

- Income \$25,000
- Production \$70,000
- Advertising \$20,000
- Private Security \$ 7,500
- Total (Less Income) \$72,500
- Spectrum \$49,000

The Motion to approve utilizing Spectrum Events at a cost not to exceed \$49,000 for Lighting of the Doves and authorize TWCVB president to execute the contract was made by Director Matthews and seconded by Director Hoylman. Discussion followed.

The question was raised: What exactly does Spectrum provide? A detailed budget handout of all the services Spectrum Events provides for the production of the LOTD event was handed out. (Handout)

Chairman Blair asked: How does this amount compare to last year's figures? Julie DeGuerre, TWCVB Event Manager, stated that last year the Board approved \$40,000 but there were some unexpected power shortages so this year the budget was increased to include additional power needs. The Board requested the TWCVB staff to look for all possible savings.

Chairman Blair asked for a vote on the Motion to recommend Spectrum Events to produce the Lighting of the Doves in an amount not to exceed \$49,000 and authorize the CVB president to execute the contract. The Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Next Agenda Item No. 4 offered by Chairman Blair: Consider and approve expenses related to producing the 2009 International Winter on The Waterway (iWOW).

President Wolda offered that this event has grown over the last couple years. When it began, statistics for The Woodlands showed 92 different countries represented in its population Today, that number has grown to 97 different countries. Like any new event, it takes some time to grow momentum.

Power point presentation was made showing how iWOW is different from Lighting of the Doves:

- This event features a variety of International entertainment.
- Consulates take part and showcase their country.
- Vendors represent International merchants, businesses and restaurants.
- Countries represented included: Mexico, Columbia, Israel, Italy and Panama
- 2009 Sponsor Goal \$25,000 and are currently at 52%
- Currently pursuing Planet Ford, Aero Mexico, Verizon Wireless and Mexico Tourism Board

TWCVB will partner again this year with a local school to bring back *World of Trees*. This is where different classes decorate trees representing different countries and they are displayed during the event.

2009 Approved Budget for iWOW

- Income \$25,000
- Production \$96,300
- Advertising \$20,000
- Private Security \$ 7,500
- Total (less income) \$98,800
- Spectrum \$75,000

A Motion was made to recommend contracting Spectrum Events to assist in the production of the 2009 iWOW at a cost not to exceed \$75,000; and authorize the President of The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau to execute contracts in connection therewith by Director Hoylman and seconded by Director Norrell.

Discussion: Director Hausman offered that she would like to see this event scaled down or cost factors picked up by more sponsors. Consider cutting back on video screens.

Chairman Blair offered that if TWCVB approves up to \$75,000 in the contract with Spectrum Events it will still have the power to cut back if necessary. Chairman Blair suggested that TWCVB staff consider what Director Hausman suggested and look for places to cut.

President Wolda addressed sponsorship by offering TWCVB has found it has been more difficult to generate a new sponsor so the focus is to bring back repeat sponsors. TWCVB is working with multiple sources and would welcome any leads from Board members.

Motion restated to take the vote:

Chairman Blair asked for a vote on the previous Motion made by Director Hoylman and seconded by Director Norrell to recommend contracting Spectrum Events to assist in the production of the 2009 International Winter on The Waterway at a cost not to exceed \$75,000; and authorize the President of The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau to execute contracts in connection therewith. Motion carried with one opposition by Director Hausman.

Next Agenda Item No. 5 offered by Chairman Blair: Consider and approve location, expenses and ticket prices related to producing The Ice Rink at The Woodlands Town Center. President Wolda explained this will be a three part Motion on Agenda Item No. 5:

- Motion to move The Ice Rink
- Motion to discuss production costs
- Motion to discuss ticket pricing

2008-2009 The Ice Rink Statistics

- 38,867 total paid skaters
- 52% from The Woodlands and South Montgomery County
- The Ice Rink at The Woodlands Town Center is featured as one of America's best Ice Rinks on www.ForbesTraveler.com
- Sponsorship goal \$50,000

The Woodlands Development Company has granted permission to TWCVB for The Ice Rink to be moved back to the corner of Six Pines and Lake Robbins.

President Wolda presented Budget for The Ice Rink (Power Point)

• Income	
○ Sponsorships	\$ 50,000
○ Admissions & Rentals	\$185,000
▪ Total Income	\$235,000
• Expenses	
○ Production of tents, lighting, etc.	\$241,500
○ Refrigeration & Electrical Power	\$ 70,000
○ Advertising	\$ 40,000
○ Signage, tickets, insurance, other production items	\$ 47,000
 TOTAL COSTS	 \$398,500
 Net Cost	 \$163,500
Budget	\$174,150
Under Budget	\$ 10,650

Use of the land at the Six Pines and Lake Robbins location, would require TWCVB to purchase additional insurance. Insurance cost is being researched and a bid is being sought.

The first Motion would be to recommend the construction of The Ice Rink on the northeast corner of Lake Robbins and Six Pines this year. Motion made by Director Hoylman and seconded by Director Matthews. After discussion, Chairman Blair asked for a vote on the Motion to move The Ice Rink to the northeast corner of Lake Robbins Drive and Six Pines Drive. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

President Wolda offered that the second Motion as part of Agenda Item No. 5, be to contract with Spectrum Events for production costs of The Ice Rink at a cost not to exceed \$311,500 and authorize the president of The Woodlands CVB to execute the contract. Motion was made by Director Matthews and seconded by Director Hoylman. (A handout was provided with the itemized costs.) After discussion, Director Hausman wanted to go on record expressing the need to have economies of scale with this. If we are going to pay a management fee to Spectrum to do The Ice rink, she respectfully submitted that TWCVB drop another festival or another production to offset costs.

Director Hausman asked what was the cost increase between Spectrum Events last year and this year? Julie DeGuerre, TWCVB event manager, responded that last year

\$301,500 was approved. We used \$306,500 so it increased by about \$5,000. There were some additional costs on sight prep due to the new site.

Director Matthews offered a suggestion for next year. He suggested TWCVB look at insuring all events at the same time for next year.

Chairman Blair offered: The Motion is to contract with Spectrum Events for production costs of The Ice Rink at a cost not to exceed \$311,500 and authorize the president of The Woodlands CVB to execute the contract with the direction of the staff to take a real hard look at expenses and try to reduce them. Motion passed by unanimous vote with Director Hunter voting "No." Motion carried.

President Wolda offered that the last Motion for Agenda Item No. 5 be to address ticket pricing for The Ice Rink. The Ice Rink has not had a ticket price increase for five years. TWCVB has done a comparison on two ice rinks in the greater Houston area that operate during the holiday season. One is Discovery Green which is downtown and has a ticket price of around \$10, but skaters have to pay for parking and the minimum parking found anywhere downtown is \$5. The Galleria charges \$11/skater. TWCVB price is \$9.50.

TWCVB offers special promotional values:

- Monday - bring a friend and you skate free
- Wednesday- dollar off admission
- \$2 off coupons which are accepted Monday through Friday
- Frequent skater card, skate four times and fifth time is free

This price increase would affect only the weekend skaters. TWCVB is approaching a partnership with Which Wich Sandwiches to offer a \$2 off coupon that will be good any day and TWCVB will promote it is good for Saturdays and Sundays.

Chairman Blair called for a Motion to increase the general admission price for skating by \$1 on weekends for a two-hour skate. President Wolda wanted to add that the \$1 on the weekends would generate approximately \$20,000 of revenue.

After some discussion, Director Hunter offered a Motion to increase the price. Chairman Blair clarified the Motion from Director Hunter to increase the amount of tickets to \$10 during the week and \$12 on weekends. Motion was offered, but no second. Motion died.

Chairman Blair called for another Motion (as stated above) to increase the general admission by one dollar on the weekends. Motion moved by Director Hausman and seconded by Director Hoylman. No more discussion. Motion passed with one “No” vote by Director Hunter.

Next Agenda Item No. 6 offered by Chairman Blair: Consider and approve location and expenses related to producing The Woodlands Winter Wonderland.

President Wolda offered that The Township actually owns the holiday lights. TWCVB went through a governmental lease process on this several years ago. There are costs for storage and as we go into next year TWCVB will be looking at how the Parks and Recreation Department at The Community Associations and TWCVB could partner on this project. However, this year the proposal is to put the lights at The Ice Rink location. There are over 250,000 lights, they are free to view by the public and attract over 100,000 visitors per year.

Sponsorship goal is set at \$20,000 and TWCVB is at 100%. TWCVB is currently looking at other possible sponsors to exceed this amount. Donoho Jewellers is a \$20,000 sponsor.

Chairman Blair asked if Donoho’s is a multi-year sponsor. President Wolda responded, yes, they are multi-year and this is the last year. It was a three-year contract.

Director Hoylman asked if there could be sponsors on individual displays. She suggested approaching some of the large churches in The Woodlands to find out their interest in a sponsorship since this is a family event.

Director Hunter moved to make the Motion to approve the construction of The Woodlands Winter Wonderland on the northeast corner of Lake Robbins Drive and Six Pines Drive using Spectrum Events at a cost not to exceed \$55,000 and authorize the president of TWCVB to execute the contact. Motion seconded by Director Hoylman. Chairman Blair asked for a vote on the Motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Director Matthews offered that it might be worthwhile to have President Wolda go to each of the Village Associations and make a presentation about the TWCVB to bring awareness of its presence and accomplishments and involvement in the community. Chairman Blair agreed this would be a very good idea.

President's Report

- TWCVB is a partner to the Mundo Continental Program promoting The Woodlands in cities in Mexico, Central America and South America. On Monday, September 21, in Market Street's Central Park there will be 60 of the top producing tour operators and travel agents from 31 Mexican cities. It is a 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm event. Market Street is producing the event and TWCVB is doing the publicity. The Woodlands Resort is the host hotel. On Tuesday the tour operators will hear presentations and will be taken on a driving tour of The Woodlands.
- Niki South Cross Country preliminaries will be held October 9 and 10 at Bear Branch Park. Expecting 2,500 runners to participate. TWCVB is partnering with WCA Parks and Recreation Department to promote this event.
- Conference USA is bringing their cross-country track championships to Bear Branch Park. This includes teams from Rice, Houston, SMU, Memphis, and Southern Miss. This is a six state event. It will be held October 30 and 31. Expecting about 1,000 attendees.

These are all great events, they are self-contained and no street closures are required. Dates and information will be sent out to Board members by Casey Snyder, TWCVB General Manager.

The regularly scheduled September 8 meeting of the TWCVB has been rescheduled for Tuesday, September 29, due to some of the CVB Board members being out of town.

Board Announcements: None

Other Matters of Record: None

Agenda items for next meeting: None

Chairman Blair called for Adjournment. Motion to adjourn made by Director Hunter and seconded by Director Hoylman and carried by unanimous vote. Meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.