



THE WOODLANDS

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

March 3, 2010

11:30 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 Meeting on March 3, 2010 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 Chair

Lloyd Matthews, Treasurer

Claude Hunter, Secretary

Nick Wolda, TWCVB President

Karen Hoylman, Director

Don Norrell, Director

Fred Domenick, Director

Kent Johnson, Director

Also in attendance were Bret Strong, Legal Counsel for the TWCVB, The Strong Firm; Monique Sharp, Assistant General Manager of Finance and Administration, The Woodlands Township; Mary Connell, Community Relations Manager, The Woodlands Township; Casey Snyder, TWCVB General Manager; Kelly Overbeck, TWCVB Business Development Specialist; Julie DeGuerre, TWCVB Event Specialist; Sharon Swaim, TWCVB Administrative Assistant.

Agenda Item No. 1 Adoption of Agenda: Vice Chair Peggy Hausman in the absence of Chairman Blair called the meeting to order at 11:30 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 a unanimous vote.

Agenda Item No. 2 Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Next Agenda Item No. 3 Consider and approve minutes from the January 6, 2010 meeting: Motion was made by Director Hunter to accept the minutes from the January 6, 2010 meeting and seconded by Director Norrell and passed by a unanimous vote.

Next Agenda Item No. 4 Consider and receive Financial Report for January 2010: President Wolda offered discussion and presentation of the Financial Report for January 2010. This is a 27-page handout. President Wolda reported that the first quarterly deposit was made from The Woodlands Township to TWCVB. He also referenced Page 4 where the year-to-date encumbrances were listed. The encumbrance amount of \$196,000 includes projects that are in progress such as destination media buys and events.

Upon arrival of Chairman Blair at this point to the meeting, she thanked Vice Chair Hausman for calling the meeting to order and conducting business in her absence. Chairman Blair called for a Motion to accept the January 2010 Financial Report. A Motion was made by Director Matthews to accept the Financial Report for January 2010 as presented. The Motion was seconded by Director Norrell and passed by a unanimous vote.

Next Agenda Item No. 5 Authorize The Woodlands Township Audit Committee to receive all audit communications and other matters relating to the 2009 audit: President Wolda called upon Monique Sharp, Assistant General Manager of Finance and Administration, The Woodlands Township, to address this issue with the Board.

Ms. Sharp offered that in accordance with the service agreement between The Woodlands Township and TWCVB, the Finance Department of The Woodlands Township will provide administrative support and audit coordination services for the 2009 audit. In order to streamline the audit process, it is being recommended that TWCVB Board of Directors authorize The Woodlands Township Audit Committee to coordinate and receive all audit communications from the audit firm of Null-Lairson and report back to TWCVB Board of Directors as needed. This will prevent TWCVB from having to perform a separate audit. TWCVB will be included in the final audit report as in previous years.

A Motion was made to authorize The Woodlands Township Audit Committee to receive and consider all audit communications and matters related to TWCVB related to 2009 by Director Hunter. The Motion was seconded by Director Hoylman and passed by unanimous vote.

Next Agenda Item No. 6 Consider and act upon approval of the fireworks vendor for the 13th Annual Red, Hot & Blue Festival on July 4, 2010: In February 2010, TWCVB issued a request for proposal (RFP) to five different vendors and received only two completed proposals back. DDT Fireworks, a company based in Spring, Texas, and Pyro Shows, a Tennessee based company, submitted proposals. DDT Fireworks produced the 2009 Lighting of the Doves fireworks display.

Pyro Shows has produced the Red, Hot & Blue fireworks for the past two years. This company has also produced shows for Disney Corporation, ABC Sports Monday Night Football and Super Bowl XXXIX, to name a few of the other nationally recognized events they have done. After reviewing both proposals and examining expectations for the show, it is recommended Pyro Shows produce this year's fireworks show and negotiate contracts for the 2011 and 2012 RHB firework shows. It was clearly presented that Pyro Shows proposed a larger and longer show for fireworks.

The budget calls for \$60,000; however, this could be supplemented by sponsorship support that is being pursued. No formal commitment has been made for sponsorship at the time of this meeting; however TWCVB is actively pursuing some interested parties.

A Motion was made by Director Matthews to contract Pyro Shows to produce the fireworks for the 13th Annual Red, Hot & Blue Festival at a cost not to exceed \$60,000 with a two year renewal for calendar years 2011 and 2012 without RFP process and authorize the president of TWCVB to execute contracts in connection therewith. Motion seconded by Director Domenick and passed by a unanimous vote.

Director Johnson commented that he would like to discuss having a firework show this year during the Memorial Day weekend. This would a great opportunity to bring visitors/business to The Woodlands for the holiday weekend. President Wolda offered this could be an agenda item for the next CVB Board meeting.

Next Agenda Item No. 7 Consider and act upon approval for expenses related to the 13th Annual Red, Hot & Blue Festival on July 4, 2010: President Wolda called upon Julie DeGuerre, TWCVB Event Specialist to present. Ms. DeGuerre stated that the Red, Hot & Blue Festival and Fireworks Extravaganza have become one of Greater Houston's largest Independence Day celebrations. She reminded Board members that in 2009 TWCVB sent out a formal Request for Quote (RFQ) seeking an event production company to produce TWCVB's five major events to four event production companies in the Greater Houston area.

These five major TWCVB events include:

- Annual Red, Hot & Blue Festival™
- Annual Lighting of the Doves™
- International Winter on The Waterway™ (iWOW)
- The Ice Rink at The Woodlands Town Center™
- Winter Wonderland™

After careful review and consideration, TWCVB elected Spectrum Catering, Concessions and Special Events as the 2009 event production service company with a one-year renewal for calendar year 2010 without RFQ process.

TWCVB also has been working very closely with The Woodlands Township Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) and they have agreed to lend their services to TWCVB which could result in an estimated production savings of \$3,500 in the RHB production budget.

A Motion was made by Director Hoylman recommending using Spectrum Events for production of 2010 Red, Hot & Blue Festival at a cost not to exceed \$80,065 and authorize the president of TWCVB to execute contracts in connection therewith. Motion seconded by Director Norrell and passed by unanimous vote.

Discussion: Director Hunter asked for examples of what The Parks and Recreation Department would do to assist in reducing production costs. PARC could assist with hanging event banners and possibly with vendor tents.

Director Hausman asked what the sponsor dollar amount was for this event and the exact cost of this event. Kelly Overbeck, TWCVB business development specialist, responded that the sponsor dollar amount was \$90,000. Ms. DeGuerre responded that the net budget is \$185,000 but anticipated costs could be less. This does not include the cost for The Fire Department. The Fire Department is paid separately.

Next Agenda Item No. 8 Consider and act upon approval for expenses related to producing The Ice Rink at The Woodlands Town Center: President Wolda offered that The Ice Rink completed its 11th season of skating with over 43,000 paid skaters. The Ice Rink was able to return to its former location at the northeast corner of Lake Robbins Drive and Six Pines and this more visible location played a vital role in the season's success. There is the opportunity to return to this site for the upcoming 2010-2011 Ice Rink season.

He continued offering that there is a study being done to contract for a permanent Ice Rink, but it is only in preliminary stages. The Board will be updated as this project develops.

He also said TWCVB has set a goal of \$50,000 for outside sponsorships and is currently in negotiations with potential sponsors. Advertising accounts for \$40,000 of the total budget. Actual production costs for Spectrum Events are not to exceed \$323,500.

A Motion was made by Director Matthews to contract Spectrum Events for production costs related to The Ice Rink at a cost not to exceed \$323,500 and authorize the president of TWCVB to execute contracts in connection therewith. Motion was seconded by Director Hoylman. *Vote was taken after lengthy discussion below.* Motion passed with one opposition by Director Hausman.

Discussion: Director Hoylman asked if a permanent Ice Rink would come about during this effective time of this contract. Director Matthews who is very involved in this project to bring a permanent Ice Rink to Town Center responded that it would most likely not happen in 2011. It is a very long process in determining a location and drawing up a design.

Director Hausman inquired if there was going to be an increase in the cost to skate in the 2010-2011 season? President Wolda responded there was no consideration at this time to increase the price.

Director Hausman also asked if TWCVB had approached any of the CVB's in the surrounding areas to participate in supporting The Ice Rink. Director Hausman said she would like TWCVB to consider using a more global and regional approach when seeking sponsorship support. Chairman Blair offered her agreement and suggested a more global and regional approach should be used.

Director Hausman also expressed that she would like to see The Ice Rink become a breakeven event. Chairman Blair offered that The Ice Rink might indeed pay for itself in indirect income ways that are very difficult to measure. People come here to shop, dine and spend money on other activities and events.

President Wolda offered that there are many costs associated with building The Ice Rink from scratch every year. If there were to be a permanent facility built and those costs did not occur every year The Ice Rink could ultimately possibly make money. The Ice Rink is viewed an event to bring visitors here to spend money during the holidays. Director Matthews commented that this is viewed as an economic development activity.

Director Johnson asked how skating cost discounts were handled. President Wolda commented there was a substantial amount of advertising and promotion on discounts being offered during the week days but no discounting on weekends which is when there is the highest number of skaters. Director Johnson asked if the loss could be cut if discounts were not offered at all. President Wolda commented that you might gain \$10,000 but might lose skaters. Chairman Blair commented that this is something that needs to be reviewed year to year.

Let it be noted that on Page 21 in the attachment to the Executive Summary (page 18) pertaining to the expenses related to producing The Ice Rink in the Board Book for this March 3, 2010 meeting, a correction will be made to reflect that in the last paragraph, last sentence (Page 21) should read: *Net costs for the 2009-2010 Ice Rink Season were \$129,462.38. (Wrong years were given)* Julie DeGuerre will correct in the original document.

Next Agenda Item No. 9 Consider and act upon a proposal from The Woodlands Film Commission: President Wolda explained that in 2009 The Woodlands Film Commission was created to encourage film production in this area. The film industry has been successful with bringing more than \$1.2 billion dollars to Texas in the past ten years and our goal is to bring film production dollars to The Woodlands area. Filmmakers look for the same amenities that travel planners value including The Woodlands' proximity to a major airport, first class hotels, dining and entertainment opportunities, in addition to a wide variety of potential filming locations.

TWCVB recommends a suggested level of support of \$5,000 to The Woodlands Film Commission in support of its efforts and economic benefits it could bring to The Woodlands. A website is needed to connect to all the Houston Film Commission as well as all the Texas film associations and this amount would help to cover the website development and design costs as well as other marketing materials needed to make this a successful effort.

Chairman Blair called for a Motion to support this effort in the amount not to exceed \$5,000 for TWCVB and The Woodlands Film Commission contract to be signed by the President of TWCVB. Motion was made by Director Matthews and seconded by Director Johnson.

The Motion carried. All Directors voted yes with one abstention by Director Hoylman.

Discussion: Director Matthews asked if this was in the budget. President Wolda responded that it would come out of the line item of "Other Festivals and Events." Director Hausman asked if other event monies had been pulled from that line item. Casey Snyder, General Manager for TWCVB, will provide Director Hausman a list of "other" events that have come from that line item and the dollar amounts.

Director Hausman asked who was doing the website design. Connie DeGuerre with The Woodlands Chamber of Commerce and The Woodlands Film Commission stated she has sought three bids. A company has been selected and Mrs. DeGuerre would be working very closely with them to have the best workable website designed.

Next Agenda Item No. 10 Update on the Water Taxi Operation: President Wolda offered there is no executive summary for this item. He reported that at The Woodlands Township Board meeting in January 2010, the Board voted for The Woodlands Township/TWCVB to get involved the operation of the Water Taxis. There are many agreements that will be needed for this to happen and they are being reviewed for changes and updates.

No Board Action needed.

Next Agenda Item No. 11 Receive TWCVB initiative reports:

Destination Marketing Report presented by Casey Snyder:

- Print
 - Ad in Continental Magazine for March, May and June
 - See Texas First – Spring/Fall Advertising
 - Texas Monthly – TWCVB will co-op with Wine & Food Week in June
 - Texas Town & City
- Television
 - Greater Houston area
 - ABC, CBS, NBC, Comcast
- Online
 - TourTexas.com
 - Monthly e-newsletters
 - Facebook
- Radio

Communication Outreach

- Visitor Guides – 13,473 requests for English
- Visitor Guides – 929 requests for Spanish
- Distribution to 70+ different locations
- Unique website visits – 9,818
- Current Newsletter – 4,500+ mailed
 - Also distributed to hotels and visitor centers
- Discovery Guides – 1,125 requested and mailed

Visitors Services

- 6,070+ visitors
- 102 different zip codes
- 22 different countries represented
- 20 different states represented

Mundo Continental 2010

Bogota	Panama
Buenos Aires	Sao Paulo
Rio de Janeiro	Newark
Houston	Mexico City
Guadalajara	Monterrey

Group Sales

An ad will run in *Convention South Magazine* and in *East Texas Group Manual*.

Who's been here? Who's coming? Report:

February 2010

- Texas Rush Blue Chip Showcase
- International Economic Development Council
- Mitsubishi Caterpillar Forklift American

March 2010

- Lunar & Planetary Science Convention
- Texas Music Media
- 28th Annual Texas Aviation Conference

September 2020

- The Woodlands High School Class of 2001 Reunion

Year 2011

- Rotary District 5910 Conference

There are many groups who want to come to The Woodlands in 2010 such as: Texas School of Administrators Legal Digest, Center for Houston's Future, Society of Nuclear Medicine, Texas Veterans Commission, NCAA Division III Men's & Women's Swimming and Diving, Texas Young Farmers Conference and Texas Association of County Auditors.

Event Update presented by Julie DeGuerre:

Recent Events

- January 23, Arbor Day
- January 28, Taste of the Town
- February 5, Connections meeting
- February 27, Movie Night at Waterway Square

Upcoming Events

- Live at Night (Spring Series) - March 24 – April 28
- Movie Night (Summer Series) - May 15 – June 12
- The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival – April 10 & 11
- CB&I Tri – May 1st
- Wine & Food Week – June 14 – 20
- 4th of July in The Woodlands – Events Friday thru Saturday

Business Update Presented by Kelly Overbeck:

- Distributed Winter Holiday Sponsor Wrap-up book
- Distributed Red, Hot & Blue Sponsor packet
- Gave update on her sponsorship mailer for this year to be sent out to current active sponsors and potential sponsors – “Stretch Your Marketing Dollars.” It is to serve as a call to action piece.

Sponsorship Status

Spring Events - Currently at 40%

Red, Hot & Blue July 4th Festival – Currently have Coca Cola, Silver Eagle and The Children’s Young Learners Academy committed. Working with Woodforest National Bank to continue their sponsorship of the fireworks. Also, working with Micro Mainframe to come back as title sponsor again this year.

Working with Huntsman to try and bring back the Little Firecracker Contest for this year’s event. Reported that Which Wich has been active with TWCVB in multiple events but have said ‘no’ to the new Live at Night series starting in April 2010 because they are so busy. That is a good reason! Northside Lexus has also said ‘no’ and will not be able to participate in The 2010 Red, Hot & Blue. Will be pursuing Munday Chevrolet to participate.

The Red, Hot & Blue sponsor packet is electronic and will be emailed to each of you. Please forward to anyone you can think might be interesting in sponsoring some of TWCVB events.

Ms. Overbeck distributed her “hot” list of potential sponsors. She asked if any Board member had or knew of a contact for any of the businesses listed to please send her way.

President Wolda reminded the Board that sponsorships ended last year at 104%. For The Township’s 2010 Public Safety Heroes Awards event sponsorships were 122%.

Next Agenda Item No. 12 President’s Report. Nick Wolda reported:

1. The presentations that he and Chairman Blair have been making to the Village Associations have been very well received. Will continue with the presentations until all Village Associations have been visited. Have received good feedback.
2. Financial policies for the TWCVB will be discussed at the next CVB Board meeting in May. The idea is to have similar financial policies as The Woodlands Township.

3. Reported a very beneficial CVB Marketing Committee on February 8, 2010.
 - The Woodlands Mall is 98% occupied
 - Forever 21 is projected to open in May or June 2010 but could be later
 - Continue to promote destination weekends in The Woodlands
 - Limited services properties are seeing a 12% increase in sport events related room nights
 - Committee members expressed a great need for some sort of transportation between The Woodlands hotels for visitors

Board Announcements:

Director Hunter made announcement that Oktoberfest is coming up again for its 2nd year.

Director Hausman asked if TWCV ever considered using interns for projects. President Wolda responded that TWCVB currently has an intern working about 15 hours a week and she is in school and is helping with many projects.

Agenda items for next meeting:

1. Discussion of having community event/activities/fireworks on Memorial Day.

Chairman Blair called for Adjournment. Motion to adjourn made by Director Hoylman and seconded by Director Hunter and carried by unanimous vote. Meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.