



# THE WOODLANDS

## CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

**May 5, 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 May 5, 2010 in The Woodlands Township Chambers 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

Lloyd Matthews, Treasurer

Claude Hunter, Secretary

Kent Johnson, Director

Nick Wolda, TWCVB President

Karen Hoylman, Director

Don Norrell, Director

Fred Domenick, 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; and Sharon Swaim, TWCVB Administrative Assistant.

Agenda Item No. 1 Adoption of Agenda: Chairman Nelda Blair called the meeting to order at 11:35 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 Norrell and carried by a unanimous vote.

Agenda Item No. 2 Public Comment: Sara Bissig with the Go Green Eco Taxi of The Woodlands, Texas gave a description of her Go Green Eco Taxi tour/service which is located in The Woodlands and operates around Town Center. The goal is to educate the public about electric cars and get charging stations in The Woodlands. Secondly, she would like to show the residents and tourists everything there is to do here in The Woodlands for shopping, dining and entertainment. She would like to promote The Woodlands and in return asks that TWCVB would consider promoting her business.

Chairman Blair thanked her for coming and addressing TWCVB Board of Directors and offered that TWCVB would take a look at the Eco Taxi business and what it has to offer.

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

Next Agenda Item No. 4 Consider and receive Financial Report for March 2010: President Wolda offered discussion and presentation of the Financial Report for March 2010. As of March 31, 2010, the ending cash balance was \$315,996 (does not include the first quarter transfer of funds from The Woodlands Township).

President Wolda called attention to the footnote on page 15 relating to salaries and benefits for TWCVB staff. This budget information is recorded in The Woodlands Township's general fund. The 2010 budgeted expense for four full-time staff and 70% of the Township's Director of Community Relations salary and benefits is \$413,642.

After discussion, Chairman Blair called for a Motion to accept the March 2010 Financial Report. A Motion was made by Director Hunter to accept the Financial Report for March 2010 as presented. The Motion was seconded by Director Hoylman and passed by a unanimous vote.

Next Agenda Item No. 5 Consider and approve Resolution 001-10 to establishing purchasing authorities for TWCVB: President Wolda called upon Monique Sharp, Assistant General Manager of Finance and Administration, The Woodlands Township, to address this issue with the Board.

Resolution 001-10 is a resolution regarding purchasing authorities for TWCVB. Currently, the President of TWCVB is authorized to make purchases up to \$1,000. The recommendation is to increase this authority to \$10,000. Also, recommended increases are for purchasing between \$10,000 and \$25,000 would require the approval of the Board Chairman or other director.

Purchases over \$25,000 but less than \$50,000 would require the approval of the Board Chairman, Board Treasurer, and TWCVB President. Purchases over \$50,000 would require approval by the Board of Directors, which is consistent with policies recently approved by the Township and Fire Department boards. These authorities are contingent upon the expense being included in the annual budget adopted by the Board of Directors; any unbudgeted purchase would require approval by the Board.

A Motion was made to approve Resolution 001-10 to establish purchasing authorities for TWCVB by Director Matthews. The Motion was seconded by Director Hunter and passed by unanimous vote.

Next Agenda Item No. 6 Consider and approve Resolution 002-10 to establish commitment and signature authorizations for the TWCVB: President Wolda called upon Monique Sharp, Assistant General Manager of Finance and Administration, The Woodlands Township, to address this issue with the Board.

The proposed revisions to the commitment authorizations are consistent with the changes recommended for TWCVB's purchasing authorities (Resolution 001-10), and the recommended spending levels for TWCVB President and Board of Directors are also consistent with policies recently adopted by The Woodlands Township and Woodlands Fire Department Board of Directors. Please note that Resolution 001-10 (Purchasing Authorities) addresses authorization to insure expenses and make purchasing decisions, the subject matter of this Resolution 002-10 is centered on authorization to execute contracts/agreements, sign checks, and initiate wire transfers.

The proposed changes are:

Checks up to \$10,000 require one signature (Board Officer, Board Director, or President of TWCVB).

Checks over \$10,000 require two signatures (Board Officer, Board Director, or President of TWCVB; one of the signatures must be that of a Board Officer).

Chairman Blair called for a Motion to approve Resolution 002-10, to establishing commitment and signature authorizations as presented. A Motion was made by Director Hunter and seconded by Director Domenick and passed by unanimous vote.

Next Agenda Item No. 7 Consider and approve advertising sponsorship for the 2010 Oktoberfest: President Wolda offered discussion on the 2010 Oktoberfest. The Rotary Club of The Woodlands will host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Oktoberfest on September 24-26, 2010 in The Woodlands at Town Green Park. TWCVB will have a booth at the event and will collect pertinent survey information along with recognition in all advertising prior and day of event.

TWCVB feels this is a good investment because the event is bringing people to The Woodlands over a 3-day period. This event is expected to draw over 12,000 festival attendees. There is currently no event like this within 200 miles of The Woodlands. Tickets will be \$10.

The suggested level of advertising is \$10,000 which is an increase of \$2,000 from 2009. This recommended increase in sponsorship is due to the fact that Oktoberfest has been expanded to a three (3) day event. This sponsorship has been programmed in the Other Festivals/Events line item in the budget.

A Motion was made to approve the Advertising Sponsorship Agreement for Oktoberfest 2010 and authorize the President of TWCVB to sign a contract by Director Hunter and seconded by Director Domenick. The Motion passed with one abstention by Director Hoylman.

Next Agenda Item No. 8 Consider and approve 2010 cooperative advertising plans:  
President Wolda offered discussion. TWCVB has a line item in its 2010 budget called Cooperative Marketing in the amount of \$25,000. This line item includes the participation in opportunities that are combined with other organizations to promote The Woodlands as a destination. These budgeted dollars are only used in conjunction with financial participation from other organizations in The Woodlands and that involve specific offers and campaigns.

After extensive research and discussion, TWCVB marketing team decided on two opportunities:

1. Participation in a Greater Houston publication called The Houston Visitor Guide or
2. A new innovative virtual tour that is a web-based approach of showing The Woodlands in spectacular immersive photography that will be seen around the world.

TWCVB team will solicit partners with a goal of paying ½ the costs associated with both opportunities. These marketing dollars have been programmed in TWCVB's Cooperative marketing budget which contains a dollar figure of \$25,000.

Discussion: The Board members would like to see the Shopping Villages throughout The Woodlands be given an opportunity to participate.

A Motion was made to approve TWCVB cooperative marketing plan as presented and authorize the President to issue requisitions at a level not to exceed \$25,000 by Director Hunter and seconded by Director Johnson. The Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Next Agenda Item No. 9 Consider and Approve a Proclamation regarding Travel and Tourism Week in The Woodlands: Discussion was offered by Chairman Blair and a copy of the National Travel and Tourism Week Proclamation was handed out.

National Travel and Tourism Week is May 8-16, 2010. The Woodlands is a destination for corporate meetings, conventions, weddings, reunions, weekend getaways, shopping, dining and more. It has over five million square feet of shopping, dining, hospitality and entertainment venues to offer. The Woodlands Township expects to generate \$30.7 million in sales and \$3.5 million in hotel taxes. The signing of the Proclamation by Chairman Blair proclaims May 8-16, 2010 as Travel and Tourism Week in The Woodlands and urges citizens of The Woodlands to join in this special occasion.

President Wolda offered in conjunction with the recognition of Travel and Tourism Week the distribution of a copy of a very comprehensive Tourism fact booklet prepared by the Community Relations Department of The Woodlands Township. This is still in draft form. Please look over and please make any suggested changes or additions.

Chairman Blair would like to see this bound and distributed. President Wolda responded that it will be distributed and used through a marketing campaign.

A Motion was made to approve the Proclamation for Travel and Tourism Week by Director Hunter and seconded by Director Hoylman. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

NOTE: Director Hoylman wanted to make sure Oktoberfest is included in the Tourism fact book.

Next Agenda Item No. 10 Discussion on 2011 CVB Budget: President Wolda reminded the Board that it is time to start working on and developing the 2011 Budget. He distributed a spreadsheet showing the items in TWCVB budget. Budget meetings will begin in July 2010 and a series of Public Hearings will take place in August 2010.

In today's meeting and discussion regarding the 2011 budget if any of you have ideas, suggestions or questions regarding the 2011 budget now is the time to bring those items forward.

Director Norrell gave an updated report on The Woodlands Township's budget process. The Township intends to submit a completed budget to The Woodlands Township's Board of Directors on July 22, 2010. After this, there will be weekly meetings through the end of August. At the end of August, we anticipate that the Board of Directors will set a tax rate. TWCVB budget will need to be submitted in early July.

Director Hoylman asked if TWCVB salaries would continue to remain under The Township budget. Director Norrell responded that that is the intent at this time.

President Wolda pointed out that the largest portion of TWCVB budget falls in the area of Attractions and Events followed by Destination Marketing. Promotion is the third largest part of budget.

President Wolda also recommended that under Destination Marketing Group Sales and Meeting Planners that these two line items need to be increased due to all the success that TWCVB is having in promoting The Woodlands as a meeting destination. Groups Sales is actually more marketing and public relations function currently. Maybe in a year or two, not proposing for 2011, TWCVB will need an actual position for a sales representative to help in the group sales initiative.

The intent is to keep the 2011 CVB budget flat line. No increase for 2011 but some shifting of monies in line items where there have been savings.

Director Matthews offered that he felt shifting funds around to the right categories and increasing the two suggested areas is a good idea. He also made the suggestion that he would like to see a bottom line of a \$2 million budget and not the \$2,045,737. He is not suggesting that anything be cut and if it is necessary to retain that figure, he is fine with that as well.

Director Hunter commented that he liked having the salaries and benefits remain under The Township budget. President Wolda offered that with the Transition some great efficiency was found. One example, the Community Relations staff, under the guidance of Mary Connell, have been able to assist in creative design work for some of TWCVB materials which in the past had to be outsourced.

Efficiency was also been found in the events area. TWCVB will be able to have some savings by using some of the resources of the Parks and Recreation Department. The Department helped last year with Lighting of the Doves and is helping this year with the Red, Hot & Blue Festival.

Director Hoylman asked if the merger of Continental Airlines and United Airlines would affect TWCVB's international marketing. President Wolda responded that nothing negative has come out as of yet. TWCVB will still be involved in Mundo Continental(name could change) and there are reports that Houston is still the gateway to Latin America and that is primarily where TWCVB's international marketing is focused.

Director Hunter suggested the rounding up of the Ice Rink ticket price for this coming season. Also, would like to see reducing the number of Water Taxis in operation. He commented that he is hearing a great deal of feedback from residents regarding this matter.

Director Johnson commented that he would like to see an event for Memorial Day added to the budget. It is a three-day weekend and would bring a great many visitors to the area. He suggested a fireworks show and entertainment.

Director Domenick suggested moving some of the holiday directed budget money into other times of the years like summer weekend activities when there are not concerts. He commented that was a need to create reasons for visitors to want to drive to The Woodlands for the weekend.

Director Hoylman asked if moving the Crawfish Festival from March to that weekend and expanding it from a one-day event to a multiple day event be helpful or beneficial. Comments followed that it would be very beneficial.

Director Matthews suggested maybe looking at a high school band concert that weekend of Memorial Day since the school year is finishing up.

Director Hunter also suggested coordinating something with the opening of the new YMCA at Creekside. Contact Gary Louie and get feedback from him.

President Wolda expressed appreciation for all these suggestions and will move forward with formulating a plan for the 2011 Budget.

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 Town & City
- Television spots in May through August
  - Greater Houston area
  - ABC, CBS, NBC, Comcast
- Online
  - TourTexas.com
  - Monthly e-newsletters
  - Facebook
- Radio
  - June thru October 2010 weekly
  - Stations: 99.1 FM, 740 AM

## Discovery Guide 2010 Spring - Summer

Had over 80 merchants participate. This is the largest number of participants so far in this publication.

### **Group Sales**

- Launched new Meeting Planning website: [www.MeetingsInTheWoodlands.com](http://www.MeetingsInTheWoodlands.com)
- Continuing meeting with hotels
- Developing The Woodlands Meeting Planner Guide
- Working with Parks & Recreation on sporting events

### **Who's been here? 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
- 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas Aviation Conference

May 2010/June 2010/July 2010

- Relax the Back Trade Show & Convention
- Texas mental health and mental Retardation Centers
- Institute of Scrap Recycling-Gulf coast Chapter Convention
- Artist Expo Houston Convention

September 2020

- The Woodlands High School Class of 2001 Reunion

Year 2011

- Rotary District 5910 Conference
- Texas State Philanthropic Educational Organization Convention

### **Who's Coming? Report:**

Fall 2010

- Texas School of Administrators Legal Digest
- Center for Houston's Future
- Society of Nuclear Medicine – Southwestern Chapter
- North American Wholesale Trade Show

2011

- NCAA Division III Men's & Women's Swimming and Diving
- Project Learning Tree International Coordinators' Conference
- Adrenaline Dance

2012

- Texas Young Farmers Conference
- Texas Association of County Auditors

2013

- State Fireman's Fire Marshals Association

**Event Update** Presented by Julie DeGuerre:

Recent Events

- Live at Night Spring Series  
Estimated 2,735 attendees
- CB&I Tri (Sponsor)  
Estimated 890 athletes participated  
Estimated 2,500 to 3,000 attendees

Upcoming Events

- 7th Annual Fiesta Universal, May 5, 2010 (sponsor)
- Movie Night (Summer Series) - May 15 – June 12, 2010
- Wine & Food Week – June 14 – 20, 2010
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July in The Woodlands – Events Friday thru Saturday, July 2 – 4, 2010

**Business Update** Presented by Kelly Overbeck:

We are at 54% of our 2010 sponsorship goal. We are currently at 60% of sponsorship goal for July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday events. We will continue to pursue sponsorship sales and hope to reach a 100%. TWCVB is still two months out from the event. If any of you have leads that we could contact, please send those to me.

A review of the sponsor party is being done this year with possible changes. This event is 100% paid for by sponsors. No tax dollars or sales tax dollars are used towards the production of this event. Currently there is not a sponsor for this event. This event will be for sponsors only which will reduce the size and cost significantly. TWCVB will continue to actively pursue a sponsor for this event.

Ms. Overbeck also reported that Jaguar of North Houston is a new sponsor for July 4<sup>th</sup> and the University of Phoenix came in as a \$15,000 sponsor and will sponsor the Little Firecracker Essay Contest which is being brought back this year.

Also, Hewitt is very interested in partnering with TWCVB for Waterway Square events. There will be more to come on this.

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

1. The presentations that President Wolda and Chairman Blair have been making to the Village Associations have been very well received. There is one more to do in June at Sterling Ridge. This will be June 28, 2010. It has been a very good initiative. Considering ways to expand on this initiative to continue to deliver the message out about TWCVB.

**Board Announcements:** None

**Agenda items for next meeting:** None

Chairman Blair called for Adjournment. Motion to adjourn made by Director Hunter and seconded by Director Norrell and carried by unanimous vote. Meeting adjourned at 12:56 p.m.