



# THE WOODLANDS CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

**January 12, 2011**

1:30 p.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 January 12, 2011 in The Woodlands Township Board 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  
Claude Hunter, Vice Chairman  
Lloyd Matthews, Treasurer/Secretary

Fred Domenick, Director  
Don Norrell, Director  
Karen Hoylman, Director  
Nick Wolda, TWCVB President

Also in attendance were Bret Strong, Legal Counsel for the TWCVB, The Strong Firm; Casey Snyder, TWCVB General Manager; Kelly Ingram, TWCVB Business Development Specialist; Julie DeGuerre, TWCVB Event Specialist; and Sharon Swaim, TWCVB Administrative Assistant.

Agenda Item No. 1 Adoption of Agenda: Chairman Blair called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.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 Domenick and carried by unanimous vote.

Agenda Item No. 2 Public Comment: Chairman Blair called on President Wolda to welcome guests: Bill Coulter, The District; Wendy Dickey, Brazos; Steve Lakey, Village of Alden Bridge resident; and Lindsey Peyton, Chronicle. There was no public comment.

Agenda Item No. 3 Consider and Approve Minutes from the November 3, 2010 meeting: Motion was made by Director Hunter to accept the minutes and seconded by Director Matthews and Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Agenda Item No. 4 Consider and Approve Minutes from the December 8, 2010 Board Workshop meeting: Motion was made by Director Hunter to accept the minutes and seconded by Director Hoylman and Motion carried by unanimous vote. Director Matthews called attention to Page 16 in regards to the number of skaters at the Ice Rink so far this year. He suggested to change wording in first bullet point to read: Up 986 skaters from last season at this time.

Agenda Item No. 5 Consider and Receive Financial Report for November 2010: President Wolda called upon Monique Sharp to review Financial Report for November 2010. After review and discussion, Chairman Blair called for a Motion to accept the November 2010 Financial Report. A Motion was made by Director Matthews to accept the Financial Report for November 2010 as presented. The Motion was seconded by Director Hunter and carried by unanimous vote.

Agenda Item No. 6 Consider and act upon approval of the Service Agreement between The Strong Firm and TWCVB for 2011 Legal Counsel Services: Chairman Blair called upon President Wolda to present. The Strong Firm located in The Woodlands brings vast experience with various corporate and business commercial matters, and extensive knowledge of the local corporate and business community, including representation of 501(c) (6) organizations and has provided great service to TWCVB over the past 4 years.

It is recommended that The Strong Firm continue this business relationship with TWCVB and with all of its legal documents and contracts, state and federal filings, and general counsel. The Strong Firm has had a long-term relationship with TWCVB and familiarity with its contracts and structure. The Strong Firm has agreed to provide a reduced rate of 25% discount over their standard billing rate. The Strong Firm is located in the same complex as TWCVB making for easy access in the case of short-term legal needs.

Chairman Blair called for a Motion to recommend utilizing The Strong Firm for TWCVB's legal counsel services for 2011 and authorize the President to sign the agreement. Motion was made by Director Hunter and seconded by Director Domenick and carried by unanimous vote.

Agenda Item No. 7 Consider and act upon approval of the Agency Engagement Agreement between Manlove Marketing & Communications and TWCVB for 2011 Destination Marketing Services: Chairman Blair called on President Wolda to present. TWCVB's Destination Marketing plan incorporates advertising, public relations, international marketing, web sites, Discovery Guide & Savings Book, Visitor's Guide and Map, and cooperative advertising opportunities to continue attracting visitors to The Woodlands. This agreement was competitively bid in 2008 with two consecutive one-year renewal opportunities so this would be the second renewal which would be the third of three years. The agreement with John Manlove Marketing & Communications will expire after December 31, 2011; therefore, TWCVB will bid out these services sometime in July or August 2011.

Director Domenick asked if the cost in year three had increased during their contracted period and President Wolda responded that it had not. He also wanted to know if there was flexibility on the media buys and President Wolda responded yes there is flexibility.

Chairman Blair called for a Motion to recommend and approve utilizing Manlove Marketing & Communications for TWCVB's 2011 Destination Marketing campaign services, including broadcast and print media buying, and authorize the President to sign the agency engagement agreement. Motion was made by Director Hoylman and seconded by Director Matthews and carried by unanimous vote.

Agenda Item No. 8 Consider and act upon approval of the 2011 Destination Marketing campaign theme and media placement schedule: Chairman Blair called on President Wolda to present. TWCVB is charged with the responsibility of promoting The Woodlands as a destination point for shopping, dining, lodging and entertainment. TWCVB is the entity to promote the destination appeal of The Woodlands.

President Wolda called upon Casey Snyder, Marketing Specialist and General Manager of TWCVB to present three new creative campaign themes for the 2011 Destination Marketing Media Buy which includes production and placement for a variety of media including television, radio, print advertising and electronic marketing created by Manlove Marketing & Communications. Three themes are centered around the following concepts:

- *Trust Me* – Create a Woodlands character who represents The Woodlands' typical weekend visitor and the tag line would be: *Sometimes you just need to get away. You can't go wrong with The Woodlands. Trust me.*

- *It's About Time* – This would also be a testimonial approach which would come from people who actually work in The Woodlands.
  - One would feature a chef who works in The Woodlands and the tag line would be: *It's about preparation and the finest ingredients...it's about time you visit The Woodlands.*
  - One would feature a fashion consultant: *It's about fashion, style and selection...it's about time you visit The Woodlands.*
  - One would feature a hotel concierge: *It's about comfort and personal attention...it's about time you visit The Woodlands.*
  
- *Big Destination* – This theme is based off of Texas Tourism. Three concepts included the following;
  - Over 2.5 million people visited the Alamo last year. **Next time, Remember The Woodlands!**
  - The Hill Country is about 250 miles from Houston. **The Woodlands is just a hill or two away!**
  - Dallas is sometimes referred to as the Big D. **The Woodlands is a pretty Big Deal too!**

After discussion, it was recommended that a combination of the *It's About Time* concept and the *Big Destination* concept be combined in a way to reflect a new theme. Ms. Snyder will work with Manlove to create a combination of the two themes.

Media Placement schedule: There are two options. The difference between the two options is that **Option A** includes continuing the Billboard campaign into the fall and print in the Hemispheres Magazine which is replacing the Continental Magazine as a result of United Airlines and Continental Airlines merging. **Option B** would not include continuing the billboard campaign but would include running three ads in the Hemispheres Magazine. These would be half page ads running for one month each.

Director Matthews asked how successful the billboard campaign has been. President Wolda responded it has been very successful but it is hard to measure. A closer monitoring of zip code tracking through the Chamber's Guest Services will be done to see if a better measure can be reflected.

Chairman Blair called for a Motion to approve the 2011 Destination Marketing campaign using the Big Destination concept with variations made to it and approve the media placement schedule. Motion made by Director Matthews and seconded by Director Hoylman. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Agenda Item No. 9 Consider and act upon approval for the Contract between Kaplan Public Relations and TWCVB for 2011 Public Relation Services; Chairman Blair called on President Wolda to present. President Wolda offered that Kaplan Public Relations has been the Public Relations agency since 2004 when destination marketing efforts began. Through an aggressive Public Relations campaign in which Kaplan PR implemented, there have been hundreds of articles generated on The Woodlands as a premier destination and increased exposure to a local, regional, statewide, national and international audience which generated over \$835,000 in unpaid advertising dollars in 2010. They have done and continue to provide an outstanding service for TWCVB.

A Request for Proposal for Public Relation efforts was distributed in 2007 and Kaplan PR was awarded the contract for 2008 and each year TWCVB Marketing Team has continued to recommend utilizing Kaplan PR. TWCVB will be distributing an RFP in the summer of 2011 for TWCVB's Public Relations services in 2012 with a two year extension based on measured success.

Chairman Blair called for a Motion to approve the contract between Kaplan Public Relations and TWCVB's for the 2011 public relation services and authorize the President to sign the contract. Motion was made by Director Domenick and seconded by Director Hoylman. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Agenda Item No. 10 Receive an Update of the Waterway Cruisers: Chairman Blair called on President Wolda to discuss and he distributed a Waterway Cruiser update. TWCVB officially owns six boats valued at \$850,000 received on January 1, 2011.

The Waterway Cruiser handout included updates on:

- Accounting Processes
- Renovation
- Request for Proposal: Waterway Cruisers Catering
- Request for Interest: Waterway Cruisers Sponsorship
- Marketing Efforts
- Infrastructure Improvements (signage and points of interest)

These are all tedious and time consuming tasks and it will take time to work through all of these items. A copy of the Waterway Cruisers Updated document will be filed in Central Records.

Director Norrell requested that the Waterway Cruiser Ridership chart that is included in this update reflect that ridership has dropped due to a cut in operational hours and not because people are not actually riding the Cruisers. President Wolda agreed this should be reflected on the chart.

Agenda Item No. 11 Consider and direct TWCVB on how to handle requests from sports initiatives: Chairman Blair called upon President Wolda to present. TWCVB has been receiving inquiries from numerous sporting events and initiatives for sponsorship and advertising dollars. These groups include swimming and diving, track, rugby, boxing, soccer, softball, baseball and more. The Woodlands is becoming known as a great area for sport events to be held.

TWCVB does consider and has advertising dollars in programs and/or websites to market The Woodlands as a destination to incoming visitors and groups. However, many of these groups are requesting sponsorship dollars to bring these activities to The Woodlands. TWCVB currently does not have a policy, but is currently conducting market research to see how other CVB's handle these types of requests. At this time, the marketing team would welcome any suggestions from TWCVB Board of Directors to determine how these requests should be handled in the future.

As a result of the market research, it was found that many CVB's such as Waco, Grapevine, and Kingsville have packets and forms that they send out when they receive these types of requests.

After discussion and suggested ideas it was decided a policy is needed and things to consider when developing the policy are:

- Review and consider each request that TWCVB receives.
- Consider helping with the marketing and advertising of the various events versus being a sponsor.
- Consider the time of year of the events and number of events so as not to have conflicts with already scheduled events.

Agenda Item No. 12 Receive TWCVB Initiative Reports: President Wolda called on Casey Snyder, TWCVB General Manager, to give an update on Destination Marketing and Group Sales.

### **Destination Marketing 2010 Wrap-Up**

- Visitor Guide & Map requests English: 146,137
- Visitor Guide & Map requests Spanish: 8,966
- Visitor Maps have been distributed to 90+ different locations

- Current Newsletter: 13,595 are mailed quarterly
- All of the above items are distributed at events, local hotels and visitor centers
- Website: 193,310 total unique website visits
- Discovery Guides: 16,999 requested from over 800 different zip codes
- Facebook Page: Over 1,400 fans added in 2010
- Visitor Services: 105,020 visitors from 588 different zip codes, 72 countries and 48 states. Missed the two states of Vermont and South Dakota.
- Over 2,500 inquiries directed to the CVB marketing team requesting event information, group requests, interviews, destination information, among a variety of other requests
- Media activity: 975+ responses to media
- Public Relations value for 2010: \$948,073 (unpaid advertising)
- Articles about The Woodlands as a destination: 1,189 articles
- 30+ million impressions generated:
  - 592 Television spots
  - 326 Radio spots
  - Print Ads
  - E-newsletters
- Billboard Campaign: 13 boards will be up through January 2011
- Tracking Efforts: 856 entries
- Cooperative Advertising Efforts partnered with The Woodlands Resort, Woodlands Mall, Market Street, The Woodlands Development Company, The Woodlands Waterway Marriott
- Virtual Tour Website: Added video on the Ice Rink

#### **Update on Group Sales Efforts – January – December 2010**

TWCVB developed The Woodlands Meeting Planner Guide, had print in Convention South Magazine, Texas Meetings & Events and East Texas Group Tour Manual. In online efforts TWCVB launched [www.MeetingsInTheWoodlands.com](http://www.MeetingsInTheWoodlands.com) and sent out 3 quarterly e-newsletters. Ms. Snyder also reviewed the continually growing list of “Who’s been to The Woodlands and Who is coming to The Woodlands?”

President Wolda said this presentation would be put on TWCVB website and Board members would be sent the link.

Chairman Blair called on Julie DeGuerre, Event Specialist for TWCVB, to give details regarding events in The Woodlands:

- **Caroling on the Square** – Sundays: December 5, 12, 19, 2010 @ 6 to 8 pm
  - 1,500+ attendees
  - 6+ performers
  - Santa visited on December 19, 2010

- **The Ice Rink Season 12** is open daily November 20, 2010 through January 17, 2011
- Season 12 is a record year with 47,862 paid skaters through Week No. 9

**Other Event Projects:**

- Finalizing 2011 Waterway Square events
- Sending out Event Production RFP
- Waterway Cruisers Catering RFP's due January 25, 2011
- Send out RFP for Memorial Day Fireworks in early February 2011
- Recommend catering company(ies)/restaurant(s) to manage catering on Waterway Cruisers in early February

**Business Development Update**

Kelly Ingram, TWCVB Business Development Specialist, reported she is setting meetings with 2010 sponsors to bring them back in 2011. There are potential title sponsors for the Memorial Day and Labor Day events. Mrs. Ingram also reported she had some very positive meetings with BBVA Compass and State Farm.

Agenda Item No. 13 President's Report: No report. President Wolda did invite the Board members to stay and watch a video wrap up of Lighting of the Doves and iWOW 2010.

Agenda Item No. 14 Board Announcements: None

Agenda Item No. 15 Agenda items for next meeting: None

Agenda Item No. 16 Chairman Blair called for Adjournment. Motion to adjourn made by Director Hunter and seconded by Director Domenick and carried by unanimous vote. Meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.