

**GATLINBURG DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

November 6, 2008

The Gatlinburg Department of Tourism Advisory Board met on November 6, 2008 at 1:30 pm in the Board Room of the Convention Center. **The following members were present:** Mr. Darrell Whitchurch, Ms. Vickie Simms, Mr. Joe Waggoner, Mr. Harry Montgomery, Ms. Jackelyn Schafer, Ms. Kathy Doyle, Mr. Kevin Tierney, Mr. Robert Montgomery, Ms. Candace Ogle, Mr. Bob Waikel, Mr. Dan Saffelder, Mr. Andy MacKinnon, and Mr. Sid Maples. **City of Gatlinburg Staff included:** City Manager Ms. Cindy Ogle, Executive Director David Perella, Mr. George Hawkins, Mr. Walter Yeldell, Ms. Sharon Rinehart, Ms. Debbie Orsburn, Ms. Lori Tierney, and Ms. Kathryn Boruff

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Jackelyn Schafer called the meeting to order.

DEALS AND PACKAGES FOR THE FUTURE

David Perella asked members what the best approach would be for getting a list of deals and packages together as a community. He explained that according to many studies, including TIA's Marketing Outlook, that travelers are buying down and will be looking for deals at the destinations. Mr. Perella wants the TAB to consider the community and come up with some ideas to present to BCF for further consideration. **A Motion was made by Robert Montgomery to defer this discussion and decision to the Mass Media Group as soon as possible. Seconded by Sid Maples. Motion Passed. A Mass media Meeting to discuss this subject was set for: Monday, November 17th at 9:00 am in the Board Room of the convention center. The meeting will include a conference call with BCF.**

WEBSITE UPDATE

Mr. David Perella handed out information regarding the TN sitemap of our website. Information is being submitted everyday and the roll out date is currently set for December 19th.

WELCOME CENTER HOURS

Ms. Lori Tierney presented the proposed changes to the current Welcome Center hours of operation. A handout was included in the TAB Packets with specific information on current hours of operation, visitor counts, and neighboring cities Welcome Center hours. The proposed hours of operation are:

November 1 – March 31, Daily 8:30 am – 5:30 pm and April 1 – October 31, Daily 8:30 am – 7:00 pm.

A Motion was made by Sid maples to grant the recommendation with the understanding that the hours can be adjusted in the future if need be. Seconded by Jackelyn Schafer. Motion passed.

CONVENTION CENTER ELECTRICITY PRICING

Ms. Debbie Orsburn presented the information regarding the electrical pricing currently used at the convention center. Her information also included the pricing that our competitors follow. The reccommendatino was to increase the charge for electricity by about %18. **A Motion was made by Mr. Bob Waikel to approve the increase. Seconded by Ms. Kathy Doyle. Motion passed.**

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mr. David Perella gave an update on the energy conservation that has been taking place through the Department of Tourism. Changes included: converting to fluorescent bulbs in the public areas of the convention center, following lighting policies to reduce the hours that all lights are on, and following air conditioning and heating policies throughout the building in accordance to occupancy.

SPECIAL EVENTS UPDATE - SPRING TIME TUNES AND TALES

Mr. George Hawkins gave an update on Special Events. The Special Events Work Group recommended that the Spring Time Tunes and Tales begin on April 24th and run on Friday and Saturday nights through May 23rd. The Group discussed having quality control of the event and ensuring that the proper funding was available were important points to consider. **A Motion was made by Mr. Kevin Tierney to do the Spring Time Tunes and Tales. Seconded by Andy MacKinnon. Motion Passed.**

Other points of interest included the future location of the Chili CookOff.

4th QUARTER ADVERTISING

An excel spreadsheet was included in the monthly TAB Packet that included all of the 4th Quarter Advertising information. David Perella went through the spreadsheet and explained some of the details to TAB Members. A breakdown of the radio advertising was also included in the discussion.

LICENSING AGREEMENT

A handout of the Licensing Information was distributed. Mr. David Perella explained the importance of using the Licensing information properly and getting the whole City involved. **A Motion was made by Mr. Robert Montgomery to use the Licensing Information for businesses throughout the community. Seconded by Jackelyn Schafer. Motion passed.**

MARKETING UPDATE ON MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

Ms. Sharon Rinehart had examples of our current ads and also gave an update of the Trade Shows that the Convention Center Sales office will be participating in. Ms. Rinehart also mentioned the Virtual Trade Show and will be giving updates to its success in the future.

HOUSING BUREAU

Mr. David Perella and Ms. Sharon Rinehart presented the Housing Bureau that is currently being established in-house. The idea is to use the Housing Bureau as a service to our customers and to our hotels/businesses. The rollout of the site is in 4-6 weeks. Ms. Sharon Rinehart and Ms. Kathryn Boruff will be hosting training classes soon. Updates will be passed along as the Housing Bureau becomes available for use.

UNSCHEDULED ITEMS

Ms. Jackelyn Schafer mentioned that the welcome flyers that were designed for the hotels are very helpful. The 'Welcome Flyers' were designed through the Sales Office of the convention center and include local information that would be helpful to our visitors.

Ms. Sandy McCown has officially resigned from the Tourism Advisory Board.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next TAB Meeting was scheduled for Thursday, January 15th at 1:30 pm in the Board Room of the convention center.