

**GATLINBURG DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

January 15, 2009

The Gatlinburg Department of Tourism Advisory Board met on January 15, 2009 at 1:30 pm in Meeting Rooms 1-3 of the Convention Center. **The following members were present:** Mr. Joe Waggoner, Mr. Dan Booth, Ms. Jackelyn Schafer, Mr. Harry Montgomery, Mr. Dennis McAvoy, Mr. Dan Saffelder, Ms. Kathy Doyle, Ms. Candace ogle, Mr. Andy MacKinnon, Mr. Jerry Morton, Mr. Bob Waikel, Mr. Ryan deSear, Mr. Tim King, Ms. Cindy Ogle, Ms. Kathryn Boruff, and Mr. David Perella

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Dan Booth called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A Motion was made by Mr. Ryan DeSear to approve the November 6, 2008 meeting minutes, seconded by Ms. Kathy Doyle. Motion passes.

UTILITY COSTS UPDATE

Mr. David Perella updated the group on the costs and savings of the winter lighting. Figures of what we have spent on the LED conversion and what we have saved thus far were shared and discussed. A handout was distributed to each member that included a breakdown of costs and reductions of incandescent lighting versus LED lighting.

MID YEAR COSTS SAVINGS UPDATE

Mr. David Perella began discussion by stating that reductions have been made without reducing marketing dollars. He added that we will be making the spring campaign more even throughout the months rather than making it heavy on one end or the other. Other changes included: cutting some travel, tightly budgeted special events, concentrating on energy savings, slightly reducing the hours of operation at the Welcome Centers, and cutting overtime hours.

A discussion was also had about convention center attendance numbers continually being up with our large groups/conventions.

There was talk of local lodging taxes and comparing Gatlinburg to Pigeon Forge and Sevierville. Members of the group commented that we have to be fair to our existing clients and groups and would have to be careful simply imposing the tax. Discussion continued of how Gatlinburg's numbers are down when compared with our leading neighbors and competitors.

WEBSITE UPDATE

The projected kick off for the website is scheduled for the end of January. BCF is in the process of testing the site right now.

David Perella also discussed the current radio promotion and the influence it is having. There was also discussion of the Call Reports and Visits from 2008 in comparison to this year. The analytics report was also displayed.

MARKETING PARTNER DISCUSSION

David Perella will be renegotiating with BCF and incorporating PR into their responsibilities for the City of Gatlinburg. This change would eliminate FWV from the marketing partners that we work with. Mr. Perella believes that this change would reduce our overall fees and help us to focus on our targeted markets.

A Motion was made by Mr. Joe Waggoner to go ahead with the renegotiating of BCF and FWV, seconded by Mr. Ryan DeSear. Motion passes.

A Tourism Summit Committee was developed. Members include: Mr. Ryan DeSear, Mr. Andy MacKinnon, Mr. Tim King, Mr. Dan Booth, and Mr. David Perella. The Tourism Advisory Board discussed potential dates for the Summit. The group agreed that sometime between March 23rd and March 27th would be a good time to have the Summit. The Summit will be a good time to get ideas from the community and provide a sense of normalcy to business owners. **The first Tourism Summit Meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 30th at 10:00 am in the Board Room of David Perella's office.**

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next TAB Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 10th at 1:30 pm in the Board Room of the convention center.