

**GATLINBURG DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM  
CONVENTION CENTER/GROUP SALES WORK GROUP MINUTES**

*November 16, 2007*

The Gatlinburg Department of Tourism Convention Center/Group Sales Work Group met on November 16th, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. in the Board Room of the Convention Center. **The following members were present:** Ms. Jackelyn Schaffer, Mr. Joe Waggoner, Mr. Bud Lawson, Ms. Sharon Sutton. Business Community Members Included: Ms. Andrea Richey, Mr. Brian Holland, Mr. Karl Thomas, Mr. David Reed, and Ms. Jackie Leatherwood.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Jackelyn Schaffer called the meeting to order.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion to approve October 19, 2007 Meeting Minutes was made by Mr. Joe Waggoner, seconded by Mr. Brian Holland.**

**FOLLOW UP ON CONVENTION CENTER SALES MANAGER POSITION**

Ms. Sharon Sutton gave an update on her new hire for the Sales Manager position for the convention center. Ms. Lori Baldwin begins her work for the City of Gatlinburg on November 19<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Sharon Sutton believes that Lori will be a great asset to the community and Sales Team. Ms. Lori Baldwin is from this area and knows Gatlinburg well. Ms. Sharon will be working with her over the next few weeks introducing her to business owners and touring Gatlinburg so that Ms. Baldwin will be able to utilize her knowledge of Gatlinburg as a selling tool for guests.

**REVIEW OF OBJECTIONS IN REGARDS TO CORPORATE GROUP BUSINESS**

Ms. Sharon Sutton began the conversation by stating that she had met with her Sales Team and they all agree that the lack of corporate rooms and hotels in Gatlinburg is the challenge that they face with corporate clients/guests. Ms. Sharon Sutton also stated that we (meaning as a City) sometimes fail in our presentation of our materials to clients. Ms. Andrea Richey suggested that we pull together a Round Table to address the presentations and material that is being presented to potential clients/guests. Ms. Jackelyn Schaffer agreed with the Round Table idea and added that all of us work together to make proposals and comments very positive. **The Group unanimously agreed to tackle the Round Table idea and go forward with a plan of action in January. All businesses will be given the opportunity to be a part of the Round Table.** Ms. Sharon Sutton added that it is the quality of our rooms, rather than the service in our rooms, that Corporate Businesses are looking at when they visit Gatlinburg. Ms. Jackelyn Shaffer also added that if we gather information and comments from clients, we might find a pattern and be

able to solve our problems through their complaints, challenges, and reasons for taking their business elsewhere.

### **BUS PARKING ON RIVER ROAD**

Mr. Brian Holland had done some research on the amount of vehicles currently parked on River Road. He found that, on average, 22-31 motor coaches and 90 cars have been occupying River Road. The bus parking discussion was tabled until the next meeting because Mr. David Perella was not available to attend this meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Andrea Richey mentioned that we should maybe look into pursuing family reunions for sales leads. She added that it is a growing business and something that many people seem to be interested in.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The Agenda for the next Convention/Group Sales Work Group Meeting will include:

-Bus Parking – with a recommendation from Mr. David Perella for a 2008 solution

**The Group unanimously agreed that a solution of some kind be made for 2008. This Item will be first on the Agenda for the next meeting.**

-Plans and details for setting up the Round Table Meeting for all City Businesses.

### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next scheduled meeting for the Convention/Group Sales Work Group is **Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 9:00 am** in the **Board Room** of the convention center.