

July Convention & Visitors Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 15, 2020 10 a.m.
Butler's Courtyard
122 N Michigan Ave. League City, TX 77573

- I. Call Meeting to Order at 10:05 by Kalpesh Patel
 - a. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum
 - b. Members present Kalpesh Patel, Cory Thomas, Tejal Patel, Shawna Reid, Bridget Bear, Amber Murphy
 - c. Staff present Stephani Polk, Ashley Donde, Sarah Greer Osborne
 - d. Guests: Larry Millican, Courtney Presser, DOS from Fairfield Inn
- II. Discuss and Consider Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. Documents: June 24, 2020 CVB Advisory Board Minutes
 - b. Motion to approve May meeting minutes: Bridget Bear
 - c. Seconded: Cory Thomas
 - d. Vote: Unanimous
- III. Citizens Request to Address the Board: none
- IV. *Postponed*: Bill Roach, Wings Over Houston Airshow – HOT Grant Application
- V. CVB Advisory Board Business
 - a. **Board Appointments for terms expiring this December**: Stephanie Polk discussed expiring memberships for board members, Cory Thomas mentioned he has another year left on his membership, Larry Millican explained that different positions carry different terms, which is based on the bylaws. Cory said he would reapply either way. Stephanie said they are 2-year terms, staggered based on position number. Tejal asked about board members who are absent at meetings but still listed. Stephanie said we share the attendance with the City secretary and that is shared when creating the new board, and they take lack of attendance into account. Stephanie said she would email the bylaws.
 - i. Document: 2020-2021 Advisory Board Terms
 - b. **Updated Tourism Grant Application Form**: Stephanie shared a copy of this document with all attendees. She explained she rebuilt the document from scratch. She wanted to emphasize what HOT taxes are supposed to be used for. Her goal was to clarify funding and explain why some things aren't granted funding when others are. Amber mentioned

she likes that hotel stays are a point of focus regarding funding, and Sarah and Stephanie agreed. Stephanie brought up wanting to track overnight stays. Stephanie also mentioned a list of other sponsorships. Sarah discussed working with Bay Area CVB and funding in the future in relation to League City giving far more money than other cities. Stephanie also mentioned there's a place for event sponsors to fill out explaining how they will bring in guests and fit the funding requirements. Sarah wants to know how other city's fund events, and Bridget suggested giving 50% of funding before and 50% after the event. Cory said the 50/50 funding option is normal with most cities. Sarah said the city doesn't cut the check until after seeing the post-event report. Sarah said after 60 days is too long to wait for the post-event report. Cory agreed that more than 60 days is also too long. Tejal Patel asked if we can include a place for events to list additional funding from other organizations. Sarah said for 2021 we have a very small budget to give events, around \$31,000. Sarah mentioned that the publicity the city gives also has a dollar value, including blogs, ads, videos, and other marketing after Bridget mentioned looking at the ROI for these events. Stephanie wants to know in advance what the marketing plan will be for potential event hosts, and if it's a good business plan. Cory mentioned creating a partnership/vendor list resource so applicants will know who they can coordinate with. Stephanie asked if we should prepare a resource kit, and Cory said yes, that could be part of the in-kind marketing plan. Sarah and Bridget agreed with this idea. Stephanie said she will add these notes and email the document sometime next week, and they can reply back with their approval.

- VI. **LC Communications Report** – Sarah Greer Osborne said most of her recent efforts have been COVID related, and most of her resources have been spent on that. She said it's important to her to promote general education about COVID to squash rumors. Sarah said she's having a lunch and learn with the regional director of Memorial Hermann to clarify these rumors. She is going full steam ahead on the summer passport, and emphasizing that it's safe to do during COVID. She said we have 20 people who have filled out the entire passport already. She mentioned COVID effects mental health and the passport is a good way to get out. Sarah mentioned the kayak rental event for this Friday, in partnership with Kayak Shack and Butler Longhorn museum, which will also have food trucks and snow cones. Sarah mentioned planning for EcoFest on Sept. 19, which will be social-distance friendly. It will entail learning about birds and bees, and giving away free trees. She explained we are trying to become a birding city and

we have to host an event to get that designation. Chalk mural artists will be there to create nature art from 9-3, and kids can also make chalk art. A professional mural artist is coming in to do chalk art, who is also helping us launch a public art campaign. Sarah also shared that the summer passport was advertised in Community Impact. Tejal asked how she can get passports for Fairfield Inn.

VII. CVB Manager Report – Stephanie Polk Stephanie said that “The Water Starts Here” billboard is up on I-45. Sarah said it will help us identify ourselves among the Houston region, and that it helps us with our imaging and identity campaign. Stephanie said we are trying to create awareness about our city and that the number one obstacle is telling people what there is to do here. Sarah mentioned nature branding including the creek, birding, etc. to establish where we are and what we have to do. Stephanie said billboard impressions are about 652,000 a week, and we have a new billboard going up in August. We also have a mobile campaign, which has had 301k impressions. It is a targeted campaign in conjunction with the billboard. Stephanie said she also sent out a visitor study questionnaire to residents, and had a few hundred responses. Stephanie is analyzing the responses. She has the results, and board members can have them. She said more than half of the respondents wouldn’t recommend people visit League City. Stephanie discussed more of the questions on the survey and that it needs to be further analyzed. Stephanie made a word cloud of some of the responses about how they would describe League City. Cory asked about demographics, and that we don’t know what they are. Stephanie said she would like to pull that info. Tejal asked who the surveys went to, and Stephanie said it went to our residents. Sarah said it was the first of many efforts moving forward, including focus groups and more, to identify League City’s branding. Kalpesh asked if now is the right time to do this, because of COVID, and that we should slow down for a few weeks. He doesn’t think the timing is very good, and it’s better to promote safety, rather than telling people to go around and explore the city. He emphasized that people are suffering. Sarah said the survey and research can be done without risk, and is stressing it through the eyes of economic development. Tourism puts off some residents, but we still need to work to diversify property vs commercial tax base. Kalpesh brought up how hard it is to social distance in the pool. Bridget said her hotel offers masks, and asked the police chief to back them if they have defiant guests. Sarah said this isn’t a sprint it’s a marathon, and that it has to be a balance of coexisting and moving forward. Amber said local travel is the kind of tourism that SHOULD be promoted. People want to get away, and not on airplanes. Amber said she is excited for the

kayak event because her kids need to get out, same with the passport. Even locals don't know about the kayak trails or birding, and other ways to social distance. Kalpesh is questioning the data because of COVID, and Tejal agreed that the data might be skewed. Stephanie said she wants a benchmark just to see what people think. Larry said people have more time to fill out the survey now, and feels we will receive more data because people have more time. Sarah said it's just a baseline and we will do more surveys moving forward. It's a guide to understand what our residents perceive are best places to take visitors. Sarah said focus groups will provide more data in different setting. Stephanie said visitor boxes will be at local hotels, asking how people heard about League City. Cory mentioned putting a QR code on the boxes. Stephanie mentioned website development, and shared photos of its progress. Sarah said we saved hundreds of thousands of dollars creating it in-house. Stephanie said yesterday she went out to a Texas Artisan store for pictures, and will be getting photos of sailboats soon to use in marketing collateral and on the website. Stephanie said we are actively working on birding, and need to develop special packages and work with hoteliers. Stephanie shared performance analytics numbers for the website. Social media performance is growing as well. Stephanie went over Q2 HOT tax revenue report from the city. Stephanie mentioned LodgingRev, a company that monitors Air B&B properties and brings them into compliance. League City currently has 11 local Air B&B properties. Revenue for the 1st quarter of 2020 was around \$80K for League City, and Air B&Bs have a very high daily rate. LodgingRev will take 6 weeks to implement and is automated. We are just waiting for contract to begin so we can implement. Tajel mentioned money we could have gotten from quarter 1, but didn't, and asked if we can go back for it. Stephanie said no. Sarah said the goal of this software is that it does the work for us, has a good ROI. Implementation is \$5k, and \$1k every month after, equaling \$12k a year. It will pay for itself after one quarter. Stephanie said we may be able to use it with the regular hotels too. Larry Millican said the ROI sounded good, that it was worth the cost. Stephanie said we are waiting on legal to see if they are sole source vendor, or if we need bids. Shawna said Kemah has about 40 rentals. Sarah said we could share this software company's contact information with Bay Area CVB cities, Shawna agreed. Stephanie said she was nominated to be on T.A.C.V.B.'s Advisory Board, and TTA also called asking her to serve on their Advisory Board. Stephanie shared our advertorial in the Community Impact inside front cover for Sugarland and Katy. Stephanie also brought up mural projects in the works. Sarah said Anat Ronen will be doing a mural for us in the future, and drove her around to get her input and where to do the mural, including the

Masonic Lodge the blue building, a nearby church, the water structure at league park, and the dollar store. Sarah will be putting together some cost estimates. Sarah will be forming an art committee within the City to do research. Mini Murals in Houston helps find local artists and project manages the mural creation. It becomes a mural tour for some people. Tejal asked how many we are looking at, and that it would be cool to create interactive murals. Sarah said we'd like nature, history, etc type of murals, along with interactive artwork. Sarah wants to know what has worked and not worked for other cities.

VIII. Comments/Reports from members of the Board Tejal said Fairfield Inn is opening in August. Shawna said she recently took part in a seminar hosted by Public Tour Magazine, with the goal of reaching northern Mexico tourism. She also said they're doing a co-op with Around Houston, doing ads in community impact and Houston 365, and another campaign with AJR media and City of Baytown in October to target Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin. She said there is a C.L.I.A. virtual training in August, and she will be doing a 30min training for cruise lines. The point is to promote us as a cruise destination for people to come stay in the Bay Area before or after a cruise. Amber mentioned doing a Bay Area Passport Tour. Cory said Music Festival is officially canceled for 2020.

IX. Request for Future Agenda Items, Announcements

X. Monday, Aug. 10 – Budget CIP Work Session: CVB Advisory Board invited to attend. Stephanie said Aug 10th at 6 pm City Council will do a budget review for the CVB and wants the CVB advisory board members to attend. Larry explained how the meetings work. It's series of meetings, and they go line by line, dollar by dollar, for the different city directorates. Sarah wants the board there to support the CVB because of how the CVB is proposing to spend money, including less funding for the Butler Longhorn Museum and Ghirardi House. Larry said he would like to have the murals as part of the funding. He brought up Seabrook, Friendswood, and Texas City public art and how they help the city's get recognized. He wants League City to have its own distinct identity. Stephanie mentioned using SeeSource in the advertising budget, and that she's concerned about the money used for other projects and that it isn't properly promoting the City.

a. **City Council Meeting** - Civic Center Ballroom

b. **Next CVB Advisory Board Scheduled Meeting**—August 19, 2020 at 10am, location will be at Fairfield Inn.

XI. Adjournment Stephanie adjourned the meeting at 11:36 a.m.