

ATTACHMENT A

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

May 19, 2020
Williamsburg Tourism Council

WILLIAMSBURG TOURISM COUNCIL MEETING

Williamsburg, Virginia

May 19, 2020

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Williamsburg Tourism Council (WTC) was convened at 1:00 p.m. on May 19, 2020, by conference call. A quorum was present.

Tourism Council Members Present:

CHAIR Jeffrey D. Wassmer, York County Board of Supervisors
VICE CHAIR Neal Chalkley, President, Williamsburg Hotel & Motel Association (WHMA)
TREASURER Ruth Larson, James City County Board of Supervisors

Michael Claar, Williamsburg Area Restaurant Association (WARA)
Christy Coleman, Executive Director, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation
Cliff Fleet, President and CEO, Colonial Williamsburg
Cheri Green, Chair, Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance (GWCTA), Board of Directors
Denise Kellogg, Director, Development, Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation
Kevin Lembke, President, Busch Gardens/Water Country USA
Rita McClenny, President and CEO, Virginia Tourism Corporation
Doug Pons, Vice Mayor, City of Williamsburg

Staff Members Present:

Victoria Cimino, CEO

Vivian Bunting, Destination Specialist
Mikey Jasiczek, Marketing Manager
Jodie Lumley, Executive Assistant/Operations Manager
Julie O'Neil, Marketing Director
Jill Pongonis, Familiarization Tour Coordinator
Dave Potter, Industry Relations Manager
Julia Smyth-Young, Sales Director
David Turner, Finance Director

I. Call to Order

- Jeff Wassmer called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.
- Michey Chohany was represented by Michael Claar
- James Horn was represented by Denise Kellogg

II. U.S. Travel Association (USTA) Briefing – Tori Barnes, EVP of Public Affairs and Policy

- \$519 billion in direct travel industry losses
- \$1.2 trillion loss in total economic output
- 8 million jobs lost (end of April)
- Total impact is nine times that of 9/11
- Travel-related job losses represent 38 percent of all job losses through April
- USTA advocacy:
 - Structural requirements to expand eligibility of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), so that destination marketing organizations (DMO) are eligible
 - Liability protections for businesses as they reopen
 - Individual tax credit, based on qualified travel expenses
 - Reinstate the business and entertainment tax deduction
 - \$10 billion grant program for travel promotion
 - Action isn't expected on next phase until late June
- With the help of leading members of the medical community, USTA has created industry guidance for health and safety promotions
- Questions from Travel Council
 - Ruth Larson asked to obtain statistics cited
 - Barnes noted that information can be found on ustravel.org
 - Cimino noted that information can be found on visitwilliamsburg.com/industryresources
 - Doug Pons asked if there will be a form of amnesty re: unemployment insurance rates
 - Barnes believed there had been work done in regard to unemployment insurance rates

III. Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) Briefing – Rita McClenny, President and CEO

- Coastal Virginia has a projected loss of \$2.5 billion in tourism spending
- Projected Coastal Virginia job loss is \$15,500; statewide is 80,000
- VTC hosts a weekly industry call on Mondays at 3:00 p.m.
- McClenny hosts a weekly DMO leadership call on Thursdays at 9:00 a.m.
- VTC advertising will be in market through August 15, focusing on drive markets
- Post-August 15, VTC will return to the "Share What You Love" campaign in New York, Philadelphia, DC, Baltimore, Raleigh, and Greensboro
- Pons asked if the Governor had given any consideration to opening local beaches given Virginia Beach is open
 - McClenny noted that Virginia Beach provided a specific and robust plan to the Governor's Office
 - Wassmer noted that there was an attempt to open Yorktown beaches,

but social distancing would have been difficult given the beach's size

IV. Public Comment

- Ron Kirkland, Williamsburg Hotel and Motel Association, introduced himself and was recognized to speak
 - Kirkland stated that it would be helpful to follow-up with the governor on opening local beaches
 - Stated hotel revenue is down 80 percent year-over-year
 - Expressed that consumers would like to know what is open

V. Minutes

- Wassmer requested a motion to approve the March 17, 2020, meeting minutes
- Cliff Fleet motioned
- Larson provided a second
- Minutes were approved

VI. Treasurer's Report

- Larson shared year-to-date financials (through March 31, 2020)
- Monthly finance meeting takes place on the Thursday preceding the Tourism Council meeting (typically the second Thursday of the month); all are invited to attend
- Revenue/expenses
 - Total revenue is \$830K; over budget by \$21K
 - Sales tax revenue totaled \$745K; \$3K over budget
 - Transient tax revenue totaled \$79K; \$11K over budget
 - YTD total revenue is \$135K over budget
 - YTD sales tax revenue is \$120K over budget
 - Expenses are \$1.1 million under budget
 - Billings not yet received, program evaluation, staffing
 - Administration expenses are \$24K under budget
- Cash on Hand
 - Totals \$10.9 million
 - \$3 million over budget
- Transient tax revenue
 - January 2020 totaled \$79,033
 - A 20 percent increase over January 2019

- Sales tax revenue
 - January 2020 totaled \$744,513
 - A three percent increase over January 2019
 - Larson noted a three-month moving average shows a nine percent increase over the same timeframe in 2019
- Larson noted that PB Mares completed the Alliance 2019 audit, which will be presented at the July 21 WTC meeting
- Cimino presented Smith Travel Research (STR) slide
 - March 2020 v. March 2019
 - Occupancy down nearly 52 percent, due to COVID-19
 - YTD occupancy down 19 percent
 - Average Daily Rate (ADR) down 14 percent
 - Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) down 58 percent
- WTC Finance Director, David Turner, presented the Fiscal Year 2021 budget; Cimino noted it is a six-month budget given the unknowns around revenue
 - Turner compared budget to 2019 actuals
 - Sales tax revenue forecast to be down 33 percent
 - Transient tax forecast to be down 42 percent
 - 2020 revenue forecast is \$9.1 million, versus 2019 actuals at \$13.8 million
 - Advertising expenditures will increase \$4 million
 - Approximately \$5 million in reserves will be used
 - Turner shared cash position
 - Entered 2020 at \$6.7 million
 - By close of March, reached \$8.8 million
 - Year-end forecast is \$1.7 million, cash-on-hand
- Wassmer requested a motion to approve the budget as presented
 - Larson motioned
 - Pons provided a second
 - Budget was approved

VII. Executive Director Report

- Procurement
 - Legal services and public relations contracts should be awarded prior to close of month
- Marketing/communication activities
 - COVID – 19
 - Worked to become an industry resource
 - Created microsite aggregating news/resources from local, state, and federal/national organizations
 - Twice weekly industry emails

- Participation in webinars, industry trade organization briefings, conference calls re: pandemic
 - Shifted public relations/social strategy
 - Created bridge campaign, “We’ll Be Together Soon”
 - Local, industry-focused campaign launched in coordination with National Travel and Tourism Week
- Research
 - Numerous research projects conducted, including consumer perception, focus groups, brand campaign testing, consumer sentiment
 - Topline perception findings:
 - Family-friendly, great place for history
 - Relaxing and a place to enjoy special moments
 - Those who have not visited believe history to be the distinguishing factor
 - Those who have visited believe new/unexpected experiences to be the distinguishing factor
 - Some travelers will prefer AirBnB stays to minimize exposure
 - Research insights informed creative platform, which then led to testing “Life. At your pace.” campaign/creative
 - Findings led to the creation of three target personas
 - Allows for more effective content creation and ad delivery
- Campaign
 - Target audience segmentation
 - Gen X/Millennials with children (48 percent)
 - Gen X/Millennials without children (20 percent)
 - Active Mature (32 percent)
 - Target geography to focus on drivable origin markets
 - Media channel approach includes television, digital, social, influencers, pay-per-click, search engine marketing
- Cooperative marketing program
 - Portion of media budget dedicated to cooperative marketing program (capped at \$500,000)
 - Open to regional suppliers
 - Two media partners, TripAdvisor and Adara
 - Programs range from \$2,500 to \$25,000
 - WTC will provide a 1:1 match
- “Dine & Shop Local” campaign to launch in June
- visitwilliamsburg.com redevelopment underway, currently in discovery phase
 - Next phase to include creative and user experience

VIII. Sales Director Report

- WTC Sales Director, Julia Smyth-Young, shared sales action plan
 - Key segments:
 - Social/Military/Education/Religious/Fraternal (SMERF)
 - Associations
 - Corporate sales and international
 - Group tour
 - Sports
 - Tactics:
 - Secure key memberships in trade groups
 - Participate in professional organizations
 - Exhibit at trade shows and events
 - Host familiarization tours
 - Sales missions and client events
 - Currently auditing protocols, implementing customer relationship management (CRM) software, identifying potential clients/target accounts, and developing collateral materials
 - There has been an aggressive push to call on current/past clients

IX. Chair Report

- Wassmer noted a recent Memorandum of Understanding agreement between the three municipalities and GWCTA, regarding Maintenance of Effort funds
- Wassmer recognized that Neal Chalkley's term on the GWCTA board of directors will expire, noted Chalkley had agreed to serve another term
 - Wassmer opened the floor to comments, then requested a motion
 - Larson motioned
 - Fleet provided a second
 - Chalkley's second term on the GWCTA board of directors was approved
- Wassmer noted the need to elect officers during the July WTC meeting, requested Chalkley form a nomination committee, suggested those interested in serving on the committee or a position reach out to Chalkley directly

X. Old Business

- None

XI. New Business

- Larson commented that the James City County budget will be reduced by ten percent
 - Emphasized the need to support tourism marketing, as it drives important tax revenues

XII. Adjournment

- The next meeting will take place on July 21, 2020