

TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

A regular meeting of the City of Brenham's Tourism Advisory Board was held on Thursday, January 19, 2023, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in The Barnhill Center, The Bullock Ballroom at 111 West Main, Brenham, Texas

Board Members present:

Scott Atwood
Commissioner Kirk Hanath
James Pharaon
Jean Shoup
Stacey Walters
Harrison Williams

Board Member absent:

Jenny Van Dorf

Visit Brenham Team present:

Director of Tourism and Marketing Jennifer Eckermann; Tourism and Marketing Coordinator Nancy Joiner; Hannah Mertz, Group Sales with Visit Brenham; Partners & Visitor Experience Manager, Kathrine Briscoe; Lu Hollander with Visit Brenham; Melinda Faubion, and Natalie Lange.

Visit Brenham Team absent:

Alex Dill, The Barnhill Center

City Council:

Leah Cook

Media Present:

none

- 1. Call Meeting to Order**
Chairman Scott Atwood called the meeting to order.
- 2. Public Comments**
There were no public comments.

REGULAR SESSION

- 3. Discuss and Possibly Act Upon the Election of Tourism Advisory Board Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for a Term of One Year, Expiring on December 31, 2023**

The current Chair and Vice Chair are Scott Atwood and Jenny Van Dorf respectively.

They both are willing to serve again in 2023.

A motion was made by Boardmember Pharaon and seconded by Boardmember Shoup.

Chair Scott Atwood called for a vote. The motion passed with voting as follows:

Scott Atwood	Yes
Kirk Hanath	Yes
James Pharaon	Yes
Jean Shoup	Yes
Jenny Van Dorf	Absent
Stacey Walters	Yes
Harrison Williams	Yes

4. Discuss and Possibly Act Upon Approval of Minutes from October 13, 2022, Board Meeting

A motion was made by Boardmember Walters and seconded by Boardmember Shoup to approve the minutes from October 13, 2022, Board Meeting.

Chair Scott Atwood called for a vote. The motion passed with voting as follows:

Scott Atwood	Yes
Kirk Hanath	Yes
James Pharaon	Yes
Jean Shoup	Yes
Jenny Van Dorf	Absent
Stacey Walters	Yes
Harrison Williams	Yes

WORK SESSION

5. Update on Short-Term Rentals (STRs) to Include Growth in 2022, and the HOT Collections Platform (GovOS)

Jennifer Eckermann, Tourism & Marketing Director presented this item. In August of 2022, we had 31 STRs (this does not include hotels) paying HOT in the City of Brenham, after working with GOVOS, an additional 43 have been identified and we are at different stages of communication with them to assist in getting signed on to the platform and paying their HOT. The County had a meeting on December 13, 2022, to lay out the directions for the County. As of January 16, 2023, GovOS has failed to meet the county's expectations. They have given them another two months to fix the issues. The County will be having training with GovOS soon. College Station is looking into RV Parks to pay HOT and will see what the Legislature will do. The County is watching this process and has expressed interest in how this will work if the Legislature follows through.

6. Report on Changes to Datafy Visitor Information Dashboard

Hannah Mertz with Group Sales for Visit Brenham presented this item. She reported on updated information on Datafy primarily brought about by the Strengthening American Cybersecurity Act of 2022. All the information collected from Datafy and given to us will be used for Marketing purposes.

7. Texas Music Friendly Committee Update to Include Texas Sounds and Cities Conference, the success of Washington County Live, and Promotion of Live Music Events at Local Venues

Kathrine Briscoe, Partners & Visitor Experience Manager presented this item. She attended the Texas Sounds and Cities Conference, and we are doing more than a city our size. We are in pretty good and the people at the conference liked the live music we promoted on the local radio station. The What's Happening page sent out each week is up by 45% for 2022.

8. Report on First Round of Tourism Grants for 2023

Jennifer Eckermann, Director of Tourism and Marketing presented this item. The Tourism Grant Eligibility Committee met on November 29, 2022, to review five grant requests that were received for events/projects scheduled between January 1, and June 30, 2023. The Funding Committee met and recommended funding to the Commissioner's Court for the five requests for a total of \$27,100. The five organizations were the Chappell Hill Chamber of Commerce-Art Walk, Chappell Hill Historical Society-Bluebonnet Festival, Chappell Hill Chamber of Commerce-Wine & Chocolate Tasting, Unity Theater Company-2022-2023 Season, and Washington on the Brazos-Texas Independence Day celebration.

9. Washington County Expo Report

Harrison Williams, Director of the Washington County Expo presented this item. He gave a 2022 wrap-up report of the Expo Center. They had 23 horse shows, 20 livestock shows, and sales, 56 Christmas parties and celebrations, 13-Quinceanera, and 11 wedding events for a total of 148 paid events. This does not include the Washington County Fair. They had 199 paid day events and 162 non-paid events for a total of 358 total usages of the Expo. A quarter of a million people have been at the Expo and have a wait list for 2023 Expo usage. They are currently working on infrastructure, and they have projects such as the sound system, working on the current parking situation, and a Master Plan for the Expo. They are currently running out of room for the usage of the grounds. They are on 40 acres and have 7 to 11 acres that are in the flood plain.

10. Report on Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections

Jennifer Eckermann, Tourism and Marketing Director presented this item. The report presented was an update of HOT collections by the City of Brenham through FY22. The FY22 Actual is higher than what was budgeted for 2022. For FY23 the Budgeted amount is \$800,000.

11. Visit Brenham DMO Q1 Report and 2022 Highlights

Jennifer Eckermann, Director of Tourism and Marketing gave this report. Her report included the Quarter 1 Report along with highlights from 2022. Kathrine Briscoe and Natalie Lange also gave an update on the Visitor Center, Visitor Guides, and Social Media posts.

12. Administrative Report to Include Tourism Partner Awards Reception, Possible Spring Press Trip, and 2023 Meeting Dates

Jennifer Eckermann, Director of Tourism and Marketing gave this report. The Tourism Partner Awards Celebration was held on Wednesday. There were approximately 115 people in attendance. We have been approached to partner with Destination Bryan and Discover Navasota for a Spring Press Trip. Abigail Noel with Destination Bryan will be meeting with a travel journalist in NYC later this month and will pitch a bluebonnets and downtown trip for 3-5 writers. Hannah Mertz let her know about Round Top until the end of March and would not be able to get hotel rooms until April. Also, Jennifer included a list of all the advertising and outreach for the quarter. The remaining meeting dates for 2023 are Thursday, April 20th, Thursday, July 20th, and Thursday, October 19th.

13. Adjourn

With no further business, Scott Atwood adjourned the meeting.

Scott Attwood

Board Chair

Nancy Joiner

Tourism & Marketing Coordinator