

TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

A regular meeting of the City of Brenham's Tourism Advisory Board was held on Thursday, April 18, 2024, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in The Barnhill Center, Morriss Hall in the Schulte Room, 106 Douglas Street, Brenham, Texas

Board Members present:

Scott Atwood
Commissioner Kirk Hanath
DeWayne Burnett
James Pharaon
Jenny Van Dorf
Harrison Williams

Board Members absent:

Stacey Walters

Visit Brenham Team present:

Director of Tourism and Marketing Jennifer Eckermann; Tourism and Marketing Coordinator Nancy Joiner; Lu Hollander with Visit Brenham; Partners & Visitor Experience Manager, Kathrine Briscoe; Manager of The Barnhill Center, Alex Dill; Melinda Faubion, and Natalie Lange.

Citizens Present:

Tiffany Eckhardt
Candice Garner
David Garner

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 Approval of Minutes from January 18, 2024, Board Meeting

A motion was made by Board Member James Pharaon and seconded by Board Member Jenny Van Dorf to approve the minutes from the January 18, 2024, Board Meeting.

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

Scott Atwood	Yes
DeWayne Burnett	Yes
James Pharaon	Yes
Jenny Van Dorf	Yes
Stacey Walters	Absent
Harrison Williams	Yes
Commissioner Kirk Hanath	Yes

WORK SESSION

4. Introduction of New Visit Brenham Team Member Elayne Grisbee

Kathrine Briscoe Tourism & Marketing Manager presented this item. She introduced Elayne Grisbee, and she started on March 5, 2024, before Spring Break. Elayne is a recent graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where is majored in Economics. We are excited to have her as the newest member of the Visit Brenham team.

5. Update on Hosting of Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street Exhibition

Jennifer Eckermann, Tourism & Marketing Director presented this item. Work on the local exhibits is progressing and our plans with community partners are evolving as we proceed. We are looking at having sound walks around the communities, a volunteer committee chair is being developed, along with a meeting about Camptown tonight at 6 pm. We are working on updating the Washington County Historical Markers Guide and thanks in part to the support of the Washington County Commissioner's Court, developing brochures and rack cards to promote all the activities. We have a marketing plan that is also being developed, fundraising plans, and a timeline and calendar for all projects.

6. Report on Visit Brenham Application for Recognition as an Inaugural Texas Tourism Friendly Community

Jennifer Eckermann, Tourism & Marketing Director presented this item. Travel Texas which is a part of the Office of the Governor's Economic Development and Tourism division. This division is responsible for promoting Texas as a premier travel destination. Visit Brenham submitted a Letter of Intent to apply to become one of the

inaugural certified communities, and submitted general information in the first section of the application which was approved. She and Kathrine Briscoe met with Travel Texas concerning the next steps of the application process.

7. Report on Formation of STR Group and Plans for Upcoming Meeting

Jennifer Eckermann, Tourism & Marketing Director presented this item. During a meeting with TH&LA President and CEO Scott Joslove, he encouraged the formation of a STR property owner group that would set up regular meetings and agendas for those meetings. He assigned several owners in attendance to a committee to plan these meetings which will be held bi-monthly and with topics for these. Visit Brenham sent an email from the property owner list and twenty owners came to the meeting. Their first meeting was on Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at the Washington County EMS building where Commissioner Hanath presented about County HOT funds.

8. Report on New Tourism Grant Application Being Developed

Commissioner Kirk Hanath presented this item. The County Tourism Grant Funding committee has updated the Tourism Grant Application by simplifying the application process. It will go before the Commissioners Court on Tuesday, April 23, 2024. The County Attorney's office has reviewed it as well. The next round of funding will begin on May 6, 2024, online.

9. Visit Brenham DMO Fiscal Year Q2 Report

Jennifer Eckermann presented this item, along with Kathrine Briscoe, Partners & Visitor Experience Manager; Alex Dill, Manager of The Barnhill Center; Melinda Faubion, and Natalie Lange. Kathrine Briscoe reported on the DMO and Visitor Center statistics, Spring Break Experiences, Visit Brenham website and wildflower watch page and statistics, E-Newsletter, and "What's Happening this Week." Natalie Lange gave her report on social media's popular posts for communities, Facebook, and Instagram. There will be an Influencer coming next week to Brenham. Melinda Faubion reported on digital marketing with Madden Media, and we are doing a great job per Madden Media. She also talked about our print and digital ads, and bonus media/advertorials. Alex Dill gave her report about The Barnhill on group rentals, the entertainment, the upcoming 2024 Speaker Series Luncheons, and the 100th Anniversary Kick-Off Celebration with the unveiling of the "100 Years of the Simon" Exhibit.

10. Washington County Expo Report

Harrison Williams, Director of the Washington County Expo presented this item. He gave an overview of what has been happening at The Expo. It's been quiet due to the Stock Shows, and they also hosted the Fortnightly Annual Book Sale. They received their 130-plus pages of the Feasibility Study and are still going through it. It does have some good plans and ideas in it so far. The Commissioners and the Washington County Fair Association will have a meeting on how to proceed. There are a lot of opportunities for The Expo. One recommendation was to expand the old Road and

Bridge building during the Washington County Fair. They are busy at The Expo with events, and they are having people stay in hotels and short-term rentals with an occasional group staying in Bryan/College Station.

11. Administrative Report

Jennifer Eckermann presented this report, along with Scott Atwood and Commissioner Kirk Hanath. Jennifer Eckermann reported that TAMF won the Texas Travel Award for best art festival for the small/medium category, we will re-elect a Chair and Vice Chair at the next quarterly meeting, and HOT figures for the City are down for January and February and are waiting to see the figures for March. Hotels are impacted by economic development, and we are lacking quality hotels. We do have two new hotels coming and they are a dual-brand hotel of La Quinta/Hawthorn and Marriott Townplace. She will have a report on this in the next quarterly meeting. Scott Atwood reported that there will be a meeting with TxDOT about the intersection at Highway 290 and Chappell Hill today at 2 pm. TxDOT already has plans to move forward with the project without the knowledge of the Chappell Hill residences. Commissioner Hanath reported that the Grant Eligibility Committee needs two people for this committee. If anyone would like to serve, please let him know before May 20, 2024. On Thursday, April 25 at 5:30 pm, there will be a prayer vigil for those who were injured and lost their life at the DPS office on April 12, 2024.

With no further business, Scott Atwood adjourned the meeting.

Scott Atwood

Board Chair

ATTEST:

Nancy Joiner

Tourism & Marketing Specialist