

TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

A regular meeting of the City of Brenham's Tourism Advisory Board was held on Thursday, January 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.

Media Present:

none

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Scott Atwood called the meeting to order.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Welcome New Board Member DeWayne (DB) Burnett

Jennifer Eckermann, Tourism & Marketing Director presented this item. She welcomed new Board member Burnett to the board. He gave an overview of his career and where he is currently. Everyone welcomed him to the Board.

REGULAR SESSION

4. **Discuss and Possibly Act Upon Approval of Minutes from July 13, 2023, Board Meeting**

A motion was made by Board Member Commissioner Hanath and seconded by Board Member Harrison Williams to approve the minutes from the October 26, 2023, 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
Jean Shoup	Yes
Jenny Van Dorf	Yes
Stacey Walters	Absent
Harrison Williams	Yes
Commissioner Kirk Hanath	Yes

WORK SESSION

5. **Visit Brenham Staff Update**

Jennifer Eckermann, Tourism & Marketing Director presented this item. Hannah Mertz, Group Sales Manager, has left and we have made some tweaks to her position to make it more destination services and group-oriented to better fit our current needs. We have had some interesting interviews, but we were not able to find the perfect fit. We decided to wait until after the holidays and will begin our search again.

6. **Review the 2024 Marketing+ Plan**

Jennifer Eckermann, Tourism & Marketing Director presented this item. Our 2024 Marketing+ Plan shows each month where and what topics we will submit ads for. The + is for the extra columns that help us keep up with a variety of other items on our calendars as well. We use Datafy to help us target campaigns, the season announcement of The Barnhill Center, and the downtown. All are doing well. Board member Van Dorf asked about Influencers, and we have one coming in April.

7. **Update on Progress in Planning Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street Exhibition**

Jennifer Eckermann, Tourism & Marketing Director presented this item. She reported several updates concerning our progress in planning the MoMS exhibit in Brenham/Washington County. They include possible new partnerships with Blinn College and the Heritage Society. Meeting with our community partners to line out their participation, and approval to use Belle's Alley for the Freedom Colonies exhibit, and there will be a workshop for our partners and other communities in the Texas

Independence Trail Region. Each partner community will oversee planning their events, have a gathering place to meet for these events, and work on these as well. Working on the idea of a sound walk for Camptown and James Pharaon would like to sit in on this meeting with Blinn when it is scheduled.

8. Visit Brenham DMO Fiscal Year Q1 Report

Jennifer Eckermann presented this item. Eckermann reported that there was a Hotelier meeting earlier in the week and they all enjoy having these updates on HOT and other items in our Q1 report. The Q1 report shows all that we have accomplished in the first quarter with our E-Newsletter, the What's Happening, social media, digital marketing, digital and print ads, and bonus media/advertorials along with data collected from these items. She gave DMO & Visitor Center updates, The Barnhill Center, and what is coming soon.

9. Washington County Expo Report

Harrison Williams, Director of the Washington County Expo presented this item. He gave an overview of what has been happening in the first quarter of 2024 and, lost opportunities and revenue due to not having enough space at the Expo. He is working on the Master Plan timeline for the Expo and the first marketing draft findings will be completed on January 23, the second draft analysis is tentative for February 13, and the third final analysis is tentative for February 27. The Expo will need from 120 to 150 acres if it decides to move or even expand, and the study will need to focus on what is best for the community. He also presented a list of what their upcoming events are for the Expo.

10. Administrative Report

Jennifer Eckermann presented this report. She and Commissioner Hanath met to discuss updates to the Tourism ILA between the City of Brenham and Washington County. Both acknowledge we can improve communication and cooperation between the entities and the flowing changes to the process will help us to achieve that. There will be a restart button on the Eligibility Committee with the following change the committee will be responsible for reviewing Tourism Grant Applications for eligibility and a member will also serve as an ex-official member of the County's Grant Funding Committee and will present the Eligibility Committee findings at the bi-annual application funding meetings. The City will continue to process the Grant Applications and the Funding Committee will meet soon with City representatives to update the application, the process and procedures, and the use of the Post-Event Reports in funding decisions. The application will be simplified, and the City will work to make the application process more efficient within the limitations of our current resources. We will hold a joint training workshop on the use of HOT funds for current or future applicants who would like to attend in April. We are looking at a new process to put into place to become a Tourism Friendly Texas Certified Community. A Letter of Intent will need to be sent by February 9 to participate in the program's inaugural year. Applicants will meet with Travel Texas staff for approval before submitting the Tourism Friendly Texas Certified Community online training.

With no further business, Scott Atwood adjourned the meeting.

Scott Atwood

Board Chair

ATTEST:

Nancy Joiner

Tourism & Marketing Specialist