

MINUTES

HOUSTON FIRST CORPORATION

**Joint Tourism Committee
July 31, 2018 – 9:00 A.M.
Partnership Tower, 701 Avenida de las Americas, Ste. 200
Houston, Texas 77010
HFC BOARD ROOM**

The Joint Tourism Committee ("Committee") of Houston First Corporation (the "Corporation" or "HFC"), a Texas local corporation created and organized by the City of Houston as a local government corporation pursuant to TEX. TRANSP. CODE ANN. §431.101 et seq. and TEX LOC. GOV'T. CODE ANN. §394.001 et seq., posted a meeting at Partnership Tower, 701 Avenida de las Americas, Houston, Harris County, Texas, 77010, on Tuesday, July 31, 2018, commencing at 9:00 a.m.

Written notice of the meeting including the date, hour, place and agenda for the meeting was posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

The following Committee members were present for the meeting: Council Member David Robinson (Co-Chair), Patricia Voss (Co-Chair), Helen Bonsall, Jay Tatum, Carlos Gutierrez, Wade Morehead, Irma Diaz-Gonzalez, and Ryan Martin.

The Chairman of the Committee called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and a quorum was established.

1. **Public Comments.** None.
2. **Review and approval of minutes from prior meeting.** Following a motion duly seconded, the minutes of May 3, 2018 were approved as presented. Ryan Martin was not present during the vote.
3. **Tourism Quiz.** The tourism quiz was led by Carla Brademan, International Marketing Manager, and included questions related to the Houston Insider Program. Prizes included passes to Houston experiences, such as the Museum of Natural Science.
4. **Presentations and Reports.**
 - A. **Houston Insider Program.** Maureen Haley, Director of Strategic Tourism Initiatives, discussed the Houston Insider Program. The program has been live since March 2018 and replaced the Certified Tourism Ambassador Program. Currently, three hundred people have completed the program, which is free to all who want to learn more about Houston. Membership in the Houston Insider Program offers exclusive deals and information about events happening in the Houston region.

- B. Houston Experience Marketplace Update. Maureen Haley discussed the top experiences purchased year to date which includes Typhoon Texas Waterpark, Houston Museum Pass, Houston Brew Pass, and Space Center Houston. She also displayed a map of Houston Experience Marketplace transactions that showed purchases made throughout the U.S. and even internationally. She is working to bring in partners from all over the city. At this time, our custom offer partners include the Marriott Marquis, Tier Reit Houston and most recently the Hampton Homewood Suites.

Carlos Gutierrez also discussed the potential for a new business opportunity to promote the Houston Experience Marketplace to employees in the oil and gas industry.

The exciting news about the Houston Experience Marketplace is that annual sales are \$53,160.83. There has been a lot of momentum since the inception of the program with the top seller being Typhoon Texas Waterpark.

Patricia Voss stated we should continue to do more to reach out to the hotel community and Medical Center to promote the initiative. Maureen Haley further explained that she was open to any assistance the Committee could provide to help the initiative grow. Jorge Franz, Senior VP of Tourism, stated he would present the initiative to the Hotel Lodging Association to increase the number of partnership opportunities.

Patricia Voss also asked for some written materials to promote the Houston Insider Program. Council Member David Robinson suggested that Tourism create an ad for HTV Houston Television.

- C. Latin America Mission Recap. Jorge Franz discussed his July trip to Peru, Chile, and Argentina for the Houston Trade Investment Mission. Jorge presented Hola Houston to all countries and in Chile he made a presentation at the request of United Airlines to the Ministry of Tourism. Although not much will transpire in the form of bi-lateral deals in Chile, there is an opportunity to foster business with Argentina and the trip was an overall success. Council Member David Robinson was a member of the delegation that attended the mission trip and stated the trip was both diplomatic and a trade mission. Representatives from City Council, HFC, the Houston Airport System, as well as Mayor Sylvester Turner all attended the mission trip.
- D. Mexico Mission Recap. Celia Morales, Senior Manager of International Media Relations, discussed the Tourism Department's annual trip to Mexico. The purpose of the trip is to generate sales and meet with the local media. Seven partners including the Houston Airport System, HGS Travel, and the Galleria participated.

Tourism hosted a media breakfast and consumer activation for influencers and bloggers. During the event, attendees were very engaged and participated in a mixology class taught by a Houston mixologist. Jorge Franz also conducted an

interview that was streamed via Facebook Live. The last event with Travel Trade was a game of Lotería using Houston images and attractions.

During the week, two teams also conducted sales calls and completed over twenty-two trainings with four hundred travel professionals.

- E. Houston Community College Travel Management Certificate Program. Jorge Franz has been contacted by Houston Community College (“HCC”) to help revitalize their tourism program. HCC and a number of tourism industry partners met at HCC West Campus to brainstorm and look at a more holistic approach towards what skills are needed in the industry and to develop an outline for the school tourism program.
- F. Tourism Marketing Update. Jorge Franz discussed some of the challenges his team has faced with marketing campaigns in Mexico. A large number of Mexican tourists have not traveled to Houston since the 1990s and are unaware of all the changes to the city. The mission of the marketing campaign has been to help tourists re-discover Houston. Social media was very receptive to the new images of Houston during the trip to Mexico. Patricia Voss noted a famous influencer with Hola TV was in attendance at the event and is currently making plans to come visit Houston.

Maureen Haley gave an update on some of Houston First Corporation’s collaborative marketing campaigns with the Houston Grand Opera, Comicalooza, Marriott Hotel and other hotels participating in the Summer Spa-tacular. This year is the 10th anniversary of City Pass and the current sales numbers look good. Jorge Franz and Mike Waterman are confident that the Houston Experience Marketplace can be a game changer as Tourism continues to develop the program.

Ryan Martin asked if the Houston Experience Marketplace was sold at the airports and international terminals at Bush Intercontinental Airport. Council Member David Robinson also noted the opportunity to promote tourism at the new international terminal. Jorge Franz further explained that he had been in discussion with the Houston Airport System and would be happy to provide a report at the next scheduled committee meeting.

- G. Houston and Beyond. Emilie Harris, Tourism Project Manager, gave an update on Houston and Beyond. The program recently moved to a two-tier program to increase financial buy-in that consists of a Silver Tier (\$5,000-\$7,500) and Gold Tier (\$15,000). The new member application process opens August 1, 2018 with applications due at the beginning of September.

Houston and Beyond currently includes fourteen cities within a ninety mile radius of the City of Houston including the Woodlands, Sugarland, Deerpark and Galveston etc. Mike Waterman spoke to the success of the Houston and Beyond Program and hopes to increase the number of participating cities in the future.

- 5. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 a.m.