

MINUTES

HOUSTON FIRST CORPORATION

SALES, TOURISM, AND MARKETING COMMITTEE
June 17, 2019 – 9:15 A.M.
Partnership Tower, 701 Avenida de las Americas, Ste. 200
Houston, Texas 77010
HFC BOARD ROOM

The Sales, Tourism, and Marketing 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 Monday, June 17, 2019, commencing at 9:15 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 (Chair), Elizabeth Brock, Ryan Martin, Gerald Womack, Stephanie Haynes, Patricia Voss, Scot Cotton, James Batt, Jonathan Horowitz, Reginald Martin, Nicki Keenan, Sofia Adrogué, and David Minchberg.

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 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 Sales Committee meeting minutes of March 28, 2019, Joint Tourism Committee meeting minutes of May 23, 2019, and Marketing Committee meeting minutes of October 31, 2018 were approved as presented. David Minchberg and Sofia Adrogué were not present for the vote.
3. **Presentations and Reports.**
 - A. **Lutheran Church – 2020 National Youth Gathering.** John Solis provided the Committee with background on the Lutheran Church National Youth Gathering. According to Mr. Solis, HFC anticipates 7,000 rooms on-peak with 47 Houston hotels booked for the event. HFC has proposed three potential options for hosting the event: 1) exclusively at NRG; 2) exclusively at GRB; or 3) at both facilities. Each option brings different concessions and options so HFC staff has been asked to attend this year's event in Minneapolis. The event team will then come to Houston to do a site visit and make a recommendation to their executive team.

Patricia Voss asked if the Lutheran Church was considering hosting the event in any other cities and Mr. Solis explained that two other cities are in the running, however, Houston is a serious contender and HFC was informed that once a site visit is complete, the Lutheran Church will not consider any other cities.

- B. Marketing Update. Lauren Baker discussed the upcoming 50th anniversary celebration of the Apollo 11 moon landing. Ms. Baker explained that for the past six months HFC has been working with NASA and Space Center Houston on a national marketing campaign for Space City Month. In July, a chartered flight from New York to Houston will bring news media to the city and a press conference will be held with Mayor Sylvester Turner to commemorate the anniversary celebration. On July 20, 2019 an event will take place at Discovery Green Park that is open to the public.
- Ms. Baker stated confirmed 61 stories written about the Apollo 11 moon landing with over 31 million impressions. HFC also created Spacey Casey as a social amplification campaign ambassador for Space City Month who has developed a huge social media following with 1.3 million views.
- She also informed the Committee that Houston has made 15 “Best of List” for 2019 and there has been a lot of positive exposure for the city. Visit Houston is also running a new 2D advertising campaign with AR (augmented reality) in the Wall Street Journal. Users can download the AR application on their phone that will bring the advertisement to life.
- Gerald Womack asked what HFC is doing to diversify advertising and if Cheryl McNair, who is the widow of veteran astronaut, Ronald McNair, who died on the Challenger, would be a part of the 50th anniversary celebration. Ms. Baker explained that HFC has reached out to Essence Magazine and will also advertise locally in the Defender. Council Member Robinson asked that the marketing team circulate the list of publications to the Committee for recommendations of additional publications.
- C. Houston Experience Marketplace Update. Jorge Franz gave an update on the Houston Experience Marketplace. The sales report has almost doubled from where HFC was this time last year based on HFC’s partnership with Bandwango. Mr. Franz discussed some of the most popular experiences such as Typhoon Texas Waterpark, Houston Brewpass, and the Vincent Van Gogh Exhibit. According to Mr. Franz, HFC has also increased the number of buyers outside of Texas and the U.S.
- D. Houston Insider Program Update. Mr. Franz informed the Committee that the Houston Insider Program has hosted more than twenty events to get Houstonians, especially those in the hospitality sector, excited about all there is to do in Houston. The Houston Insider Program now has over 1500 members and continues to grow with the addition of in-person certifications at the Tourism Summit, University of Houston, Houston airports and more.

Nicki Keenan stated she thinks the program is great and that it is critical to get hoteliers involved.

David Mincberg asked if there is a goal for Houston Insider participation. Maureen Haley explained that HFC has already exceed that goal and Mr. Mincberg stated that it would be good to see the numbers charted.

Patricia Voss suggested that Mr. Franz present a breakdown by region of the Houston Experience Marketplace and also congratulated the Tourism Department on the launch of the Hola Houston Marketplace in Mexico. Jorge Franz briefly discussed the program and the launch of the United Airlines Vacation Package, which includes hotel accommodations, tickets to Space Center Houston, and a city pass with access to the top six attractions in Houston.

4. **Committee Business**

- A. Consideration and possible recommendation of the 2021 Convening Leaders Host City Agreement with the Professional Convention Management Association ("PCMA"), inclusive of Event Budget, for the 2021 PCMA Annual Meeting. John Solis gave some background on the Professional Convention Management Association ("PCMA"). HFC submitted a bid to host the event in 2015, however, Austin was selected. In 2017, Houston was selected to host the 2019 event, but due to pending legislation related to the bathroom bill, the event organizers pulled out. Houston was then automatically selected as the host city for 2021.

Mr. Solis stated that the 2021 Annual Meeting will have approximately 5,000 attendees, including 1,600 meeting planners and a large number of associations on HFC's target list. According to Mr. Solis, the event is the Superbowl of industry events. HFC has a 60% closure rate when visitors have an opportunity to view the convention facility so this is a great opportunity to showcase the new campus.

HFC's host obligations include pre-promotion during the 2020 Annual Meeting in San Francisco as well as the host obligations during the 2021 event. The overall Event Budget is approximately \$4 million, but HFC anticipates a significant portion of the funds will be raised through an event fee for downtown hotels, the State Trust Funds, and industry suppliers.

Peter McStravick stated that the hotel fee is a project specific assessment that will be applied to all downtown hotels in the amount of \$2.00 per room night for a 12-month period. He further explained that according to reports, even with 10% attrition, a 12-month collection would generate approximately \$3.8 million.

Nicki Keenan stated that we need to fully vet this idea and make sure that everyone understands that the fee is voluntary and if questioned by a guest, it can be removed from their bill. Peter McStravick fully agreed and discussed the process for getting downtown hotels to opt into the program.

Reginald Martin asked if HFC intends to promote other parts of the city outside of the downtown area and John Solis explained there are city tours set up for off-site venues so they anticipate associations will want to book exclusive events outside of the downtown campus.

Council Member Robinson stated that HFC should have heightened awareness of any ADA or accessibility issues as well as language barriers, as previously mentioned by Committee Member Elizabeth Brock.

Gerald Womack asked if there is a diversity opportunity for local businesses and Mr. Solis stated that PCMA runs its own event, but HFC will utilize the services of diverse businesses where they can.

Scot Cotton stated that the Marriott Marquis is in support of PCMA and discussed the significant impact of the Marriott Masters.

David Minberg stated that HFC has been in communication with the Greater Houston Convention Visitors Bureau and acknowledged John Solis for his hard work and effort.

A motion was made for the recommendation of the 2021 Convening Leaders Host City Agreement with the Professional Convention Management Association ("PCMA"), inclusive of Event Budget, for the 2021 PCMA Annual Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

- B. Consideration and possible recommendation of an agreement with the International Association of Exhibitions and Events ("IAEE"), inclusive of the Event Budget. John Solis briefly discussed the International Association of Exhibitions and Events ("IAEE"). He explained that the IAEE event is directed at sales representatives selling exhibit space, but they work closely with meeting planners. HFC is currently in the bid process, however, IAEE will decide in August between Houston and several other cities. The event is smaller than PCMA, however, HFC anticipates 1,200 room nights on peak with over 1,200 organizations in attendance.

A motion was made for the recommendation of an agreement with the International Association of Exhibitions and Events ("IAEE"), inclusive of the Event Budget. The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Adjournment**. The meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.