

# MINUTES

## HOUSTON FIRST CORPORATION

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**Joint Tourism Committee  
November 2, 2018 – 10:00 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 Friday, November 2, 2018, commencing at 10:00 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), Carlos Gutierrez, Jay Tatum, Fernando Cuellar, and Ryan Martin.*

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 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 July 31, 2018 and September 6, 2018 were approved as presented.
3. **Tourism Quiz.** [Item taken out of turn.]
4. **Presentations and Reports.**
  - A. **Tourism Update.**
    - i. **Houston Insider Program.** Maureen Haley, Director of Strategic Tourism Initiatives, gave an update on the Houston Insider Program. She stated that the program currently has over 500 Insiders and that they are looking at ways to engage the community and increase membership.
    - ii. **Tourism Summit.** Maureen Haley announced that the Tourism Summit is scheduled for Thursday, April 25, 2019.

She then introduced Steven Karpas, Director of Partnership Sales, to discuss the sponsorship packages for the 2019 Tourism Summit.

Mr. Karpas announced that United Airlines will serve as a presenting sponsor and President, Scott Kirby, will be a keynote speaker for the 2019 Tourism Summit. He further explained that revenues for the 2018 Tourism Summit were \$55,000 and the goal for the 2019 Tourism Summit is \$75,000.

Council Member David Robinson asked Committee members to contact Mr. Karpas if they knew of anyone interested in participating as a sponsor.

iii. Houston Experience Marketplace Update. Ashley McKenney, Tourism Project Manager, provided an overview of the Houston Experience Marketplace. She provided a map of Houston Marketplace Experience participants and recruiting efforts by district. She stated that the top-selling experiences include Space Center Houston, the Bayou City Arts Festival, and Merry Mansions, Cookies + Cocktails Tour.

iv. Fall Tourism Marketing Update. Emilie Harris, Tourism Project Manager, gave an update on advertising. From September 12, 2018 through November 9, 2018, according to Ms. Harris, the Tourism Department focused on promoting various festivals and fall experiences.

v. Holiday Tourism Advertising Campaign. Emilie Harris discussed the Holiday Tourism Advertising Campaign November 12-28, 2018 with a focus on gift and holiday experiences. She also noted the use of new technology and geofencing to maximize advertising capabilities.

## B. International Tourism Update

i. Market Spotlight: New Research on India. Cindy Decker, Vice President of Market Strategy, discussed findings regarding the growing number of Indian tourists to Houston. She explained that India is now the 5<sup>th</sup> highest market for visitors to Houston and that, although most visitors from India stay with friends and family members, they spend more dollars. Ms. Decker believes there is a lot of opportunity for Houston to market to Indian tourists.

Patricia Voss asked some follow-up questions about the statistics presented.

ii. Mayor's Mission to India. Jorge Franz, Senior Vice President of Tourism, announced that he will accompany Mayor Sylvester Turner on a trade mission to New Delhi and Mumbai November 9-17, 2018 along with many local business representatives.

iii. International Agency Strategy Meeting. Jorge Franz announced that he has joined the 2019 U.S. Travel Association's Educational Seminar for Tourism

Organizations (ESTO) and the Board of Expedia Media Solutions. Mr. Franz added that members of the Board include Bill Gilmer from the Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston.

5. **Committee Business.**

A. **Consideration and possible recommendation of the 2019 Tourism Strategic Plan and Budget.**

Frank Wilson, Chief Financial Officer, gave an overview of the 2019 HFC budget process, and then he provided more details regarding the 2019 Tourism Budget.

Maureen Haley discussed the goals of the Tourism department in the 2019 Strategic Plan and key performance indicators for the upcoming year.

Both Council Member David Robinson and Patricia Voss commented on the necessity of balance in reviewing some of the budget cuts for the upcoming year.

Carlos Gutierrez stated that Tourism should do more to expand its relationship with other major airlines such as Emirates Airlines.

A motion was made to approve the 2019 Tourism Strategic Plan and Budget and was approved unanimously.

6. **Announcements.** Brenda Bazan, HFC President & CEO, announced an upcoming meeting on November 8, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

7. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

**III. Minutes – March 29, 2019**