

MINUTES

HOUSTON FIRST CORPORATION

**Joint Tourism Committee
March 29, 2019 – 9:30 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, March 29, 2019, commencing at 9:30 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), Wade Morehead, Irma Diaz-Gonzalez, and Ryan Martin.

The meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.m. A quorum was not established.

1. **Public Comments.** None.
2. **Review and approval of minutes from prior meeting.** The minutes were not reviewed due to lack of a quorum.
3. **Tourism Quiz.** Edna Tellez opened the meeting with a Tourism Quiz with four Tourism Trivia questions. Prizes were handed out for correct responses.
4. **Presentations and Reports.**
 - A. **Domestic 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 785 Insiders. She informed the committee that the Houston Insider has a new platform and app, which have already launched. So far, in 2019, the program has completed 8 events and has 8 more scheduled through June 2019. Maureen also stated there is a new course provider and that Insider members are utilized as volunteers for events.

ii. Tourism Summit. Jorge Franz, Senior Vice President of Tourism, stated that the Tourism Summit is scheduled for Thursday, April 25, 2019 and that David Minberg, Chairman of the Houston First Corporation Board of Directors, will make the opening remarks and then introduce Mayor Sylvester Turner who has confirmed his attendance.

Jorge stated that there are 400 RSVPs so far for the summit. There will be a strong space theme due to 2019 being the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing (Apollo 11) which occurred on July 20, 1969. This year's agenda is filled with great keynote speakers; including Scott Kirby, President of United Airlines who will speak at the Luncheon.

iii. Houston Experience Marketplace. Ashley McKenney, Tourism Project Manager, provided an overview of the Houston Experience Marketplace. She provided a 2018 Marketplace sales recap. Total Sales were \$140,856. The total sales goal was \$100,000. Total experiences sold were 4,136 with a goal of 400. The top experience sold was Space Center Houston. The total 2018 Visit Houston Profit on Transactions was \$14,542.

Ashley added that there are discussions with the new leadership in marketing at the Houston Zoo about getting on the Marketplace soon. She also mentioned that out of the top 10 best sellers, Sugar Land Holiday Lights, a Houston and Beyond partner, sold 400 tickets in 2018 and are looking forward to their sales in 2019.

The Geographic Sales Breakdown Report for 2018 indicates 64% of sales is inside 50 miles of Houston, 12% is in Texas but outside of Houston, 18% is in the U.S. but outside of Texas, and 6% is International.

Patricia Voss praised the Tourism team on the work they have done. Council Member Robinson pointed out that higher goals are probably needed for 2019. Jorge and Maureen agreed and indicated that they are thrilled with the achievements.

Ashley concluded her update by stating that the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston is the Featured Partner of the Joint Tourism Marketing Program and Marriott International is the Enhanced Partner.

iv. Texas Travel Counselor Conference. Rebecca Thompson, Tourism Services and Special Project Manager, announced that the Texas Travel Counselors Conference is March 31 – April 4, 2019. Over 92 attendees are expected and 80 exhibitors. She mentioned that the last time the conference was in Houston was in 1989. The first time Houston hosted was in 1969, the same year of the first moon landing. So, this year's theme will center around the 50th anniversary of the lunar landing. Council Member Robinson will give welcome remarks at a luncheon

The total cost of the conference is \$120,000 but sponsorships of \$70,000 have been received.

Rebecca provided a handout which outlines the scheduled events, which includes two days of tours to landmarks in Houston and surrounding areas.

B. International Tourism Update

i. New Account Director in Mexico. Carla Brademan, International Marketing Manager, announced that Cynthia Hernandez is the new Account Director in Mexico

ii. Hola Houston Market. Carla provided a handout of Hola Houston Market Launch which included a list of corporate partners. She stated that the Hola Houston Market Launch has generated 32,000 – 33,000 of media value. This product is selling experiences in Mexico for Mexico. A Spanish language site is currently being worked on and it will mirror the English language site.

Jorge mentioned that travel from Mexico is mostly by ground but half a million visitors travel by air.

iii. IPW Conference. Carla stated that this conference is the largest for international travel. This year's conference will be held in Anaheim, CA in early June. Local partners will be attending. This event is also leaning toward a 50th Anniversary Lunar Landing theme.

C. Tourism Results

i. Preliminary estimated 2018 numbers and methodology. Cindy Decker, Vice President of Market Strategy, gave an overview of the estimated numbers for 2018. These leisure visitation numbers were derived by using OmniTrak Data. Visitation in 2018 is estimated at 22.6 million. The projected numbers for 2019 and 2020 are 23.9 million and 25 million, respectively.

Cindy added that in place of just one data point with surveys, multi-source data will be used. The sources will include OmniTrack Surveys, Dean Runyan Associates, and DK Shifflet.

5. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.