

**HOUSTON FIRST CORPORATION | GREATER HOUSTON CONVENTION
AND VISITORS BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE JOINT SALES COMMITTEE**

MARCH 20, 2017 – 9:30 A.M.

The Joint Sales Committee of the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, a Texas non-profit corporation, and Houston First Corporation (the "Corporation"), a Texas non-profit 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., held a meeting at the Partnership Tower, 701 Avenida de las Americas, on Monday, March 20, 2017, 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 members participated in the meeting: David Mincberg, Tom Netting, Scot Cotton, Harry Greenblatt, and Nicki Keenan. Fernando Cuellar, Stephanie Haynes and David Solomon were absent.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:32 A.M.

1. **Public Comments.** None.
2. **Review and Approval of Minutes – January 19, 2017.** A motion was made and duly seconded to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2017 meeting as presented. Chairman Mincberg noted that he had not received the economic impact of the World Petroleum Congress as requested.
3. **Presentations.**
 - A. **Strategic Plan by Segment.** John Solis advised the Committee that there has been an upward trend in booking room nights over the last 48 months and that sales had accomplished a 38% increase in bookings. He stated that the addition of Marriott provided a nice addition to the package as well as the changes to the interior of the convention center and the Avenida.

Further, Mr. Solis described the three focus areas for deployment – city-wide, non city-wide and international and the various goals and the conversion ratios. The sales strategies are focused on personal conversations and building relationships to attract trade shows and client events. He also added that site visits increased from 124 in 2015 to 153 in 2016 and Houston will be hosting key industry events with clients representing 1,500 to 2,000 peak room nights.
4. **Committee Business.** None.
5. **Updates.**
 - A. **Sales Updates.**

Nathan Tollett advised the Committee that short-term City-wide corporate is a major focus and that national associations are our lion's share of business. He is placing a more specific effort to understand the needs of the groups and associate meetings with Houston assets. Houston has a competitive advantage with two international airports.

Jason Purifoy's focus is on non city-wide business and outsourcing meeting planners for larger corporations. He stated that he works on a shorter booking cycle at 24 months out or less, placing emphasis on weekend and holiday patterns. Bookings increased from 28,000 in 2015 to 35,000 room nights in 2016. A component of that success is based on participating in a quarterly sales blitz that partners with hotels to identify potential opportunities. In February, 1,900 calls were placed with a potential of 9,000 room nights. He stated that the conversion rate is approximately 39%. His team is constantly out in the community with a focus on more than downtown.

Daniel Palomo provided an update on international sales, which takes a longer time to book. He stated that Destination Management Company (DMC) is coming to Houston and will increase opportunities in the medical and energy fields. He meets quarterly with Texas Medical Center. He uses social media to communicate with people in other countries for WPC and MPI to attempt to schedule international and domestic conferences together. His main objective is to increase the number of targeted businesses and increasing the conversion rate.

- B. Events Update. Paul Casso reported that the Events team participated in over 20 events for the company year-to-date. He provided a report on the Top Taxi program indicating that 1,205 taxicabs drivers had gone through the certification process; however, the driver turnover is high. There has not been outreach on Uber and Lyft yet. He is currently reviewing a long-range plan.
- C. Services Update. Judi Quesonova highlighted some of the groups that the Client Services team have been working with including monthly meetings with Alpha Kappa Alpha and First Robotics. She also indicated that many groups have expressed concern about HB6. Her team is working with organizations such as METRO, Discovery Green to provide programming for conference attendees.
- D. Marketing Updates. Holly Clapham provided an update on Avenida branding, which tested #1 in brand recognition. Further, she stated that KHOU would be promoting Avenida Houston instead of Houston First. The website and all social channels have been launched for Avenida Houston and additional advertising would be forthcoming. She stated that the concept for a downtown digital studio would be presented to the Joint Marketing Committee and the Houston First Board. If all goes as planned, the digital studio could potentially be active the end of fourth quarter. Finally, she provided an update on Kulture, which could potentially open in June or July of 2017.
- E. Convention Center Report. Dave Osterhout gave the convention center report stating that it has been extremely busy and it was anticipating 15,000 the weekend of March 25-26 for volleyball tournaments. He reported that the new restaurants are doing quite well and the overall reaction from clients is overwhelming. He is anticipating that Bud's Bar-b-que is building out its smokehouse and should be open by the end of May.

David Minberg announced the Joint Sales Committee meeting dates through the remainder of 2017. Mike Waterman added that he would be bringing a reporting package from Jones Lang LaSalle to the next Joint Sales Committee meeting. Further, he stated that the job description for the Market Strategy/Revenue management position was being finalized and he is hoping to fill that position shortly.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:44 A.M.

/s/_____

Pamela Walko, Secretary