

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

SEPTEMBER 14, 2015

The Joint Tourism 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 George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas, Houston, Harris County, Texas 77002, on Monday, September 14, 2015, commencing at 12:00 noon. 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: Fernando Cuellar, Jonathon Glus, Alex Brennan Martin, Katy Caldwell, Andrew Huang, Winslow Jeffries, Council Member Robinson, and Patricia Voss. Carlos Gutierrez and Latha Thomas were absent.

The meeting was called to order at 12:11 p.m. and a quorum was established.

1. Public Comments. None.
2. Minutes. A motion was made and duly seconded to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2015 and July 24, 2015 meetings of the Joint Tourism Committee.
3. Team Activity. Jorge Franz presented a trivia quiz with tourism-related questions about Houston. A small prize was given to those with correct answers.
4. Presentations. Jeff Ross, President and CEO of Houston Botanic Garden, was invited to come to the meeting to provide an update on the Houston Botanic Garden Draft Master Plan. He was accompanied by Jamie Maslyn Larson of West 8, the design firm for the master plan and Priya Sircar of Lord Cultural Resources which provides community facilitation services. His presentation included justification for a botanic garden; proposed location and location scale comparisons with other cities; and, site potential, such as tree canopy, topography, drainage channel and meandering bayou. A public meeting was held on May 12, 2015 and the top priorities that resulted from that meeting were walking trails, shady walkways, nature programs, farmers market, native plantings, seasonal color, flexible lawns and formal gardens. A draft timeline was presented which included an anticipated 2020 opening. They plan to conduct additional public input sessions as their planning continues.
5. Updates.
 - A. Jorge Franz updated the committee on the success of the Tourism Summit held on September 10, 2015. A report on the results of the attendee surveys will be provided at a future Joint Tourism Committee meeting.

- B. Mr. Franz continued with an update on the annual Texas Travel Industry Association Travel Summit. The summit will be held in San Antonio in 2015 and Houston in October of 2016. Houston will host a luncheon on September 21st at the San Antonio summit.
- C. Mr. Franz provided information on Houston & Beyond, a program that is intended to be a marketing cooperative to assist small CVBs to buy into the Official Visitors Guide, and other media opportunities as well as obtain website exposure and collaborate on consumer and trade shows. The goal is to create a cooperative plan with 55 CVBs around Houston to promote the greater Houston area.
- D. Julie Gorte discussed emerging tourism initiatives, such as the Marvel Surf Park, which is planned to include a skatepark, amphitheater, and wave park. The opening is anticipated for late 2016.
- E. Ms. Gorte also provided information on the proposed Grand Central Theme Park in New Caney. This is planned as a western style theme park with an emphasis on Texas history.
- F. Dawn Ullrich discussed the possibility of Space Center Houston as an iconic attraction for the region. Ideas have included the possible use of Houston First funds to assist in the development of a master plan.
- G. Mr. Franz updated the committee on the creation of receptive operators, which are companies that package destinations exclusively to the international market. Houston First will prepare a proposed business plan and take a deep dive at the committee level into this possibility.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:32 p.m.

Pamela Walko

Pamela Walko, Secretary