

TDA Sub-Committee Chair Work Session, March 11, 2014

Session start at 5:30 pm

Attending: Darlene Fox, Julie Spiro, Stephanie Edwards, Brien Peterkin, Mary Lanning, Clifford Meads, Robert Jumper

Not attending: Alex Bell

Gallery: Roy Burnette, George Ware

Alex Bell had previously notified the Chair that he would not be able to attend due to a prior commitment.

Minutes:

Group discussed preparation needs for marketing in the new fiscal year beginning July 2014. Clifford is discussing the options with Marketing Committee and will be making a recommendation to the Board with next steps.

Group discussed the need to research Executive Director for the TDA. Those present concluded that it would be prudent to create a subcommittee to examine the current structure, compare and analyze need and feasibility of position. Subcommittee will be created by Chair. No action would be taken on a position without TDA Board and Board of Commissioners approval, per resolution. The purpose of the subcommittee would be exploratory.

Group discussed leads generated by the efforts of the TDA and subsequent database. The group specifically discussed the leads generated by the new landing page. Questions arose with regard to legality and appropriateness of access to the leads anyone but the TDA. Current practice is that all accommodations that collect occupancy tax have access via an internet portal to leads currently generated. The Brandon Agency is doing additional research on legality and common practices. No action advised for the Board at this time.

Group discussed stand-alone metrics for planning and success. Currently, the Board monitors occupancy tax collections as a primary indicator of tourism economy health. Other indicators are provided by the agencies through web traffic monitoring and impression analysis for our paid media and pr. Smith Travel Research reports were discussed as an opportunity to benefit our accommodations and provide meaningful metrics to track occupancy and effectiveness of marketing efforts. A challenge to beginning to benefit from this tool would be that many of the existing accommodations do not currently participate in reporting. This will be brought at the March 19 meeting to determine if there is Board support for launching a campaign to gauge accommodation interest and buy-in to reporting.

Group discussed the need for internal public relations and communications. Much of the work that is being done by the TDA is not realized by the press and public. The TDA wants to do a better job of letting all interested parties know, not only what is being done, but why action are being taken. An internal public relations strategy has been proposed, which will be reviewed at the March 19 meeting, to augment our efforts to keep everyone abreast of TDA activities.

Group discussed grant process and procedures. There were concerns that the current policy did not allow sufficient planning time for all grant applicants. There were a couple of applicants in the FY2014 cycle that needed a special review because of misunderstanding of guidelines. No action could be taken on how to proceed with these and this will be an issue that will be addressed at the March 19 meeting, in addition to discussion with the full board on any amendments to the current grant policy.

Meeting concluded at 7:10 pm.