

TRI-COUNTY LODGING ASSOCIATION

Thursday, October 24, 2019

The Tri-County Lodging Association met at 9:00 a.m. at the TCLA/CVB Offices, 985 KK Drive, Osage Beach, Camden County, Missouri.

TCLA Board Members Present:

Ken Allen
Russell Burdette
Jim Cleary
Fred Dehner
Mark Krantz
Don Neuharth
Michael Spriggs
Lance Utley
Sue Westenhaver

TCLA Board Members Absent:

Angie Seaton

Non-Voting Advisors Absent:

Presiding Commissioner Greg Hasty
Presiding Commissioner Tom Wright
Presiding Commissioner Tony Stephens

Also present were Jim Divincen, Tim Jacobsen, Lagina Fitzpatrick, Jen West, Rebecca Rupard, Matt & Vicky Foote (Skyline Resort), Jake & Pam Drake (Lakeview Resort), Bill Morgan (Robin's Resort), Laura Salamun (Point View Resort), Megan DeWitt (Bass Point Resort), Gail Griswold (Shawnee Bluff Winery), David Dailing (Hawks Landing Resort), Laura Martin (Karis Cottages), Teresa Boss (Breezy Point Resort), Gena Aldrich (Lake Breeze Resort), Brian Roberts (Kapilana Resort), Karen Witt (Lampighter Resort), Lee & Jennifer Branson (Dogwood Acres Resort), Nathan Rinne (Rinne Trimcraft), John Beckett (Beckett Motors), Stacy Shore (ReMax Realtors), Nathan Bechtold (Lake Expo), Mayor John Olivarri (Osage Beach), Alderman Richard Ross (Osage Beach), Marc Ellinger (Ellinger & Associates, LLC), Jim Moody (Husch Blackwell Strategies), Michelle Aiello (LOCVB), and Denise Pozniak (LOCVB).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Don Neuharth made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Russell Burdette seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Sue Westenhaver opened the floor for public comments by reading the policy as follows: “This is a time set aside on the agenda for citizens and visitors to address the Advisory Board on any topic that is not a public hearing. The Board will not act on any item not listed on the agenda, but the Advisory Board welcomes and values input and feedback from the public. Speakers will be restricted to three minutes unless otherwise permitted. Minutes may not be donated or transferred from one speaker to another”. Ms. Westenhaver also reminded the attendees that this was a time for public comments rather than questions. Megan DeWitt inquired about the Business District meetings beginning at 9:00 a.m. and whether she should address the full TCLA Board or just the Morgan County Business District members. Ms. Westenhaver explained that the Business District meetings will immediately follow the TCLA Board meeting. The following speakers utilized this time for comments:

- **Nathan Rinne:** Mr. Rinne inquired about Board meeting minutes being removed from the TCLA website.

- **Megan DeWitt:** Ms. DeWitt had questions directly for the Board members of the Morgan County Business District, inquired about who is serving as President on this Business District Board. Sue Westenhaver reminded Ms. DeWitt that this time is for public comments. Ms. DeWitt indicated she came before the Board today representing several lodging properties in Morgan County including Coconuts, Rock Harbor Resort, Lake House Inn, Serenity Lakefront Cottages, Hilty Inn B&B, Premier Vacations, Hava-Space RV Park and Water's Edge. Ms. DeWitt acknowledged that the two (2) members serving on the Advisory Board for the Morgan County Business District voted to put a proposed lodging tax increase on the ballot without seeking input from the businesses in this District. Ms. DeWitt will be submitting questions following the meeting to the Morgan County Business District. She feels the lodging community has not been represented in this decision.
- **Laura Salamun:** Ms. Salamun acknowledged that she and some of her peers attended an informational meeting in March regarding the proposed soccer complex and indicated that they were asked to withhold judgment until more information became available. She stated that assurances were made to the Business District members that questions would be answered before decisions were made. In six (6) months no information was provided as promised, she felt the Board had an obligation to inform the membership and feels that they have not been represented and not proper of an elected Board.
- **Matt Foote:** Mr. Foote is the President of the EE Association, attended a meeting regarding this project, and was told this group of property owners were a small faction that opposed this increase, which he states is incorrect. Mr. Foote named several resorts in his area that were opposed to this lodging tax increase. He feels that this process has been absurd and would like to see a budget for this soccer project. Mr. Foote does not feel the math that is being used is accurate.
- **Gail Griswold:** Ms. Griswold explained that she is a part of the Miller Small category of the Miller County Business District. Ms. Griswold indicated that the whole election process of the Board is "super questionable" as it is not certified. Also, she made references to the Business District bank accounts, election costs and refunds following the elections. She further added that the Business Districts are not registered with the Secretary of State's website. She wants to know where all the money is going from the lodging taxes. Ms. Griswold also commented on the existing TIF by the City of Osage Beach on the land being donated for the soccer complex. Ms. Griswold requested an audit of the business districts and was informed that requests must be received in writing.
- **Laura Martin:** Ms. Martin commented that she has emailed questions to TCLA and the answers received did not answer her questions. She finds offense to the numbers used for the soccer complex. She referenced a complex in Kansas City and made comparisons. She does not believe that there will be a \$75 million dollar impact based on her research and says that no one will give her information on where the numbers used were obtained. Ms. Martin thanked Sue Westenhaver for contacting her, and she was happy to share that she was opposed to the lodging tax increase. Ms. Martin indicated that there are many opposed to the project, and two (2) days after the XO Strategic presentation it was voted to pursue the increase in lodging tax. Ms. Martin added that other funding sources are available and should have been researched and proposed.

- **Pam Drake:** Ms. Drake spoke about her family-owned resort (Lakeview Resort) and having to answer to guests about their rates/fees. They have many reservations already on the books for their resort for 2020. They host groups, family reunions, fishing tournaments, and several other guests. She states that the soccer complex proposed is not going to fill their resort, as they are already filled during the seasons of soccer tournaments, so therefore this complex will not benefit their resort. She went onto say that she wants to know how the TCLA was formed, that there is no documentation with the State of Missouri showing the Business Districts exist, but have found that an annual registration is filed for TCLA that includes the names of the existing Board members.
- **David Dailing:** Mr. Dailing inquired how many Camden Small properties were spoken with prior to the decision being made to vote for a lodging tax increase. He commented that if the elected Board members were not going to represent the constituents that they should step down.
- **Gena Aldrich:** Ms. Aldrich has a 15-unit resort in Camdenton and understands that this complex has plans to bring in hotels and other development. She is heartbroken that the Board members did not take into consideration the small properties, that she tries to keep her rates down so the returning families can afford to stay. She says the guests she hosts will not benefit from this complex and how dare the Board vote to move forward without contacting the small resorts for their input. She has always wondered what TCLA does to benefit her business, but trusted that those in the organization were doing the right things.
- **Teresa Boss:** Ms. Boss owns Breezy Point Resort, has 10 units, and been in business since 1977. Her customers love coming to the Lake, but adding another 3% that they will not benefit from, she was not asked, and all the information being shared in the past week have left many questions in her mind about how this organization was formed and if it is operating legally.
- **Brian Roberts:** Mr. Roberts owns Kapilana Resort, has been remodeling his resort and trying to keep costs down for his customers. He also questions the economic impact numbers being shared about the soccer complex. He added that this project just doesn't add up in order to benefit the Lake area. (At this time David Dailing stood up and announced that he had contacted the CVB and canceled his advertising for the coming year. He stated if the CVB was not going to support his business, then he would not support them.)
- **Karen Witt:** Ms. Witt owns a small family resort, has been in business almost 41 years. When TCLA came in she supported this organization. She expressed that she did not understand why a soccer complex was chosen, that the Lake needs to get back to it's 'roots', and what happens to the Lake when this complex comes in. She is bothered that this is already put into play and does not receive letters any longer from TCLA. Ms. Witt thanked Jim Divincen for his time but stated he should retire. She emphasized that this will not be a "cure-all", and if something needs to be built to benefit the area then build an Olympic-sized swimming pool so everyone could enjoy it including the schools. She added that the Lake was built for people to have fun, and a soccer complex will not do this for the Lake.

At this time Matt Foote presented a document signed by fourteen (14) attendees requesting that TCLA, CVB, and the Business Districts be audited.

Nathan Rinne questioned: “Where is Charlie McElyea? Where is the County attorney in all this?”

Sue Westenhaver thanked the attendees for speaking and explained that the Board will now continue with the regular Agenda, and that the Business Districts will meet following the TCLA Board meeting. A discussion was held regarding the time and place that questions could be answered, and the attendees were welcomed to stay for the remainder of the meeting and attend the Business District meetings following. Members of the group attending the meeting were upset that they could not get questions answered. Michael Spriggs suggested that this discussion be continued under “Old Business” during the meeting. Sue Westenhaver also added that an informational meeting regarding the soccer complex was being held on Monday evening, October 28, 2019, beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Four Seasons POA building on HH, and everyone would be welcome to ask questions about the complex at that meeting. The discussion went on about the public forum, and Tim Jacobsen confirmed that questions would be answered at that meeting.

MINUTES

Ken Allen made a motion to approve the September 26, 2019, TCLA Board meeting minutes. Russell Burdette seconded the motion. The motion failed unanimously when voted upon. After further discussion, Michael Spriggs made a motion to table approving the September 26, 2019, TCLA Board meeting minutes because he had comments that were not included in the minutes. Russell Burdette seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously when voted upon.

BILLS COMMITTEE REPORT

Michael Spriggs made a motion to approve Bill #280. Mark Krantz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Jim Divincen reported on lodging tax collections. Lodging tax collections for the month of August 2019 were up 20.4% compared to August 2018. Year-to-date collections for the two (2) months of FY20, were up 20.4% compared to FY18.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT – Russell Burdette, Chair – Jim Moody indicated things were quiet in Jefferson City at the beginning of this Legislative Session. A short discussion was held regarding the Missouri School Board Association and the newest School Start Date Legislation.

Mayor Olivarri reported that a rezoning request was being considered by the City of Osage Beach. This request is for an apartment complex that would provide additional housing in Osage Beach. Mayor Olivarri also spoke about the recent, successful Fall Festival. He added that the City was hosting an upcoming ‘ribbon cutting’ for Peanick Park, and invited everyone to attend.

Executive Director Report – Jim Divincen reported on several items covering the past month. Mr. Divincen reported on the recent Google Seminar held at the TCLA/CVB offices. Mr. Divincen gave the Board an update on the half-hour “Missouri Life” television

show production to be aired on major networks in our regional market area. Dates and times have not been confirmed but will notify the Board when this information is known. He also reported that The Beenders-Walker Group reported that \$1.861 million dollars was achieved in ad equivalency in FY19. Finally, Mr. Divincen confirmed that Liverpool Legends have been booked for March 13 and 14, 2020.

Internal Public Relations Report – Rebecca Rupard reported on several events and activities from the past month. Ms. Rupard recently attended the Governor’s Conference on Tourism in Columbia, MO, has been completing and gathering documents for the Business Districts FY19 Audit, and submitted ad approvals to the Missouri Division of Tourism. She also sent out ‘room night requests’ for LOTO Bike Fest and Big Bass Bash and reported on the results from each.

Group Sales – Jen West covered Group Sales information provided in the Board meeting packets. Ms. West spoke briefly about the upcoming 2020 Can-Am Games as well.

Special Events Committee – Russell Burdette, Chair –Russell Burdette inquired about the Lake of the Ozarks Air Show frequency. Tim Jacobsen indicated that this event might take place in alternating years, depending on the progress of the Camdenton Airport.

Fishing Tournament Committee – Marcus Sykora, Chair – No report at this time.

Advertising/Budget/Public Relations – Michael Spriggs, Chair – Michael Spriggs suggested that the Budget Committee hold a meeting on Thursday, November 7, 2019, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the TCLA/CVB offices located at 985 KK Drive, Osage Beach, MO.

Employee Review Committee – No report was given at this time.

Website Committee Report – Lance Utley, Chair – Tim Jacobsen reported that website visits were down in September 2019 compared to September 2018. After some research, it was discovered that the 2nd season of the Netflix series “Ozark” was released on August 31, 2018, which created a spike in website visits. Gail Griswold suggested that members should be able to easily link their website to the Funlake.com, and a public forum was suggested for the Funlake.com website.

CVB Update and Report – Tim Jacobsen reported that the CVB staff was doing a great job managing 2020 Vacation Guide sales. The CVB just finished hosting the Fall Harbor Hop, with 1748 participants. Mr. Jacobsen reported on Eagle Days and indicated that the Lake of the Ozarks Master Naturalists would again play a major role for this event, as well as the Dickerson Park Zoo out of Springfield, MO. At this time Mr. Jacobsen fielded questions from various attendees regarding the 2020 Vacation Guide. He explained that 150,000 were printed and all would be disseminated throughout the year, including mailings, sport and travel shows, in visitor centers around the State and in local businesses.

OLD BUSINESS

Inquiry Update – An inquiry report was provided in the Board packets for review. Visits

to Funlake.com for the month of September 2019 were down 28.3% compared to September 2018. Year to date for the first nine (9) calendar months, Funlake.com visits are up 1.4%.

Destination Tournament Soccer Complex Cooperation Agreement Signatures – Signatures were obtained for this document prior to the meeting. Michael Spriggs inquired about a budget for the Soccer Complex. Mayor Olivarri responded that the numbers are not defined yet, and funds were currently not available to hire the necessary professionals to provide this information.

Other Old Business – None at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Funding Request: None were presented at this time.

Board Packet Discussion – Rebecca Rupard indicated that research is ongoing for a program to utilize for disseminating Board packets to the Board members and community members who wish to receive one. She mentioned that she and Eric Homan were discussing the use of the program “One Drive” for this purpose.

Minutes and Agendas posted online – No discussion was held at this time.

Other New Business – The next TCLA Board & Business District Advisory Board meetings are scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at the TCLA/CVB Offices.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Don Neuharth made a motion to adjourn the TCLA board meeting. Mark Krantz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The TCLA board meeting ended at 11:09 a.m.