

**GATLINBURG DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM  
CONVENTION CENTER/GROUP SALES WORK GROUP MINUTES**

*February 29, 2008*

The Gatlinburg Department of Tourism Convention Center/Group Sales Work Group met on February 29, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. in the Board Room of the Convention Center. **The following members were present:** Ms. Jackelyn Schafer, Mr. Joe Waggoner, Mr. Bud Lawson, Ms. Sharon Sutton, and Mr. David Perella. Business Community Members Included: Ms. Angela Wilson, Mr. David Reed, and Ms. Jackie Leatherwood, Mr. Brian Holland, Ms. Betty Pierce and Ms. Andrea Richey.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Jackelyn Schafer called the meeting to order.

**READING/ APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion to approve February 29, 2008 Meeting Minutes was made by Mr. Joe Waggoner, seconded by Mr. Bud Lawson.**

**TROLLEY PASS UPDATE**

Mr. David Perella has talked with Ms. Cindy Ogle and Mr. Buddy Parton regarding the Trolley Pass Update. An e-mail may be sent out to all properties asking for possibly the first five Properties to participate in a test run trying out the Trolley Passes. The goal is to make the trolley system more accessible with providing day passes, Groups, and Time Frames. The Trolley Pass will be issued on a consignment basis and Properties will only be billed for what they sell. The Properties will give the client a card with the days they won't be using punched out. The Trolley Pass will be \$2.00 a day, per person. The weeks will be color coded 5 Different colors, Week One – Week Five. The Trolley Passes will be for *GATLINBURG USE ONLY* in the following routes, Uptown, Arts & Crafts, National Park, City Hall and Welcome Center. Signs are in discussion of being made promoting "The Trolley Passes". Also the Hours of Operations are being discussed. The estimated time line for the Trolley Pass Update is before the end of the fiscal year. If big Conventions and or Groups are in town more Trolley's may be added to those routes.

**UPDATES ON CHALLENGES WITH RESURRECTION HOUSING**

We are still waiting on responses back from 12 Properties; Ms. Sharon Sutton met with Mr. Jeremy Shugarts from CCC last week to discuss the impact on the Resurrection Housing. The website for Resurrection didn't announce the Housing on Resurrection. Jeremy is aware of these issues and wants to work with Mr. Dan Gray on these issues. All the Registration is done thru Mr. Dan Gray and all of the Housing is done thru Mr. Jeremy Shugarts. As long as these two are kept separate this doesn't require them to go thru CCC. There was a huge amount of Cabin Rentals this utilized this year by the Resurrection attendees. David suggested that we as a community need to make the statement that come time of their event if everything isn't

organized they will not be getting their Convention Space needed. Reason being here at the Convention Center we do not want to have to put the community thru the process. The Meeting Planners' staff is smaller and they don't have time to do the Housing for Resurrection to them it is just considered to be busy work. We will have to work toward assisting both CCC and Mr. Gray in resolving this issue prior to next year's event.

## **OLD AND/OR NEW BUSINESS/ GROUP DISCUSSION**

The majority of the City's new business is Associations; the new Marketing Group BCF is very experienced in Associations. Associations are the majority of the same type of groups they get in Virginia Beach. The BCF goal is to help keep the Lodging, Dining, Attraction and Convention Center Full. The idea of the Housing Bureau was brought up in today's meeting; The Goal of the Housing Bureau is to insure groups attending events at the Convention Center are actually sleeping in lodging facilities in Gatlinburg. A Housing Bureau provided by the City of Gatlinburg would not cost the Lodging Properties as much as they are paying an "outside company" to do the job (i.e. CCC for Resurrection) nor would it be anymore time than what they are already putting into it. David and Sharon are going to research and justify what the cost will be to start The Housing Bureau for the city, as well as the cost for all Lodging Properties to be involved in the Housing Bureau Service. The Lodging Properties are against The Housing Bureau if it doesn't show a fresh, new impact on the community. It was reiterated that the number one goal of the Housing Bureau would be to control keeping the Convention Center Event attendees' group rooms in Gatlinburg. Mr. Perella also mentioned that a Housing Bureau will be controlling the Wildflower Pilgrimage housing and registration for their next event and will only require a slight increase in registration costs from \$50 - \$60.

Sharon is going to download the Proposal / Lead Response Template Form presented at the Sales Lead Roundtable Meeting onto CD's and distribute the CD to all Dining, Attractions and Lodging Properties, including those that didn't attend the Roundtable meeting. She will spend time as needed with each business and assist them in making this template suit their needs if they desire. The goal being to streamline our current presentation to our potential meeting clients.

Regarding the issues surrounding the lack of response from the area hotels for the Lodging Usage Reports – it is suggested to re-write the agreement to Properties that they will have to be returned in XX amount of days, and if a property does not follow the rule, then a penalty will be placed against the lodging facility. An idea of what the penalty may be is the property won't be able to participate in the Leads program. Sharon plans to schedule a meeting with all businesses who receive and/or want to receive the Sales Leads to go over the guidelines and have them sign up at the meeting to insure they understand the rules and guidelines. In consideration of those represented at the Sales Lead Roundtable meeting in February – we will introduce "Celebrating our Successes" at this Sales Leads Sign Up Meeting informing everyone we will begin announcing what business received the booking from the Sales Lead. Sharon hopes to schedule this before the end of March.

The Convention Center is going to start sending out Press Releases on Upcoming Events here at the Convention Center so that we may also "Celebrate our Success" as a City.

## **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next scheduled meeting for the Convention/Group Sales Work Group is **Friday, April, 11, 2008 at 9:00 am** in the **Board Room** of the convention center.