

**GATLINBURG DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
SPECIAL EVENTS WORK GROUP MINUTES**

February 19, 2009

The Gatlinburg Department of Tourism Special Events Work Group met on February 19, 2009, at 1:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Administrative Office. **The following members were present:** Mr. Dennis McAvoy, Ms. Jackie Leatherwood, Mr. Kent Cave, Mr. George Hawkins, Ms. Erin Moran, Mr. David Perella, and Ms. Kathryn Boruff

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. George Hawkins called the meeting to order

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 27th MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes was postponed due to lack of quorum.

RIBFEST UPDATE

Mr. George Hawkins announced that the recommendation made by the Work Group to move Ribfest on to the Parkway was indeed approved by TAB. The TAB's recommendation will be going to City Council in March. Mr. George Hawkins has also gotten approval from the Fire and Police Chiefs. The Fire Chiefs will require that a fire lane be kept available throughout the event.

Ms. Jackie Leatherwood suggested that the armbands be available throughout the day of Ribfest so that people may come by and have them put on prior to the event. This would help eliminate the long lines that form when the event first opens the gate. In previous years, those wishing to purchase a ticket must first stand in line to buy the ticket and then stand in line to have their armband put on. Having the armbands available prior to the gates opening will help the amount of people standing in lines for tickets and armbands.

Mr. George Hawkins went over some of the guidelines that have been considered – although his department is waiting for approval from the City Commission before making definite changes. He stressed that he really wants to keep people on the Parkway that evening and get them to enjoy the restaurants and shops available. There will be booths serving on both sides of the streets and a stage will be at both ends of the event to help balance the Parkway and flow of visitors. Coke will be providing the soft drinks. The event will take place on April 23rd.

SUZUKI STRINGS

The Suzuki Strong, a violinist group of young children, will be in town on March 19th for free concerts. They will be performing at the school, at the Aquarium, and in Mills Auditorium.

MOUNTAIN MAN MARCH

This year's Mountain Man March will be April 4th. The events participants will gather in the parking lot behind the Harley Davidson Shop and will be having an awards ceremony in Mills Auditorium that evening. The University of Tennessee's ROTC heads this event off and several interest groups have become involved this year.

BALLOON FEST

Mr. George Hawkins is looking into having a Balloon Fest in Mills Auditorium the weekend of July 4th. The event will consist of a display of balloons both inside and outside of the building. The Group also discussed maybe getting involved in some hot air balloons of some kind. Mr. George Hawkins is going to call around and see what guidelines would have to be followed to make such an event take place in Gatlinburg with our terrain.

UNSCHEDULED ITEMS

Mr. George Hawkins passed a flier around that advertised the Gatlinburg Screenfest Event. Mr. Hawkins also reminded the Group of the Celebrate Santa event that will be taking place.

Mr. Kent Cave had a schedule of the Music of the Mountains Event from the Sugarlands Welcome Center. He really wants to see us get involved with more old time music rather than the modern Bluegrass or Country Music for this event. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood would like to have some information or posters available for her to hang in her lobby. Mr. Kent Cave and Nancy Gray will have 50 posters made to have available for hoteliers and the Chamber of Commerce.

The Wildflower Pilgrimage is having a special book signing with 3 important historians on the night that Ribfest will be taking place. Mr. Cave wants to make sure that there will be easy access to the convention center.

There were also some questions as to how the Craft Community is getting involved with the Park's 75th Anniversary. The Work Group agreed that the crafters really need to get involved in the activities and felt like they would be missing a great opportunity if they were not involved.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Special Events Work Group Meeting is TBA.