

Walla Walla Tourism Walla Walla
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, May 20, 2010

Present: Michele Rennie, Jay Brodt, Mark Hess, Ron Anderson, Kay Wessel, Cory Hewitt, Jennifer Skoglund, Justin Wylie, Rick Standard, Michael Davidson, Andrew Holt, Gibson Media --Todd Gibson, Brett Borders, Victoria Barylskaya and Richard Kahn.

Absent: Shane Laib, Skip Cundiff, Elizabeth Martin-Calder, James Payne, Nancy Mitchell, Tim McCarty, and Jeffrey Townsend.

Michele Rennie called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

1. Gibson Media Presentation – Todd Gibson and Brett Borders.

Gibson gave brief introduction of firm's personnel and then background of company. Todd Gibson then reviewed the firm's acquisition of the Tourism Walla Walla contract. A power point presentation chronicled Gibson's handling of the TWW account and provided information on success indicators. Todd Gibson also gave a brief explanation of new internet marketing strategies and tools.

Todd Gibson fielded questions. Main highlights: the firm spends 30% on internet, 30% on radio, 40% on print; radio campaigns on strategically place and Gibson never places a buy unless it knows the exact listening numbers and demographics; the decide completely based on data;

Gibson recommends another round of Focus Groups before developing a marketing strategy for 2011. Late summer would be preferable. Focus Groups would involve local and out-of-area.

Michele Rennie thanked Gibson media for the presentation and bringing all the members of its firm.

2. Approval of the Minutes – Michele Rennie

There were no comments or corrections to the minutes. Mark moved to accept the minutes as written, Kay seconded the motion. Motion carried.

3. Tourism Indicators – Michael Davidson

Michael highlighted the report:

April 2010

Room Revenue up 11.2%,
Rooms sold up 6.3%,
Hotel Occupancy up 6.3%.

YTD

Revenue up 5.2%,
Rooms sold up 4.2%,
Hotel Occupancy up 4.2% Website

4. Treasurers Report – Jay Brodt

Jay reported that that income for April was \$42,972, expenses \$ 54,940, in the red \$11,000 but added that costs during the spring are heavy due to advertising and will be much less in second half of year.

Mark questioned why “restricted funds” were included in the Balance Sheet. Michael said check into this and report back to the board at the next meeting he would talk to Lori and see why she put it on there.

Kay moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report, Mark seconded the motion. Motion carried.

5. 2010 Goals & Objectives – Michele Rennie

Michele stated that these goals had been developed by Michael and the Executive Board and in consultation with a number of board members. A revised copy was distributed (see attachment) and reviewed point by point.

Ron stated his appreciation of the board’s response to the lodging industry’s needs by including in the Goals and Objectives a stretch goal of 16% increase in room nights sold.

Jay moved that the Goals & Objectives be accepted. Rick seconded the motion. Motion carried.

6) TPA – Ron Anderson

Ron announced that the TPA has initially received enough votes to come to fruition. The draft petition to the City of Walla Walla has been written. It needs to be presented to the City. When the hoteliers officially request the formation of the TPA at a council meeting, Ron requested that all TWW board members be present to show support.

Ron said he had a meeting scheduled with the City Manager Shawa and would ask the city to relax the language so that it is not providing less monies to TWW because of TPA funds.

Ron stated that all of the petitions signed by the hoteliers are now on the legal record. Although 2 hoteliers were against the TPA, they will still have a seat on the commission. Ron clarified that the TPA is a commission whose meetings are required to be public. TPA meetings must strictly follow the Public Meeting Process.

Rick commended Ron for all of his hard work and leadership in bringing about the TPA. Kay commended Ron, also, and added that she appreciates that he protected both the hoteliers and TWW so neither would lose money. Ron concurred.

Mark said that he feels the city will be a good partner.

7) Signage – Michael Davidson.

The Signage Committee did have a meeting. It is creating an RFP for identifying signage needs. We still need to look for funds to undertake the study.

8) Horizon Air – Jennifer Skoglund

Horizon and the WW Regional Airport will hold a celebration of 25 years of Horizon air service to WW on June 9th, 1 pm. Jennifer will send out an invite.

Michael requested monthly passenger reports for the TWW board packets. Jennifer said that would not be a problem.

Meeting adjourned at 5:29 pm.

Next meeting June 17th at 3:30 PM

2010 Goals and Objectives

1. Last year (2009) was the first year since the formation of Tourism Walla Walla where room nights sold decreased versus the previous year. The board recognizes that our hoteliers require aggressive growth to be sustainable long term. To this end, it is Tourism Walla Walla's role to drive the effort to diversify and develop the areas that bring visitors to Walla Walla with emphasis on sports marketing, corporate, events, and working to develop Arts and Culinary/Agritourism efforts.

a. Development efforts: measured by number of meetings, and resulting campaigns.

GOAL

- Produce monthly report on meetings attended and meetings with industry stakeholders

b. Diversification efforts: measured by number of room nights sold per sectors against historical performance.

GOAL

- To drive our goals towards lodging industry sustainability, we have included two goals for room nights sold this year. First is a minimum expectable increase for the year of 8% over 2009 – a goal that we believe is obtainable. Second, is a stretch goal that would significantly improve the hotel industries financial sustainability or 16% increase in room nights sold over 2009.

2. Proactive monthly management of the 2010 budget with action plans on what can be cut should 2010 revenue projections prove to be overly optimistic.

a. Measured by fiscal performance and sound judgment i.e. not using reserve funds, increasing reserve funding.

3. Developing and growing the local efforts, specifically Super Host, Walla Walla Partnership, and Tourism information office. Exploring and evaluating opportunities for out of area marketing.

a. Local efforts measured by the growth in Super Host classes, # of Partnership projects, increase in numbers of visitors served at TWW info office

GOAL

- 6 super host classes
- 2 new partnership projects
- Increase from 9,908 visitors to served at downtown tourism booth to 12,000
 - b. Out of area marketing: measured by number of guidebooks mailed, website visitors and collaborative projects with potential partners.

GOAL

- increase of number of travel guides mailed from 2,893 to 3,500
- increase in number of website visitors from 391,000 to 420,000

4. A concerted effort to get the signage project going working with the various entities. Assist in the development of a plan for funding and implementation.

GOAL

- a. Develop Request for Proposal for first phase of comprehensive way finding program and identify potential funding sources and partners.

5. Increase the revenue base of the organization by \$20,000 from sources beyond traditional city support.

- a. Measured by amount of dollars raised from new and existing funding sources.
- b. Secondary measurements: number of viable options developed.

6. Continue to pursue initiatives that assist in strengthening alliances between the wine industry, Downtown Walla Walla, city, county, port, lodging industry and other tourism efforts.

7. Build support and increase awareness of the economic importance of the visitor industry to the local community.

- a. Measured by number of newspaper articles, quotes, presentations and representing TWW at local meetings.

GOAL

- Eight (8) local stories generated by TWW in UB/ Waitsburg Times/ Tri-City Herald.
- Four (4) radio interviews.

