I. Call Meeting To Order  
The Tourism Development Advisory Committee meeting was called to an order at 9:00 A.M.

II. Roll Call And Declaration Of A Quorum  
The roll was called, a majority of the members were present and a quorum was declared.


TDAC Members Absent: Barbara Sanderson Ted O'Rourke.

III. Conflict Of Interest Declarations  
There were no conflict of interests declared.

IV. Requests To Address The Committee  
There were no requests made to address the committee.

V. Discuss And Consider Approval Of Meeting Minutes  
Motion: Maureen Patton made a motion to approve September 22, 2020 meeting minutes.  
Second: Trey Click second the motion.  
Vote: 13-0 (2 abstained) James Clark not present for the vote.

VI. Introduction Of New Tourism Development Advisory Committee Members - Will Wright (10 Minutes)  
Will Wright introduced the new members of the Tourism Development Advisory Committee.

VII. Review Of 2019-2020 HOT Collections And Overview Of Tourism Development Budget - Bryson Frazier (20 Minutes)  
Bryson Frazier, Chief Financial Officer, presented the HOT Collections and Tourism Development Budget.

The August 2020 collections were successfully submitted to the City on 10/5/2020. Revenues registered a penny value of $209,977 for August 2020, compared to $212,309 in August of 2019. This represents a 1% decrease compared to August 2019. The actual penny value for August 2020, however, is 50% above COVID adjusted budget, which forecasted only $139,954 in HOT penny value.

The current actual Hotel Occupancy Tax penny value for the FY20 twelve-month period of September 2019 through August 2020 came in at $1,721,523. That's 14% below the FY19 actuals, 16% below the FY20 original budget, but 31% higher than the COVID adjusted budget.
Also included in your packet is the final Tourism Development Operating Budget as approved by the Board of Trustees. Total operating revenue for this department is equivalent to 3X the budgeted HOT penny value ($1,539,870) or $4,619,610. In addition, $996.00 in contingency for special projects was requested and approved as a draw from cash reserves. The beginning balance of cash reserves was $5,116,073, and with this draw, cash reserves will rest at $4,152,115 at the close of the 2020-21 fiscal year, if all projects listed are requested by staff and approved by the Board.

VIII. Update On Short Term Rental HOT Collections - Bryson Frazier (10 Minutes)

Staff has been working with City staff on a Short-Term Rental – Voluntary Collection Agreement (VCA) project. The City’s Finance Director started a conversation with Council regarding non-compliant STRs and VCA’s. As a result, a task force has been established to study the issue.

While STR revenue collections continue to increase as a percentage of total HOT collection, there is still a significant number of STR properties that are not registered and therefore not remitting the required HOT. Quantifying that number is difficult. Staff has enlisted a third-party that will use software to scrape data from platforms like Airbnb, Expedia, and VRBO, and use that data to produce a list of invisible STRs.

In the meantime, Staff has been in contact with representatives from the State Controller’s Office and members of STROAG. Staff is studying the pros and cons of VCA’s. For example, the state’s HOT penny value has surpassed the City’s after entering into VCA’s; however, it remains to be seen how the state will ensure compliance with the proper application of HOT as they have not audited any VCAs yet. Staff is also reaching out to other cities that have either entered into VCAs or opted out of entering them.

November 17, 2020 the Park Board staff will be presenting to City Council regarding the Short Term Rental Compliance.

IX. Update On Status Of Events And Permitting - David Smith, City Of Galveston (15 Minutes)

David Smith with the City of Galveston presented an update on current rules and regulations related to outdoor events and the issuing of permits. Much is driven by Governor Greg Abbott’s Executive Order GA-30.

Following is section 6 of that Executive Order that relates to outdoor gatherings and is still currently in effect on a state level:

6. For any outdoor gathering in excess of 10 people, other than those set forth in paragraph Nos. 1, 2, 3, or 5, the gathering is prohibited unless the mayor of the city in which the gathering is held, or the county judge in the case of a gathering in an unincorporated area, approves of the gathering, and such approval can be made subject to certain conditions or restrictions not inconsistent with this executive order.

David Smith stated that the City will be opening to runs and this was decided due to the organizations COVID plans. All events must submit a COVID plan with the application for approval to have their events.

X. Presentation Of 2020 Downtown Holiday Plans - Trey Click (15 Minutes)

Over the past few years, the Park Board has invested resources to transform downtown by adding garland, weaths, accent lighting on buildings and other festive decorations. This has been a collaborative effort between Mitchell Properties, The Downtown Partnership, City of Galveston and the Park Board.

As a result of reduced budgets from all participating organizations, The Partnership is requesting a sponsorship of $18,000 to include the installation of the 32’ Christmas tree at Saengerfest Park, Installation of ribbon and wreaths on Gas Lamp posts on The Strand and Post Office, repair and replacement of lightbulbs on The Strand and Postoffice, installation of banner poles for street garland at intersections on The Strand, and electrical work on The Strand and Postoffice tied to the lighting initiative. In addition, 3
photo-op vignettes will be created in the district.

XI. Update On Staffing Analysis- Michael Woody (10 Minutes)

At the request of the Committee, staff was asked to research Full-Time staffing levels of the CVB over the past three years and touch on the creation of any new positions.

Looking back to 2017, the Full-Time staffing level rested at 15 which included a Sales Team of 5, Marketing/Communications team of 5, Destination Services team of 3, an Office Coordinator and CVB Director.

In 2018, the Full-Time staffing level rested at 16, growing the team by 1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE). The new position was the Creative Services Coordinator (Videographer/Photographer) in the Marketing team. Some additional changes took place during this year to pivot focus on serving the customer. We moved one FTE from the Sales Team, creating an additional Destination Services Coordinator position.

In 2019, the Full-Time staffing level rested at 19, growing the team by 3 FTE’s. The new positions included two Destination Specialists (Visitor Information Center staff who were elevated from Part-Time to Full-Time) and the addition of a Marketing Coordinator (Graphic Design).

In 2020, the Full-Time Staffing level rested at 19, until a reduction in force was implemented as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The positions that were eliminated included 3 FTE’s from Destination Services (Destination Experience Manager and 2 Destination Specialists – all tied to the Visitor Information Center), and 1 FTE from Marketing (Public Relations Manager).

Following the 2020 reductions, the Full-Time staffing level rested at 15 which includes a Sales Team of 4, Marketing/Communications Team of 6, Destination Services of 3, an Office Coordinator and the Chief Tourism Officer.

Staffing levels remain the same for FY2020/21.

XII. Update On VisitGalveston.com Microblog Launch - Melody Smith (10 Minutes)

Due to changes in the contractual agreement with galveston.com, the CVB developed a microblog site to bridge the gap until the full destination website launches in May 2021. This new platform allows the CVB an opportunity to begin building the VisitGalveston.com brand and provides an online presence, driving traffic to relative content to support earned, owned, and paid initiatives.

The site, www.visitgalveston.com, had a soft launch on October 1, 2020. The marketing team is developing storytelling content to maximize engagement and SEO.

The site’s primary strategy is to provide rich, diverse blogs that appeal to target markets while educating potential visitors on the variety of Galveston’s offerings and encouraging visitation. To offer more variety of content, we will be inviting local influencers to write and submit blogs to promote their attractions and businesses.

During the transition, until the launch of the full VisitGalveston.com website, the Park Board will deliver the best user experience and hyperlink to partner websites and Galveston.com. These links will provide consumers with additional content not found on the microblog website including, lodging and dining reservations, ticket sales and category listings.

XIII. Monthly Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) Reports

Michael Woody update the committee of efforts made by CVB for the month of September 2020.

XIV. 2019-2020 Committee Work Plan
XV. Future Agenda Items

Tour of the new Mobile Visitor Information Center

Group Best Practices

Resident Sentiment Survey

XVI. Announcements

The committee members gave an update on their organizations upcoming events and status.

XVII. Next Tourism Development Advisory Committee (TDAC) Scheduled Meeting - November 17, 2020

XVIII. Adjournment

The Tourism Development Advisory Committee meeting adjourned at 10:57 A.M.