

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE HOTEL/MOTEL TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE VILLAGE OF WILLOWBROOK HELD ON MONDAY, JULY 18, 2016, AT THE VILLAGE OF WILLOWBROOK, 835 MIDWAY DRIVE, WILLOWBROOK, ILLINOIS.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Gayle Neal called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Those present at roll call were Trustee Gayle Neal, Village Administrator Tim Halik, Director of Finance Carrie Dittman and Administrative Intern Tiffany Kolodziej. Miriam Blumenthal, DuPage Convention and Visitors Bureau (DCVB), arrived at 4:15.

ABSENT: Member Frank Fishella (Chamber of Commerce), Member Roswitha Korpas (La Quinta), Member Rashmi Patel (Econo Lodge), Member Red Roof Inn Plus and Member Willowbrook Inn (hotel is closed). There was no quorum.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 16, 2016 & May 24, 2016

There was no quorum so the minutes could not be approved.

3.1. APPROVAL OF MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT – June 30, 2016

Director Dittman presented the financial report of the Hotel/Motel Tax Fund as of June 30, 2016. There was no quorum so the report could not be approved

4. DISCUSSION – Trolley Program

The trolley program that began July 1, 2016 was discussed, including dates the mini-bus has been substituted (included in the packet) due to previously scheduled events the Trolley Co had at the time the trolley contract was signed. The mini-bus now has a sign on the top of it that indicates it is for the Willowbrook hotel trolley program. Discussion ensued about modifying the front of the brochure to include pictures of both vehicles to make it clear to guests what they may be entering. The committee discussed the trolley company missing a day on Sunday, July 10, and the lack of communication with Village staff on whether a trolley or bus would be dispatched when it diverts from the pre-determined trolley schedule. The Village is keeping a log of these events. Administrative Intern Kolodziej will look into Chicago Trolley Co. out of Addison, IL as an alternative company.

Ridership this past weekend was extremely low, 10 riders over 3 days, likely due to the Chicago Open Air 2016 heavy metal 3-day concert that most of the hotel guests were attending. We are hoping the hotels can further promote this to their guests to spur ridership. The Village will track the usage by weekend based on the figures we receive from the Trolley Co – if the hotels can keep an independent count and provide that to the Village after each weekend as well that will help us to evaluate the success of the program and to determine the true cost per rider.

Trustee Neal also visited Target this past weekend and met with the local store manager, Mia, about adding them as a trolley stop. She was excited about the prospect, and if a written permission can be obtained as advised by the Village attorney, we will contact the trolley company and add this as a permanent stop on the route. Gayle will make a follow-up visit to Target with a permission letter.

5. DISCUSSION – Landscape Beautification

Administrator Halik reported on the poor condition of the “porkchop” turn-in at Midway Drive and Frontage Rd. that is on the main street leading to three (3) of the Village’s hotels. Pictures were distributed illustrating the deterioration this landscape triangle has experienced, which was put in when Target was constructed using developer contributions. Administrator Halik received two (2) proposals to completely tear down and rebuild the porkchop, from Falco’s Landscaping (\$16,010) and Benito’s Landscaping (\$15,700). The renovation includes all new curbs, new pavers and new landscaping to be installed. The Committee agreed that the enhancement was appropriate and would freshen the look for guests entering the Village. Mr. Halik will bring the lower of the two bids, Benito’s, to the Village Board at the next Village board meeting. If approved, the project would start about 2-3 weeks later.

Miriam inquired on the hotel directional signage that is in the porkchop, especially that LaQuinta is missing, and Mr. Halik noted that IDOT runs the program that dictates what signage can be placed there. The existing signage would be reinstalled in the porkchop when the project is complete, perhaps on a new pole to compliment the brick paver colors. Miriam offered to contact IDOT to inquire about adding LaQuinta to the signage.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

Director Dittman relayed the voicemail she had received from and following conversation with Mark of LaQuinta voicing his concerns about the trolley missing a day and the driver’s being off the schedule about 15 minutes. She noted that she had contacted Damien at the Trolley Co. and addressed these issues with him.

Miriam presented a sample map/brochure from the City of Elmhurst’s trolley program. While very professional looking, it should be noted the Elmhurst program has been in effect for at least 2 years and they have advertisements on the brochure that probably offset the cost of production. It also appeared they had partnered with their local chamber of commerce to produce it. This is something the Village staff have discussed with the local merchants, and along with coupon books, is something we may be able to add to the program in 2017. Miriam has provided “goodie bags” that can be passed out to trolley riders when they get on/off the trolley, which does include a discount booklet.

Miriam discussed the advertising program and incorporating AAA into it, however not every hotel is a member of AAA. She will reach out to EconoLodge, which is not a member, to see if they could be included. She also discussed the Midway Airport “Park, Sleep, Fly” program and the billboard that went up near the airport on Cicero Ave. DCVB is checking on possible billboard placement in downstate Illinois to encourage travelers coming to Chicago that cannot afford Chicago hotel prices to stay in Willowbrook. Digital campaigns will be a primary focus as millennials prefer this method over others. Also, DCVB plans to enhance the website to make it more vibrant. Trustee Neal and Miriam discussed getting updated pictures of the hotels for the website. Another campaign is the 90th anniversary of Rt. 66. Finally, the DVCB is hosting a strategic Town Hall Meeting next Monday at NIU in Naperville during the day and Wilder Mansion in Elmhurst Monday night, with another meeting on Tuesday at College of DuPage, for those interested in attending.

7. VISITOR’S BUSINESS

There were no visitors present.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Trustee Neal at 5:08 p.m.

Minutes transcribed by Carrie Dittman, 7/19/16