



**Minutes of the Gig Harbor
Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
March 2, 2005**

Call to Order/Roll Call:

Councilmember Derek Young called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Present: Committee Members present: Linda Gair, Sue Braaten, Mary Rae Lund, Kim Hails, Mort Altman, Councilmember Derek Young and Jennifer Kilmer. Others present: Laureen Lund and Molly Towslee, City Clerk.

Those absent: Kathy Franklin and Wade Perrow.

1. Destination Development Update and Review

Laureen Lund said that she had hoped to have the Destination Development report to distribute, but would get it to the members as soon as possible. She thanked those members who were able to attend the session.

Linda Gair reported that as a result of the session, her building was being repainted and businesses were changing their signage to reflect what they do.

Laureen explained that in 4-6 weeks she is scheduled to meet with Roger Brooks to go over the report. She said that there is still \$5000 available and discussed the best way to spend the funds. After she has had a change to review the report, she would categorize and prioritize the information before making a recommendation.

Linda Gair brought up freeway signage. Laureen will follow up with the contact that Bruce Gair had talked to in order to find out more information on improvements to signs on Highway 16.

Jennifer Kilmer spoke favorably about a Wayfinding Plan and how it might benefit the Heritage Assessment committee.

The members further discussed the Wayfinding Plan and how it could capture dollars once tourists have come to the harbor. Councilmember Young said it may be possible for the city to fund additional signage.

Laureen then said that the comments about the Marketing Website were fairly complimentary and gave an overview of the suggestions. There was continued discussion about having a portal website for people to open that would then link to the Chamber of Commerce, City Government, Shopping Guides, etc. Laureen said that she would work with the webpage designer regarding this option.

The next subject discussed was the Customer Service Tape, which Laureen described as excellent. At \$700, it would be an affordable tool.

Linda Gair mentioned that there is no promotion for specific shops in the Gig Harbor Guide. She asked for assistance, as the shops can't afford the advertising costs.

Councilmember Young talked about Roger's point of promoting unique things to do and see here, as every town has shopping. He suggested talking further to Roger about branding those things that make Gig Harbor unique such as galleries and water activities.

Sue Braaten suggested adding more detail to the white pad mat maps that are distributed.

Jennifer Kilmer asked about changes to the city's sign code to facilitate better signage. Roger mentioned that all the sandwich boards are busy-looking. Because a new Sign Code Enforcement Officer is being hired, a suggestion was made to form a committee to work closely with this person to develop a master sign code to bring to the city for consideration.

Mary Rae Lund said that there really aren't very many attractions in Gig Harbor for those who don't like shopping. The committee discussed alternative activities that could be marketed such as throwing pottery, a working boatyard, and the Historical Museum.

Jennifer Kilmer gave an update of the plans for the Historical Society's new location and the active restoration of the Shenandoah. She also talked about the National Heritage Trust analysis of Gig Harbor that will be taking place.

Laureen Lund talked about Shataqua, a visioning process that would help identify where the city is going as a community. All the work should end up as a document that could be used as a recommendation. She discussed her tour of some local performing arts facilities. She stressed that it is the time to begin to plan and to develop a strategy.

Mort Altman mentioned the performing arts in Friday Harbor, and how the community supports this program. The committee all agreed that the key to success is community buy-in.

Linda Gair commented that as the city buys more property for park activities, it diminishes the revenue downtown and that there needs to be more profit-making activities.

Jennifer Kilmer responded by giving a report on how successful the Smithsonian Exhibit had been. The visitors to the exhibit were all fairly local, but while here they were told where to go to eat and to shop. This proves that Gig Harbor can draw people if there is something interesting going on. The key is to build on activities.

Linda said that the retailers are going to discuss an Adopt-a-Business program and Councilmember Young commented on what a great job of cross-selling the retailers do.

Kim Hails reported that the *Northwest Travel Magazine* article should be finalized in mid-summer. She said that they also got a full color picture in the *Trans Western Phone Book*.

2. Public Relations Update

Laureen said that she was finalizing the hiring of Carol Zihorsky to replace the PR company that she had been using. She said that Carol is closely tied to small community destinations, adding that at the end of the year, the committee would have to make a decision on what direction to take. She said that she felt that it was a wonderful value.

3. Advertising Update

(LAUREEN...fix this section. I was brain dead by this time and you talk too damn fast!)

Laureen said that she has one ad in the - _____???? Gets leads... Have an editorial in 2006.

Laureen mentioned the Lodging Tax graph which indicates a 2% increase in taxes received over last year. Sue Braaten said that she had a great December and January due to conferences and the Boeing Group.

Linda Gair asked if the motels could keep the businesses informed of upcoming events.

Committee members talked about recent changes in the Tacoma Convention Visitors Bureau. Kim Hails said that she still receives an occasional lead.

Laureen talked about a sales team ??? Helmes Briscoe. It costs nothing to participate. They receive payment through a percentage of a booking.

Laureen said that Karen Scott had been hired to be her Administrative Assistant and would be coming to future meetings to take minutes. To facilitate her working schedule, the meetings will be scheduled on Thursdays. The next meeting is April 14th at 8:30 a.m.

There was no further discussion and the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Molly M. Towslee, City Clerk