



Minutes City Council's Tourism & Recreation Committee January 9, 2008

Minutes of the City Council's Tourism and Recreation Committee held on Wednesday, January 9, 2008, 3:00 p.m., in the 3rd Floor Council Conference Room, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Members Present:

Councilmember Mark Mitchell, Chair
Councilmember Ben Arredondo

City Staff Present:

Travis Dray, Deputy Mgr, Recreation
Shelley Hearn, Comm Relations Mgr
Jan Hort, City Clerk
Tom Lopez, Facility Svcs Dir
Mark Richwine, Parks & Rec Mgr
Chris Salomone, Community Dev Mgr
Mari Yennie, Council Aide

Guests Present:

Brian Belkin, TCVB Sports Marketing Manager
Stephanie Nowack, President/CEO, TCVB
Virgil Renzouli, VP, ASU

Councilmember Mitchell called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

Stephanie Nowack introduced Brian Belkin, the new Sports Marketing Manager for the Tempe Convention and Visitors Bureau (TCVB).

Agenda Item 2 – Insight Bowl Update

Shelley Hearn summarized that the Insight Bowl went well. Although the media moved to the Camelback Inn, Tempe was able to have a presence there.

Travis Dray added that the Indiana pep rally at Tempe Beach Park was well attended. Staff will continue to review the Block Party event and determine how best to create an even better synergy between the game and the Block Party.

Stephanie Nowack stated that the TCVB is tracking the hotel occupancy rates. Even with only one-third of the hotels reporting to date, the two nights prior to the game showed about an 65% occupancy, leading up to about 80% on New Year's Eve. The average should be at about 75% occupancy over the three nights of December 29, 30 and 31. The media was well-organized, and prior to the game, the TCVB, in partnership with the Diablos, the Fiesta Bowl, Insight, and the City, sent representatives to Indiana and Oklahoma with TV spots, radio interviews, and major newspaper feature stories. The schools were very receptive to the way Tempe approached the pre-game hospitality. The partnerships were much improved from last year.

Ms. Hearn suggested that next year, the State should be contacted as well, as both the Indiana and Oklahoma governors attended. All attendees were impressed with meeting the City Council and with Tempe's hospitality. By treating the schools as "number one", the word gets back and that makes our bowl game desirable.

Councilmember Mitchell suggested a follow-up meeting with the Fiesta Bowl for a recap.

Ms. Nowack responded that a meeting has been set up for next week.

Councilmember Arredondo congratulated Travis Dray and his staff for a very good job with the Block Party. Thousands from the game came directly to the Block Party. He suggested that staff make sure the Fiesta Bowl knows it was a "home run" for Tempe and that scheduling the Bowl game the same day as the Block Party needs to continue.

Ms. Hearn added that six out of the next eight games are scheduled for New Year's Eve. When it doesn't fall on New Year's Eve, she suggested making the same offer so people will return to the Block Party.

Councilmember Arredondo added that the hotels reaped the benefit as it was easier for Oklahoma to stay here and drive to the other game. The event at the Arts Center was great and next time ASU representatives need to be invited to showcase the entire partnership. This committee needs to figure out how staff can work with ASU to upgrade so that ASU will want to continue to play the game here.

Agenda Item 3 – Super Bowl Update

Travis Dray summarized that staff has been working with the NFL on the NFL Super Bowl Saturday Night event. No further progress to report at this time. There will be a free concert from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m., and as soon as the talent is named, the NFL will issue a press release.

Councilmember Arredondo added that the NFL will wait until the last minute and he advised staff to be ready for any event they dish out.

Shelley Hearn added that since the talent hasn't been named yet, and they are not pushing the event, the quality of entertainment might be less than originally thought.

Mark Richwine added that we should know next week. There are Super Bowl events all over the Valley.

Stephanie Nowack added that the NFL did publish 100,000 copies of a program guide with the event at Tempe Beach Park listed. Staff called every hotel and as of yesterday, there are only

570 rooms left in Tempe, even though the teams have yet to be announced. That equals 90% occupancy. They are receiving calls from the media to check on what is happening in Tempe and how Tempe will benefit from the Super Bowl. Tempe will have national exposure by the fact that the NFL chose a Tempe venue for one of their most prestigious events at the Tempe Center for the Arts (TCA).

Councilmember Mitchell asked staff to be sure to get a list of attendees for the private event at the TCA and have marketing materials ready for them.

Mr. Richwine added that Suncor will be hosting many private events as well and Tempe will be showcased.

Agenda Item 4 – Spring Training/Angels Event

Mark Richwine summarized that he has spoken to the Angels. They were receptive and their preference would be for something of a more social setting, separate from the Diablos welcoming event. They are available to work with Shelley Hearn to make the necessary arrangements.

Shelley Hearn suggested hosting the event at the TCA, for example.

Travis Dray added that staff is looking at ways to include the players in the community. One suggestion would be to have the players work with the Kiwanis Head Start reading program at the end of February. He will work with the Council Aides to put that on the Council calendar.

Agenda Item 5 – Youth and Amateur Sports Facility

Chris Salomone summarized that an unsolicited offer was received from a group in Chicago. Information was faxed to staff yesterday and he will submit the information at the Council's Executive Session on January 24th.

Agenda Item 6 – Rock n' Roll Marathon Update

Travis Dray summarized that the event will be held on Sunday, January 13th. Last year, the marathon produced a \$10.2M economic impact. Twenty-six charities are participating this year, and the charities generated \$5.8M in revenue last year. The half marathon is expected to have at least 25,000 participants, and the marathon will have approximately 9,000 participants. There will be 70 bands participating. The largest local charity, Chances for Children, is from Tempe.

Stephanie Nowack added that she will have a report on the event at next month's meeting.

Agenda Item 7 – Hotel and Conference Facilities Update

Chris Salomone summarized that the hotels highlighted at the last meeting are continuing to develop and move forward.

- Aloft is under construction.
- Le Meridien has asked for a six-month extension to reduce the number of condominiums and add more rooms. They still plan to break ground in April.

- Suncor has had a significant response to the ASU/Suncor leased property conference/hotel facility. They intend to short-list it to three. The City is not involved in the selection process. The top candidates have provided evidence of financing.
- Paragon is moving forward as a conference facility with 85,000 sq. ft. of meeting rooms. All issues have been resolved.
- At the Harkins site, DMB is proposing a Marriott hotel with a sports training facility.
- The bonds for the Pier project are on Council's agenda for tomorrow. They plan to break ground in February.

He added that the hotel market is strong.

Agenda Item 8 – Future Agenda Items

- Rock 'n Roll Marathon
- Insight Bowl Recap
- Partnership with ASU

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Prepared by: Connie Krosschell
Reviewed by: Shelley Hearn

Jan Hort
City Clerk