



Simon Webster, Chairperson  
Alex Patel, Vice Chair  
Fran Lindsey

Rafael Hernandez  
Stuart Whitaker  
Susan Rand

**Palestine Tourism Advisory Board**  
**1/18/17 Meeting Minutes to be presented on 2/15/17 for board approval**

The Tourism Advisory Board of Palestine met on Wednesday, January 18, 2016, 3 p.m., at the Palestine Economic Development Conference Room, 100 Willow Creek Parkway, Ste. A, Palestine, Texas. Attending were the following:

**Members in Attendance:**

Alex Patel  
Fran Lindsey  
Stuart Whitaker  
Simon Webster  
Rafael Hernandez  
Susan Rand

**Staff Present:**

Mary Raum, ex-officio  
A quorum was present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a) Presentation & Approval of 12/21/16 Meeting Minutes

After review and discussion of the board meeting minutes, a motion was made to approve the minutes by Board Member Fran Lindsey. Motion was second by Board Member Rafael Hernandez, the motion was passed.

**Discussion & Action**

1. Chairperson and Vice Chairperson Selection – Rafael Hernandez nominated Simon Webster to the position of President of the Tourism Advisory Board for the 2016-17 year. Simon accepted the nomination. Alex Patel expressed interest in the position of Vice Chair. With no other nominations Alex Patel made a motion to approve Simon Webster as Chairperson and Alex Patel as Vice Chairperson. The motion was second by Stuart Whitaker, none opposed, motion carried.
2. Presentation of the PYAA HOT Application was tabled
3. Review and discussion on Code of Ordinances: Mary presented the Code of Ordinances and reviewed the document with a focus on Sec. 2-100 – Purposes of board. Mary noted that point #6 was to be discussed further down on the agenda.
4. Review and discuss Tourism & Performing Arts Services Contract with the Palestine Area Chamber of Commerce: Mary presented a contract that she was provided on 12/20/16 that was an agreement between the City of Palestine and the Palestine Area Chamber of Commerce. After further research, it was discovered that the payment in the past has been issued out of the Event Tourism Committee budget line item, which is supposed to be a board member recommendation line item for HOT grants. Mary indicated that she was not aware of this expense and does not have it in the 2016-17 budget. The date of the contract was February 27, 2012 and none of the board members nor tourism staff were aware



of the expense. The invoice was sent to City Hall Attn: Theresa Herrera and was placed in the Visitor Center mailbox at City Hall sometime between 12/12 and 12/20. Once the invoice was received, Mary reached out to the Chamber for clarification, which is when the contract was emailed to her on 12/20/16. Due to the timing of this notification, the 60 day grace period to have the expense placed in the 2015-16 budget cycle has lapsed which will result in two payments in the 2016/17 budget cycle totaling \$16,800.00. Mary noted that there are not enough funds to cover this unbudgeted expense. Alex Patel made a motion that Mary Raum and Stuart Whitaker work together on the wording to address the issue with City Management. Fran Lindsey second the motion, none opposed, motion passed.

5. Review and discuss Sec. 2-100 Purposes of the board: Specifically point (6) Develop and maintain a tourism master plan and program for the city – Mary presented the Code of Ordinances where as one of the responsibilities of the board is to develop and maintain a tourism master plan. Discussion was held making note that this expense is currently not within the 2016-17 budget, but that funds may be available to cover this expense through the Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund Balance. Based on research, the expected price range for services to help develop the Master Tourism Plan are from \$15,000 to \$90,000. Mary explained that the plan should include big wish list ideas that will help move Palestine forward as a tourist destination including details like trying to get the TSRR to drop off/pick up in town and a convention center with a minimum of 10K square feet with breakout rooms on the same side of town as the majority of the hotels. Simon Webster made a motion to authorize that we start looking for support to help us strategize for the Master Plan RFP Process. Rafael Hernandez second the motion. None opposed, motion carried.

**Staff Reports**

1. Visitor Center Report – Mary reported the YTD traffic totaling 4,570 people in the Visitor Center and the Visitor Center has mailed 2,711 leads within this calendar year.
2. Marketing and Promotional Update – Reviewed the print and content projects in work, update on TV/Film exposure that is centered on Palestine, Facebook video statistics on the Taste of Palestine sizzle video. Upcoming projects include a website refresh which will include a consolidation of the blog into our existing website. Updates provided for Taste of NO and Dogwood Trails.

**Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn was made by Board Member Alex Patel, Board Member Stuart Whitaker second the motion, meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Date Approved: 2-15-17

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Simon Webster, Tourism Advisory Board Chairman

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Prepared by: Mary Raum, Marketing Manager

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