

CTAB/City Council Joint Meeting December 19, 2012

I have been meaning to write this memo for some time but things keep getting in the way. In December we had a joint meeting with CTAB. We covered many topics and had a "lively" discussion. Among those items discussed were sports tourism, fiscal responsibility, mission statement and goals, upcoming events and how to further tourism. The following are my thoughts on this meeting and what I feel should occur in the next few months.

1. Increase in the number of CTAB board members.
 - a. Sports tourism: we spent funds on a study to determine what facilities are available and how we can improve our sports tourism. It has been quite some time since this was completed and I believe the time has come to establish a sports tourism commission or board. The chair (president) and possibly one other should serve on the CTAB so activities can be coordinated.
 - b. Add a position for someone specifically skilled in marketing.
 - c. MainStreet is a successful and an integral part of the city when it comes to establishing events to attract visitors which is tourism. It makes sense for the board president or representative having a seat at the table.

We already have a draft ordinance to add sports tourism to the CTAB and it could easily be modified to accomplish these additions.

2. Fiscal responsibility: funds continue to flow into the tourism program yet no true audit of how these funds are utilized or distributed has ever been completed. We owe it to the public and ourselves to ensure funds are handled responsibly. Therefore, an audit should be accomplished in the next year.
3. Tourism Director: no disrespect for Kristi but I feel we have reached a point where a full-time tourism director educated in tourism and experienced with a track record to support it should be hired. This Director would have a specific job description and be accountable for meeting measurable goals while reporting directly to the City as outlined below.
4. Break out tourism separate from the Chamber and manage it from the City level. This would put the tourism director and visitors center as a department of the city. The CTAB would consist of appointments from the Mayor and Council as do most of the boards. The front portion of the Depot can be reorganized to provide a space for the tourism director and an expanded visitor center with gift shop while still providing office space for the Chamber through a separate entrance. The Chamber would still be centrally located in the same building where they can continue to their relationships with area businesses, UCM and WAFB. This will also make it easier to accomplish item Number 2 above.

since the City's accounting operation would be used to track payroll and financial management which already undergoes periodic audits.

These are my feelings I took away from that meeting. You may or may not agree with them but I think they require serious consideration. I believe it is time for a change in the direction and path we are following for tourism. The program has evolved over time and is now at the point a change is needed. I don't think this is unreasonable nor will it have a detrimental effect on our current efforts. There are other communities that have taken this path with success and I too feel we can be successful.

I know this would be a big change and may not be welcomed by all. However, when is change ever accepted by all. We, as a Council representing the people who elected us, are obligated to make those tough and sometimes unpopular decisions for the betterment of the community.

I welcome any comments. I would like to address this as soon as possible, and if agreed, make these changes no later than June 1 so we can have a director in place and be ready for the tourist season.

Don Butterfield
Mayor