

Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce & Business Association

Notes from October 5, 2017 Board Meeting

Financials – In good financial health. Membership renewals were strong. Gained more new than we lost. Trolley revenue good.

Present: Ian Bachtel, Tom Piete, Robert Roos, Mike Gantenbein, Arlis Duncan, Bobby Abernathy, Linda Graham, Tim Balfour

Absent: Kelly Cason, Cindi Hickey, Jerry Hayes, Angela Beeks

Old Business

- **Update on 3rd Street Park Project** – Robert spoke with the landscape architect contracted to develop the conceptual illustrations, Laurie Sager. They reviewed other small-town public spaces to confirm some ideas. She will deliver 3 different concepts which will be used to restart the project team and start defining the direction of this project.
- **Off-Season Promotion Concept** – new date still needs to be set. Sandi Whittle confirmed her role as lead of the planning group and will get the next meeting set.
- **Haunted Trolley Tour Planning** –
 - **Ticket Sales** – basically sold out. Some in-house tour times have availability. Others have 1-3 open seats. Tim will determine how to get those filled. We will also release the 9:45 and 10 pm tours for Fridays and Saturdays.
 - **Sign-up for support** – filling in volunteers for check-in and character roles. Since this is the Chamber's main fundraiser we expect some level of support from the board and the membership. If it is not forthcoming we may not be able to produce this event in the future.
 - **Haunted Trolley Runs Oct. 19, 20, 21, 26, 27 & 28**
- **Victorian Christmas Planning** –
 - **Arlis Duncan** volunteered to take on **Parade Coordinator** role. Member Jeanena Whit Wilson has been recruiting parade participants.
 - **Caroling Coordinator** role is still not filled. This role would contact potential performers to carol on the weekends. The first weekend is already full. The 2nd & 3rd Weekends and Saturday the 23rd need more groups.
 - **Lighting Project** – Sandi Whittle shared feedback from a member that they didn't like receiving an invoice without being asked. Discussion was about how many merchants prefer to just receive the invoice to facilitate their payment since this is a cost that has been in place for a number of years. Also mentioned was the fact that we don't have the manpower to make in-person calls on these initiatives and rely on email communication.

This year there was limited communication as we assumed that most of the merchants are aware of this issue. An oversight that will be addressed next year.
 - Information will be updated online at: www.ChristmasInJacksonville.com

- Annual Dinner – proposed date is Sunday, January 14. Will be getting proposal from a local restaurant for menu/cost. Our expectation is that we will need to increase the cost for attending. It hasn't been raised in quite a while and limits the host restaurant from offering some options.

- **Marketing & Visitor Services Update**

- Travel Writers – Tim Balfour reported on the group of 7 culinary writers who were in town Sept. 12. They were very positive about their experience in Jacksonville and impressed by the small/historic town ambiance and all we have to offer. He will be monitoring their blogs for writing. They were attending FEAST Portland and this trip was coordinated through Travel Oregon/Travel Southern Oregon.

October 27 is when the next group of travel writers will be in town. Society of American Travel Writers' annual meeting is in Portland and Travel Oregon/Travel Southern Oregon have planned a series of familiarization trips throughout the state. We will have a group of 6-7 travel writers in town for 2.5 hours – giving them a trolley/cemetery tour and time to explore on their own.

- **Visitor & Trolley Stats** – contact counts at the Information Center were down in the spring and up in the summer. The increase was due primarily to shifting the trolley ticket sales to the info center. People are taking advantage of being able to pay on-site and with credit cards to a great extent.

Trolley ridership has remained consistent with past years.

- VIC Staff Update – Tim also reported on staffing changes at the info center and the need to minimize the size of the staff. His position gives 10 hours/week for visitor services oversight and far too much of that time has been taken up with staff interactions – training, updating on procedures, serving as the primary informational resource, observing, etc. Fewer staff would allow a better allocation of his time.

- **New Business**

- **Permanent City Christmas Tree** – Robert has been speaking with City officials and staff about planting a fir tree on the City Hall Grounds that will serve as the official city Christmas tree in future years. This idea has been raised before, but with the death of one of the mature deciduous trees the opportunity to replace it with an evergreen has presented itself.

Linda Graham reported that based on her research a Nordland Fir is the type of tree best suited for our needs. It looks like a spruce, does well in this climate and doesn't too large (for decorating purposes).

Having the tree on the city hall lawn would expand the impression of the area that comprises our "downtown" by bringing it more around the corner from Californian and down 5th. Moving some of the functions, such as the tree lighting to one of the side streets would also have some benefits from a planning and implementation perspective.

- **Downtown Trick-or-Treat** – Saturday, October 28, 1 – 3 pm. Participating merchants will be provided with a marker (Foam jack-o-lantern face on mesh ribbon which replaced the balloons of previous years) so families can identify where to go.

Tim will send email to past participants and new merchants to confirm participation.
Linda Graham will distribute markers the morning of the 28th.