

Los Alamos County
Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board Meeting
Special Strategic Planning Meeting (Part 2)
Tuesday, May 12, 2009
Chamber of Commerce Conference Room
109 Central Park Square, Los Alamos, NM 87544

IN ATTENDANCE

Board Members:

Brad Duni, Chairman (community at-large representative)
Ken Ashley, Vice Chair, Canyon Inn (lodging representative)
Linda Deck, Bradbury Science Museum (visitor attraction representative)
Denise Smith, Best Western Hilltop House (lodging representative)

Liaisons/Staff/Contractors

Kevin Holsapple, Executive Director, LACDC
David Empey, Project Manager, Griffin and Associates

CALL TO ORDER/STATEMENT OF ANTI-TRUST

The meeting was called to order at approximately 1:15 p.m. All board members present agreed to follow the bylaws of the Statement of Antitrust Policy.

AGENDA/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

All board members approved the meeting agenda. All board members reviewed and approved the minutes of the April 28, 2009 meetings with changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public in attendance.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Kelly announced that she had sent an e-mail to the new superintendent of Bandelier National Monument, Jason Lott, inviting him to apply for the vacant visitor attractions representative position on the Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board. No response as of this meeting. Kelly will follow up in the next week.

SMALL PROJECT GRANT RFP PROCESS FY10

Kelly reported that the RFP will be noticed in the Albuquerque Journal and the Los Alamos Monitor on Sunday, May 17th; distributed to all known, potential proposers via e-mail and/or letter on Monday, May 18th; proposals are due on Wednesday, June 3rd; recommended proposals and grant allotments to be presented for approval at the June 12th LTAB meeting. Kelly asked for two Board volunteers for the Small Project selection committee. Ken Ashley and Denise Smith volunteered to serve on the selection committee with Kelly Stewart.

STRATEGIC PLANNING, PART 2: ASSET ANALYSIS

LTAB’s target audience is defined as out of town visitors—couples and families—with an interest in history & science or recreation with the means and incentives to spend at least one weekend night at a Los Alamos lodging establishment. In addition to the marketing, advertising and promotion designed to communicate to these audiences, the Board, through its strategic planning process has identified the need to focus and possibly foster the improvement of the “product” we are selling to our visitors. Based on criteria defined by the branding firm Destination Development International (DDI), the Board initiated an asset analysis of Los Alamos’ visitor product.

Asset Assessment

Per Destination Development International’s assessment, a successful downtown is built upon a 10/10/10 strategy: 10 dining/treat places; 10 merchants; 10 businesses open after 7:00 p.m. within a 3-block stretch.

The Board brainstormed Los Alamos County’s most promising assets from a visitor’s perspective.

Anchor Restaurants	Anchor Attractions	Anchor Merchants
Coffee House Café	Bandelier National Monument	CB Fox
Blue Window Bistro	Bradbury Science Museum	Cookin’n Style
Tea World	Fuller Lodge (with 24/7 display)	Uli’s
Pyramid Café	Historic Walking Tour	Otowi
Central Avenue Grill	Ashley Pond	Quark
Ruby K’s	Art Center at Fuller Lodge	
Origami	Art in Public Places	
Hill Diner	Setting/Scenery	
Viola’s	Pajarito Ski Hill/Area	
Daniel’s Bistro	Black Hole	
Chili Works	Los Alamos Golf Course	

“PRODUCT” ASSESSMENT

It’s critical that an outside individual or group identify Los Alamos’ assets.

LTAB’s primary target is potential overnight visitors. Not commuters.

Los Alamos Creative Cultural District designation would provide funding incentives to new and existing merchants to create or change aspects of aesthetics and operations of their business.

It was mentioned that there might be a growing litter problem, especially in Downtown.

Youth businesses could be encouraged to provide maintenance and fix-up services.

Seek expanded access to Lab property? Via bus tours?

Need to improve curb/sidewalks in the downtown area.

Initiate a Monitor contest for “The best of” Los Alamos to get community’s view of best assets.

Bradbury Science should put a revolving display at the Research Park.

WAYFARER SIGNAGE

Banner at Central and Trinity that communicate “Welcome” and “there’s a lot going on here”.

The Board agreed that more wayfarer signage was required throughout town, particularly en route to and at the gateways to Los Alamos townsite, White Rock, the Lab and Bandelier. Townsite locations that require better signage include Bandelier, Fuller Lodge. Signage should let the visitor know “you’ve arrived” at each location.

The Gateway rocks at the entrance of Los Alamos are a mile’s distance from the townsite. Currently the visitor experiences a long stretch of uninviting roadway/scenery (guard tower, airport, fencing, barbed wire) between the Los Alamos gateway rocks and the scenic, welcoming downtown area. While the Los Alamos rocks should remain in place, landscaping should be added, as well as a sign that says “Downtown Los Alamos – 1 mile”.

Similar wayfarer/gateway signage should be posted on westbound Trinity and Central, letting travelers know what’s up ahead and when they have “arrived” in downtown Los Alamos. should be repositioned just before the Downtown.

Gateway signage to White Rock is already part of the White Rock Master Plan as an approved County Capital Improvement Project. Wayfarer signage must be implemented on both ends of White Rock to capture attention of Bandelier visitors on their way to and out of the attraction, ensuring awareness of both White Rock and Los Alamos downtowns.

Wayfarer signage at and around the guard gates at the Lab must be implemented to guide visitors through the area and reassure them of their destinations once through the gates.

TARGET AUDIENCES

Denise Smith mentioned that a primary target audience of Best Western is large tour groups. The largest conference for tour operators is Powwow which is scheduled to be held in Miami, FL on June 13th this year. Once established as part of a tour operator’s route, 35-40 overnight hotel visits are virtually guaranteed. Hotels will likely need to provide luggage hauling and box lunches for attraction tours, etc.

QUESTIONS

Does LTAB still have capital budget appropriated for signage?

Who are the appropriate contacts at the County and the Lab to approach regarding additional signage at the guard gates?

Can LTAB’s Visitor Advertising and Marketing contract fund giveaways?

Can LTAB’s Small Project Grant program accept proposals to improve assets to attract visitors?

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m.