

VISIT NORMAN

To: Norman City Council
From: Dan Schemm, Executive Director
Date: September 21, 2016
Subject: Explanation of request for appropriation from room tax fund balance

The VisitNorman Board of Directors has authorized a request of \$80,000 from the room tax fund balance be made to City Council; \$50,000 of this will be used to hire Civitas to explore setting up a tourism improvement district in Norman. And, if the initial feedback is positive, help implement the TID. The remaining \$30,000 would be used to hire the Huddle Up group to help set up a sports commission here in Norman.

Oklahoma State Legislators recently amended the business improvement district legislation to allow Oklahoma cities to create Tourism Improvement Districts (TID). This would allow for hotels and motels with 50 or more rooms to create a Tourism Improvement District. Similar to a business improvement district, the TID would be a fee that the hotels assess on themselves, with the revenue generated being used to market Norman to tourists and visitors. This fee would be passed through to the guests meaning that there is no cost to the City of Norman or our citizens.

Civitas would be hired to help research and form a Norman TID. They have served as consultant to more than 80 tourism districts throughout the U.S. and have been forming and renewing special districts since 1995. Civitas would work with VisitNorman through a five-step process.

Step One: Initiation/Infrastructure

This step creates the necessary leadership structure to carry out the project. During this step Civitas, VN and business owners will identify their respective roles in the formation process. This step also includes gathering information on the district.

Step Two: Outreach and Consensus Building

Outreach efforts are undertaken in step two to connect with business owners and City officials and gain their support for the proposed district.

Step Three: Document Preparation

In step three, documents necessary to form the district are drafted. Civitas will work closely with business owners, VN and the City to ensure documents reflect the needs and priorities of assessed businesses.

VISIT NORMAN

Step Four: Document Revision

Documents drafted by Civitas will be submitted to VN, business owners and the City for review. Based on their input, Civitas will revise documents as necessary and prepare final documents.

Step Five: Hearing Process

Finally, Civitas will guide VN through the City Council hearing process to form the district.

The second portion of this request would be used to work with Huddle Up Group to research expanding sports tourism in Norman by creating a sports commission. With the Norman Forward facilities coming on line, a sports commission would bring in regional tournaments to make sure the venues are fully utilized.

Huddle Up Group would analyze the existing events, venues and sports tourism activities in the Norman area, then develop a complete 5-year sports tourism and events enrichment game plan for VisitNorman. This would include determining the best structure for a new sports commission as well as identifying new resources to sustain and grow our economic development effort through sports. The strategic plan would include best practices in the development of a new sports commission and includes the following deliverables:

1. Conduct a complete audit of existing sports tourism efforts. This stage includes a review of all existing venues along with the proposed Norman Forward projects.
2. Conduct an in-person sports tourism evaluation including venue tours, hotel inventory analysis, review of existing events and review of existing marketing efforts.
3. Using the audit, in-person evaluation and national best practices to develop an initial draft of a 5-year sports tourism and events strategic plan to use in creating a new sports commission in Norman.
4. Provide an in-person summary of findings to VisitNorman's Board, elected officials, hospitality industry and community leaders.
5. Consultant will be available to VisitNorman staff via phone, in person, and/or at industry related events to act as a sounding board throughout the fiscal year for all sports tourism related questions pertaining to this scope of work.

These two projects need to run on a parallel path as the funding for a sports commission would most likely come from the TID and the hotels would be more apt to support the TID if we can show the impact that a sports commission would have on room nights.

Thank you for your consideration.
Dan Schemm