



HSV Marketing – What Happened?

Description

Written by Tom Blakeman, May 26, 2019

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The following is an excerpt from the HSVPOA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes of June 15, 2011 (Emphasis added):

“President Kosoglow commented on the marketing of Hot Springs Village. He wished Lacey Ekberg well in her personal and professional endeavors as she moves to North Carolina.”

“President Kosoglow stated the Board wants to stay committed to marketing Hot Springs Village .”

“Also, we need several hundred new residents coming into the Village each year just to keep our current population and we really need more growth. We have suffered the consequences of limited growth over the past few years with reduced revenues.”

Baby boomers needed

“We need our share of the retiring baby boomers. They won’t consider Arkansas or Hot Springs Village if we don’t change our position of being the best kept secret in the country to being top of mind for new retirees and people who are considering relocation. We also need the marketing program because we need to increase our rounds of golf being played in the Village. We reached our peak in 2005 of 360,000 rounds in a year. The last two years have been around 295,000 rounds.”

“Our lack of growth, the aging population and based on last year’s new resident surveys a lot of the new residents seem to be less interested in golf than people who moved here previously. Those kind of things have created a loss of golf revenue. Getting more new residents is part of the solution, as well as more visitors, more memberships, more outings to add to the much needed revenue and will allow

us to keep the fees for property owners as low as possible.”

The vision

“The efforts done so far with marketing have helped us to accomplish a few of these kinds of things, in particular, we have had more new contacts come in – up 80% year to date versus previous years when we were not doing any real marketing.”

“We are doing a much better job of responding to the people who contact the Chamber and the POA offices to get them information about the Village and setting up a system of getting back to them in 60-90 days after their initial contacts. I believe these contacts, well managed, will allow us to increase our population and golfing activities. We have a work plan that I feel will help us accomplish the most important goal of getting new residents. These residents are a combination of retirees and people in general who see that they are looking for an active, friendly, gated community with a wide variety of outstanding amenities in a natural environment providing ample opportunities for community involvement in an enriching lifestyle. That’s the vision.”

Marketing helps retain non-resident lot owners

“I think the marketing effort will also help us retain current non-resident lot owners who see their investments being protected by our marketing activities. Scott has already begun work on ensuring the first short-term goal which is to execute this current work plan and is working with the Chamber to provide whatever management experience and resources from the POA needed to do that.”

Chamber desires to return to Chamber focused Executive Director

“The Chamber is working hard using help from LeeAnn Branch, the past Exec. Director and other volunteers as well as some of the Chamber members to keep answering the contacts being made at the Chamber and responding appropriately. The POA and the Chamber Boards will be discussing the future of our contractual agreement shortly. The Chamber Board has voiced their interest to me about wanting to return to a Chamber focused Executive Director to ensure the best service to their Chamber members. He has asked Scott to consider managing the marketing efforts directly. He believes he is planning on providing a proposal to the Board within the next month or so which we will discuss among ourselves and with the Chamber Board to decide the future of the marketing program.”

Previously, many options implemented

“Scott Randall [General Manager] stated, with the Board’s guidance **we are committed to implementing all elements of the approved marketing plan this year. We are working with the Chamber Board and their staff, other perspective (sic) partners to make sure that all the elements the Board has previously approved and the resources that have been committed will be implemented throughout the course of the year.** We are looking at the structure and exploring options i.e. maintaining a relationship with the Chamber, looking at other perspective (sic) partnerships, finding third-party vendors to provide such services or bringing it in-house as a staff function that is the

recommendation I will be bringing forward within the course of the next month as we work on this transition plan with all of those perspective (sic) partners or players.”

10,000 Baby boomers reach retirement age every day

Eight years later

Since 2011 – **Eight Years Later** – Hot Springs Village has apparently continued to stumble and bumble along: We have continued to have less than 50 new homes per year. Golf Rounds were 280,125 in 2011, and 300,484 in 2012 but then only 258,348 in 2013 and less than 250,000 each year since. Our dues have been jacked up (**Two Tier**) and fees have been raised on almost everything. We have hired (and then fired) ‘Professional’ golf management (Troon) and implemented ‘Flex Pricing’ on golf. We have become totally ‘Governance’ oriented, rewritten all of our Bylaws & Policies and inflated our managerial titles (CEO, Chairman, CFO, etc.). We have spent millions on consultants and lawyers (CMP, Two Tier, Declarations Vote, Secrecy, etc).

Need for real National Marketing Program

Yet today we still do not have and are still talking about the need for a real **National Marketing Program**. But, this is limited to only discussions of a new committee and then relegating it to being only a sub-committee of another committee. Go figure. Meanwhile, we are poised to go down new rabbit holes such as ‘Lodging’ and ‘Pocket Neighborhoods’. And, it would seem, if our recent Board Meeting and Nextdoor commentary are any reference, that many of the Owners and Residents are near revolt.

So, What Happened?

Tom Blakeman May 26, 2019

Note: Headings and paragraph breaks were all added by Editor for ease in reading and not part of the original document.

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