



BILL WHITE  
MAYOR

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF HOUSTON  
TEXAS

November 1, 2006

*Via Facsimile & First Class Mail*

Douglas M. Horn, Chairman  
Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau  
121 North Post Oak Lane  
Houston, Texas 77024

Dear Doug,

I write to request that the Bureau form a committee comprised of individuals designated by organizations of principal stakeholders in the Bureau—including the restaurant industry, the hotel industry, the airline industry, the City of Houston, Harris County, and the Greater Houston Partnership—to conduct a competitive process to recommend a candidate for president of the Bureau beginning sometime after the expiration of Mr. Tollett's contract. This committee should retain a leading national executive search firm.

Mr. Tollett has served this community for many years, and told me that he would want to be considered in any competitive process, and I believe that is entirely appropriate.

I also request that the committee defer the decision whether to have an employment contract until the review and approval of the contract between the Bureau and the City of Houston. That contract provides most of the funding of the Bureau.

In the public sector, employment contracts are a rarity. Many dedicated and effective public servants are willing to serve without a contract. On occasion, there are qualified candidates for senior positions responsible for large City organizations which we have not been able to hire based on the adverse impact on other employees with similar or greater job responsibilities who are not offered employment contracts. We are aware that the market does dictate the compensation and other terms for which many senior executives can be employed. Some individuals leaving a secure position for a new position with new responsibilities and a new community often may not do so without some employment security.

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These two simple requests are not intended to substitute the City's judgment for that of a committee formed by representatives designated by stakeholders concerning the profile and qualifications for the president of the Bureau on its application to any particular candidate.

The best practices of corporate governance require board members to routinely consider both formal succession planning and the performance and capabilities of the chief executive in relation to others in the industry. In fact, many boards consider planning for potential succession to be the most important of all fiduciary duties of board members, equal to every board's principal responsibility for high standards of integrity and the absence of any self-dealing.

Houston is a great City. We are proud of it. We are proud of the enormous strides that Houston has made in attracting conventions and visitors. This reflects both the work of your Board, its predecessors, and many public officials who have contributed to the building of the Convention Center, the Hotel, our transportation system, and our vibrant hospitality and entertainment industries.

We also recognize that the convention and tourism business is one of the most competitive in the country, with many markets that have built excess capacity, and that for some tourists and some events other destinations may have amenities or traditions that create significant competitive advantages compared to Houston. We know that our success in selling Houston as a destination will depend not only on the professionals within the Bureau, but on the ability of the leadership of the Bureau to engage the commitment and active assistance of the major hospitality and leisure industries and the broader business, cultural, and civic organizations whose members must help us sell our new Houston. By actively and openly asking those who can help the Bureau about its future leadership, an executive search committee will send a strong signal that the Bureau is not only justifiably proud of its success, but is striving for a better future based on a spirit of openness and cooperation.

Sincerely,



Bill White  
Mayor

cc: City Controller  
Members of City Council  
County Judge Robert Eckels  
Jeff Moseley, President & CEO of Greater Houston Partnership