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**National Conclave Planning Committee**

**Conclave Planning Workshop, November 1, 2020**

Listed below are the Unanswered Workshop Questions with NCPC Responses:

1. **What about the hospitality suite pricing/negotiation?**

It is important to think about and negotiate the hospitality suite issues when the Hotel is trying to get your business. Hotel chains have different rules pertaining to whether you can bring in food and alcohol from the outside. Hotels also have union workers that may not let you bring in outside bartenders/servers to assist you as well. Using their servers and alcohol, will increase your bill. Hotels may also have rules about how long you can stay open as well. If you have the Hospitality Suite in the hotel where outside people are being housed, be aware that they may complain and close your event early. Using a meeting/event planner to negotiate for you is your best bet, since they know all the tricks of the trade. You may need to consider the cost and operations of the hospitiality suite in your overall negotiations with the hotel. Whatever you decide, write it in a contract.

1. **Will Philadelphia be able to host a future year, and did that help with the negotiations re: cancellation?**

While the Philadelphia chapter will host conclave again, they did not have enough certainty as to when that date would be during the cancellation negotiations. Therefore, the Philadelphia Chapter could not commit to an alternative year and did not use the promise of hosting a future conclave at the hotel in negotiating the cancellation.

1. **Does the chapter cover the cost of the planner or is that covered in a commission included in the room rate?**

The Philadelphia chapter covered the cost of the event planner. However, the chapter members negotiated the contract with the hotel before the event planner was engaged. If your event planner negotiates the hotel deal, they will receive a commission from the hotel. The fact that you engaged the event planner to negotiate the hotel contract and their receipt of a commission can be a consideration in negotiating your chapter’s fee with the event planner.

1. **Is it reasonable to expect that some event and/or meeting planners have limitations in what they can offer?**

Absolutely. Some event planners have experience and expertise negotiating with hotels, while others may focus on identifying local venues, vendors, and sponsors. Still others have expertise in registration and web platforms for websites and online registration. And some have an acumen for graphics design and managing onsite activities. One event planner may not do it all, but many event planners do much of it. Before interviewing and selecting an event planner, the chapter should identify its priorities and then determine which candidates have the capacity to meet those priorities. You may engage one planner on the front end for hotel negotiations and another for registration and an onsite presence. Or you may not use an event planner at all and engage the services of a meeting planner that only handles the registration platform and on-site meeting management.

1. **Please elaborate on the comments made regarding adding to hotel costs to offset food & beverage costs for a conclave.**

Hotels often allow the contracting host chapter to add an amount to the room rate ($5.00 or $10.00 for example) above the negotiated group rate. That additional amount can go toward the cost of food and beverages.

1. **What amount has been the range of costs for the host chapter for the last 2-3 years of our in-person conclaves?**

The total expenditures for the last four (4) in-person Conclaves have ranged from $295M (Seattle) to $561M (Trenton). Norfolk's total expenditures were $359M, while NY's were $493M.

1. **What was offered in exchange for support to past Sponsors of Conclaves?**

The New York Chapter offered AARP our Golden Sponsor the following:

A. Time to speak at the Luncheon

B. Full Page ad in the Souvenir Journal

C. Two email blasts to all registered conclave participants

D. At least one Post on the GF FB page

E. Contact information to all GF’s who opted in on the registration portal (the contract was not signed, so instead we had both GF’s and BF’s voluntarily fill out info cards in return for being included in a lottery for goods).

F. All other sponsors were given acknowledgement in the Souvenir Journal and in the event program.

1. **How many members does the Philly chapter have?**

We had 30 members during most of the planning process. Two Girl Friends passed away in the final year of planning (2019).

1. **How did you manage conflict over Conclave plans?**

All plans were initially presented to the entire Membership. The concepts were voted on and then implemented. Later, a smaller group of the Event Chairs along with the Conclave Chair would discuss and vote. Sometimes the Conclave Chair made the final decision if no resolution was insight. A rule that we implemented was “if you suggest it, you research it”. Avoid public arguments, have discussions in smaller groups, and have facts, and or vision boards to aid in presenting your views. Once the event chairs are identified, it is important that they have people on their team that they can work with. Let them select their team. If possible, have senior members or GF’s that typically attend Conclave. You will need their experience.

1. **What types of unexpected situations came up and how did you manage them?**

An example of unexpected situations is where the Philadelphia chapter experienced the deaths of two Girl Friends in the final year of conclave planning (2019). One of our Girl Friends passed after a lengthy illness. The death of another girl friend was unexpected and somewhat disorienting because she was a chapter pillar and an integral part of the planning process. The strength of the chapter relationships allowed us to support each other and navigate that difficult situation.

1. **When the NCPC submits a Bylaw proposal to increase conclave registration fees in December 2020, if passed, when would it go into effect?**

The Bylaw would be proposed to the membership at Conclave 2021, voted on at Conclave 2022, and if passed, the increased registration fees would go in effect for the Conclave in May 2023.