Timeline from the North Lake Travis Chamber of Commerce, Oct. 26, 2026

Sent as four images to the Lago Vista Watchdog tips inbox by the chamber's executive director, Allison Sargent, on Oct. 26, 2026. Images as received, with the names of private people covered.

TIMELINE

Lago Vista HOT Funding & Visitors Center Agreement
Fall 2025–September 2026

Council approved $100,000 in FY2025–26 HOT funding, but the method for administering that funding changed while a new policy and service agreement contract were being developed. The agreement remained unresolved through a City Manager transition, requiring new submissions and legal review.

DATE

June 30, 2025 - Submit Hot application request for $55,000. A $7,000 increase from the historic $48,000 of yearly support that has remained static for over 15+ years. (Allison only a few weeks as Executive Director. Increase specifically for upgrading CRM and accounting systems).

Sept. 18, 2025
Regular meeting (public hearing and FY 25-26 budget workshop)

Sept. 25, 2025
Special called meeting
FY2025–26 budget approval. $100,000 in HOT funding was included for Chamber/Visitors Center operations and approved unanimously as part of the City budget.

Sept. 30, 2025
The Chamber met with Economic Development Director Eric Zeno shortly after the new fiscal-year funding was approved to move forward with a collaborative working relationship.

Oct. 14, 2025
Meeting with City Manager Charles West regarding the City–Chamber relationship and administration of the approved funding.

Dec. 20, 2025
New HOT framework begins. City Attorney Brad Bullock sent a sample HOT policy to City Manager Charles West and Mayor Shane Saum, beginning the move toward a formal policy, application process, and written agreements.

January 6, 2026
Formal Request to Begin Contract Process
Emailed City Manager Charles West requesting a meeting within two weeks to begin drafting an MOU outlining the City–Chamber partnership and a formal contract for the already-approved $25,000 quarterly HOT funding. Requested participation from two City Council members and two Chamber Board members to establish clear roles, reporting requirements, payment timelines, and shared priorities.

Feb. 2, 2026
Meeting between City leadership, the Chamber leadership. Allison Sargent, Justin Loucks, [redacted] Charles West, Adam Benefield, Norma Owen, Eric Zeno

February 19, 2026
The draft HOT Fund Application and Granting Policy first came to Council as Item XII.2 for consideration. Councilor Saum posted the draft PDF on the council message board ahead of that meeting: https://councilforum.lagovistatexas.gov/threads/hot-fund-application-and-policy-draft-for-consideration.152

March 5, 2026
Detailed reimbursement package. The Chamber submitted a detailed request for Oct.–Dec. 2025 totaling $66,742.49 in expenses.

April 1, 2026
The City mailed a check for $30,000 for reimbursement of Oct - Dec 2025 request.

April 2, 2026
Item IX.1
Council meeting policy and contract discussion. Council discussed establishing a HOT policy and directing the City Manager to negotiate contracts directly with the Chamber. Allison Sargent and Justin Loucks spoke publicly; Council directed Charles West to negotiate and execute a Hot fund Contract. *(Track A). "Tourism Partner Agreement (annual/renewable) For organizations that provide ongoing destination marketing/visitor services (e.g. Chamber). Funded via a service agreement with defined deliverables and quarterly reporting.*

April 9, 2026
At the TX Heart Acupuncture ribbon cutting Charles West handed an envelope with no explanation to Allison with an additional $ 8,237.37 dated April 8, 2026.

April 14, 2026
The Chamber executive director and board president met with Charles West, Eric Zeno and Mayor Shane Saum.

April 16, 2026
Council approved the *Track B HOT Tourism Grants (project/event-based) policy/application. For specific events/projects that drive overnight visitation (e.g. archery tournaments, festivals, visitor-facing marketing campaigns, shuttle/wayfinding for tourist events, etc.).*

April – July 2026
Repeated contract revisions. The Chamber reviewed numerous other chamber/city contracts and began discussions with Texas Hotel & Lodging Association counsel and continued revisions. A meeting about redline items with Allison, Charles West, Eric Zeno and Norma Owen on June 23 specifically about the Visitors Center contract; revisions continued in July.

June 8, 2026 — Requested Lago Fest Reporting as a City-Approved Example
After receiving Lago Fest's executive summary, emailed Eric Zeno and Charles West requesting the actual HOT reimbursement documentation as an example of the reporting format the City considered acceptable. Also requested the source and supporting methodology for the attendance, visitor-origin, dwell-time, and travel-pattern data. The following day, the City confirmed that Lago Fest had not gone through the newly adopted HOT Funds application and review process because its funding had been included in the City's October 2025 budget before the policy was adopted.

July 29, 2026
City Manager transition. Charles West resigned before the agreement and the remaining reimbursement issues were resolved, leaving the process to Acting City Manager/Police Chief Ron Joy and other City leadership.

August 10, 2026
Text with Mayor Saum "Forwarded you the email thread about our reimbursements. I think Chief Joy might be confused. I also dropped off a packet with your name on it."

August 11, 2026 Mayor Relayed City Attorney's Position on Reimbursements
Mayor Shane Saum stated by text that the City Attorney viewed the approved budget as a maximum reimbursement amount, not guaranteed funding for our ongoing partnership, and believed submitted expenses did not qualify. The attorney would not meet with the Texas Hotel & Lodging Association attorney as we asked unless directed by the City Council and indicated that such a meeting was unlikely to change his position. I clarified that the Chamber was submitting expenses quarterly and had been reimbursed for only one quarter—not for the full approved period.

August 13, 2026
Call with Mayor Saum directing to fill out the 25 page event grant application - link sent in text. Immediately worked on this submitted and printed.
Same day**: Documented Conflicting Requirements and Departure from the Two-Track Process**
In a correspondence to Mayor Shane Saum, documented that the City's requirements remained unclear, conflicting, and a moving target. The Chamber was being directed to sign and submit an application marked "DRAFT V2" on every page (Track B), overriding the two-track process (Track A) discussed earlier in the year: a separate contractual agreement for the Chamber's ongoing operation of the Visitors Center and a HOT-fund application process for individual events, programs, and activities. Explained that combining these distinct funding relationships contradicted the previously discussed approach and created confusion about the process required for payment.

August 9–19, 2026
New submissions and contract package. The Chamber resubmitted/delivered January–June draft reimbursement documentation for advice. Revised agreement language and redlines were completed and added in for review Aug. 13–17, and the outstanding reimbursement and agreement were formally raised again Aug. 19.

August 27, 2026
Meeting Following City Leadership Transition
Following the City's leadership transition, the Chamber met in person with Eric Zeno, Acting City Manager/Police Chief Ron Joy, and [redacted] with Mayor Shane Saum participating virtually, to discuss the outstanding HOT reimbursements and Visitors Center agreement. During the meeting, [redacted] presented a $2 receipt accompanied by multiple pages of handwritten documentation inside a laminating sheet as an example of the level of supporting documentation the Chamber was expected to provide.

September 2–3, 2026 — Selected Draft Documents Published in Council Packet
Mayor Saum selected certain attachments from an email sent to the full City Council for inclusion in the public agenda packet; not all materials from the email were included. Some selected documents

contained draft financial information as we work through our reporting process, identical to what was accepted earlier this year. A line item was included with third-party information subject to an NDA. In an effort to be fully transparent, the Chamber sent this info over for advice and acknowledges that this material should not have been included in the original email.

After following through with the demand to obtain an attorney to re-evaluate, the City's legal team determined that the City was then not legally required to remove the documents. However, as a courtesy to the Chamber, the City agreed to remove the requested materials and repost the agenda packet.

Current Position — September 3, 2026
This matter has again returned to the City Council, with a proposed path forward still under review. The Chamber continues to seek reimbursement for its remaining eligible FY2025–26 expenses, along with a clear, signed agreement establishing the Chamber's continued operation of the Visitors Center and defining the services, funding, reporting requirements, and responsibilities moving forward.

Bottom Line
The Chamber cannot continue attempting to meet requirements that repeatedly change or remain unclear. We have continued sustaining the Visitors Center and tourism operations under this uncertainty and this comes at the direct expense of our business owners and Chamber members, the organization's financial stability, and its success. A clear, consistent, and mutually agreed-upon path forward is now essential.

This issue developed and repeatedly changed over nearly a year. It did not result from a lack of reporting, responsiveness, or participation by the Chamber. It arose from an unresolved change in the City's HOT-funding process, evolving documentation requirements, prolonged contract negotiations, and City leadership transition before the approved FY2025–26 allocation was fully administered.