



July 28, 2023
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
RACVB Annex

Board Present: Carol Schuster, Tiana McCall, Darrell Snorek, Todd Cagnoni, Jennifer Furst, Mick Gronewold, Shelton Kay, Ricardo Montoya-Picazo, Caitlin Pusateri, Therese Thill, Kirk Weitzel

Board Absent: Kevin Frost, Bobbie Holzwarth, Geno lafrate, Dana Martin, Jay Sandine, Richard Shuga, Patrick Thompson

Staff Present: Joanne Nold, Kristen Paul, Lindsay Arellano, Brandi Liantonio

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:32 a.m. by board chair Carol Schuster

Shelton Kay was congratulated on his recent retirement from Crusader Community Health.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the June 28, 2023 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Internal Monitoring Reports:

It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the Internal Monitoring Reports, including John Groh's CEO Interpretations, for monitoring on:

- 2.3 Financial Planning/Budgeting
- 2.4 Financial Condition & Activities.

CEO Report:

Industry Accreditation Update: RACVB received reaccreditation from the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program, which is the highest level of certification a destination organization like RACVB can receive. It required a rigorous process that includes demonstrating achievement with performance benchmarks as well as best practices in various accountability metrics. There are only 204 accredited destination organizations worldwide and out of 700 member organizations in Destinations International. In four years, we will go through an even more rigorous eight-year full renewal process.

Destination Master Plan Update:

- The Consumer Brand and Perception survey of Rockford and our Market is in market by SMARInsights. We will receive the results in a few weeks and hope to share that information with the board at the September meeting.
- We are finalizing our Winnebago and Boone counties resident survey. That should go live the week of August 7 and that will remain open until the end of September.
- There will also be a Destination Next survey for community leaders targeting a narrower list of recipients than the broader resident survey. That survey will analyze destination readiness and the perception of stakeholder and community leaders on 12 different areas within the tourism industry.
- Finally, we will hold industry specific focus groups that will be scheduled the week of September 6, 7 & 8 and we'll have at least 6 of those.
- Then, at the end of October, we will have three town halls where we will begin to roll out early findings from the research and seek feedback.

RACVB will host a mural dedication ceremony at the Veterans mural of the roundabout at North Main and Auburn. We will have speakers from Winnebago County, Collins Aerospace, our office, Veteran's Groups and the Friends of group that maintains the flowers at the roundabout.

Also on August 3, our team is supporting the International Women's Baseball Center. They are hosting, for the first time ever in Rockford, USA Baseball Women's National team. The day provides a great opportunity to see professional players in our community. There will be a block party on 15th Avenue and the game will be at 5 p.m.

GFNY is next weekend, August 4-6, with 200 registered riders and 300 guests. The start and finish are at the Venetian Club. There are 45 teams and riders from 20 countries.

It is Christmas in July in our office right now. We have been doing a social media kickoff to gear up for Stroll on State, which is now only a few months away. We have \$200k in confirmed sponsorships so far and all applications are live for registrations, vendors and tree submissions. We are on pace, but we'll be focusing for the next few months on getting to our stretch goal of \$310k.

The Rockford Public Art Trail launched last week. This is about bringing attention to the public art in our community and helping people experience it as a product. We have had 420 people sign up for the Art Trail so far with 1,833 check-ins to individual sites. We have prize redemption from as far afield as North Carolina and engagement from all over the country. After your vote at our last meeting, the board helped us decide that the next trail will be a pizza and beer trail. This is estimated to launch in the beginning of September. The board was then requested to submit their input on their personal favorite pizza and beer locations.

Partner Updates:

Rockford Area Economic Development Council is planning the Midwest Aerospace Conference 2023 on September 20 at Embassy Suites hotel with a strong roster of experts talking about trends in the Aerospace industry, specifically around electrification.

City of Rockford has sworn in the new 13th Ward Alderman, Jeff Bailey. The fiber city partnership with SciFi is a \$200 million open access investment in access to broadband and construction is now in process. City Council approved the Barber Colman redevelopment agreement. There are many public infrastructure projects going on this summer. There is discussion of opening an open container/social district in the downtown area in partnership with the River District Association. City and River District are surveying businesses and residents for concerns right now and hope to move forward once we get responses.

Hard Rock had their topping off ceremony a couple weeks ago for the new casino, with a plan to open by Labor Day 2024.

The board adjourned at 8:03 a.m.

The next meeting is Wednesday, Next Board Meeting: September 27, 2023, in the RACVB annex.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darrell Snorek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Darrell Snorek, Board Secretary

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