

MINUTES

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting August 15, 2012

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at The Residence Inn, Chapel Hill

Board Members Present: Dave Gephart, Karen DeHart, Mike Gering, Gene Pease, Greg Overbeck, Meg McGurk, Laura Morgan, Annette Stone, Anthony Carey, Jim Parker, Gordon Jameson, Valerie Foushee

Members Absent: Mark Sherburne, Lydia Lavelle, Lee Pavao

Staff Present: Laurie Paolicelli, Linda Ekeland, Martha Shannon, and Tina Fuller

Others Present: Jack Schmidt and Bob Ward, guests, Vision Point staff- Diane Kuehn, Diana Tong and Erik Olson, presented

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gephart called the meeting to order at 8:05 am

Announcements

Council member, Gene Pease is now representing the Town of Chapel Hill on the Visitors Bureau board, replacing Donna Bell. Current board member Mark Sherburne will be filling the vacant seat representing Orange County Economic Development Commission. Upon approval of the BOCC, Jack Schmidt with Carolina Inn will fill the Orange County Lodging Association seat vacated by Mr. Sherburne. November will be Commissioner Foushee's last meeting with the Bureau's board. The Commissioners will appoint a new board member.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Gephart requested a motion to approve the minutes. Mike Gering motioned, with Jim Parker seconding. All members were in favor and the minutes were approved as written.

COMPLETING OLD BUSINESS

Orange County Advisory Board By-Laws/Elections of Officers

In the last meeting, the election of officers was postponed until the department's advisory board by-laws were approved by the BOCC, which at this time was still in the approval process. For the sake of electing board officers, the Board of County Commissioners, existing advisory board policy, was followed.

The motion to re-elect Dave Gephart for Chair, Anthony Carey for Vice Chair and Mike Gering for Financial Chair for second terms, was made by Gene Pease and seconded by Jim Parker and passed with all members in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Diane Kuehn, CEO Vision Point and staff presented their strategy and design concepts (following the recent brand transformation) for the Bureau's website redesign and development. Key points presented: the 2014 trend in websites is moving towards viewing websites via mobile devices (close to 40%) search engines will be more personalized, the Bureau's website design will be adaptable to currently available mobile devices providing an immersive experience.

Discussion points: will the 'Edge' be used interchangeably with the 'Alternative Southern platform? No, the website will reflect the branding elements of the Edge and details will be shown at September's board meeting.

Reports

Marketing

Anthony Carey notified members that the new [Chapel Hill] logo has created a feeling among the other towns of being marginalized in the county's tourism efforts. To this end, and after several phone calls and meetings with stakeholders, the marketing committee reconvened and discussed the issue. Mr. Carey reported that the committee has agreed, from a marketing standpoint, a logo that includes all three towns is preferred and would not detract from the original initiative.

Discussion: Annette Stone endorsed the decision with commentary from Carrboro. Mike Gering commented that the [3-town] logo is a good idea, but asked if the tag line and all three towns would remain on the logo, which he felt made it difficult to translate on smaller spaces. Laurie Paolicelli replied that the three brands would not transfer easily to certain marketing materials, for instance, merchandise. Concluding the discussion, Mr. Carey motioned to adopt the 3-town logo but use a stand-alone Chapel Hill logo on some applications such as merchandise and bumper stickers. Carey asked Paolicelli to bring back more details as to how and when the Chapel Hill solo logo would be used. Mike Gering seconded. All members were in favor and the motion passed.

Arts Commission

Gordon Jameson announced that Torey Mishoe would begin her position as FRANK Gallery Manager in September

Budget

Mike Gering gave a brief report with respect to finances in the 2012-2013 budget-year. Mr. Gering pointed out that occupancy revenue is budgeted higher than the previous year and the \$150,000 appropriation request from fund balance to the current budget was approved. He asked that dollars be allocated from fund balance to pay for a research study to track the success of the new campaign.

Town reports

Gene Pease and board members discussed towing ordinances and cell phone usage while driving.

Annette Stone gave an update on Carrboro, on the upcoming Carrboro Music Fest in September that is free to the public and reported that they are currently going through a brand change.

Jim Parker reported on the happenings in Hillsborough; Vice President Biden was in town, the Chamber of Commerce has moved to space across from the SportsPlex, outcomes from the post Hog Day meeting and upcoming events.

Mike Gering reported that the DOT gave money to Hillsborough that will be used to improve Churton Street; work slated for next year is wider sidewalks and the possibility of laying conduit for streetlights and removing overhead power lines.

Meg McGurk reported that Missy Julian-Fox has organized a downtown ambassador program for this weekend for new students and their families. Ambassadors will be wearing specially identifying aprons filled with visitor information and be strategically placed along Franklin Street to help visitors.

Other Business

Jack Schmidt reported that the Carolina Inn will be remodeling the other 2/3 of rooms (about 100) beginning November 29th with a completion date forecasted for April 20th. Mr. Schmidt stated that the Rizzo Center might see overflow from those rooms offline, however he has been working with competitors in Orange County as well. Mr. Schmidt also reported that the steam tunnel is near completion, possibly by the end of September.

The topic of the CVB relocating was briefly discussed. Paolicelli reported that this idea is in its infancy but Manager, Frank Clifton, has discussed the potential increase in servicing visitors if the Center was located on a more significant transit corridor with ample parking. Paolicelli will meet with Clifton and update the board.

Laurie Paolicelli gave a follow up report on the proposed GLBT campaign stating that she met with Mayor Kleinschmidt and showed him the proposed advertisements (sample ads were passed around for viewing). Mayor Kleinschmidt offered feedback to the ads, which Clean Design preferred. After a photo shoot is staged and taken, the Bureau will complete the ad and run these in GLBT publications that are (according to Community Marketing, Inc.) "a demographic that travels more, owns more homes and cars, spends more on electronics, and have the largest amount of disposable income of any niche market. Lesbians and gay men are a dream market for the tourism industry."

Linda Ekeland gave a brief overview of group sales progress and upcoming events.

Next meeting venue

Siena Hotel, Chapel Hill

In conclusion and with no other business to discuss, Dave Gephart adjourn the meeting 9:35 am.

Minutes reviewed by:
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Date

Minutes accepted by:
Dave Gephart, Chairman

Date