

Approved September 18, 2013

MINUTES

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting August 21, 2013

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at the
North Carolina H.S. Athletic Assoc., 222 Finley Golf Course Rd., Chapel Hill

Board Members Present: Anthony Carey, Dave Gephart, Gene Pease, Greg Overbeck, Jack Schmidt, Karen DeHart, Laura Morgan, Lee Pavao, Lydia Lavelle, Mark Sherburne, Mike Gering, Penny Rich, and Meg McGurk

Not Present: Jim Parker, Annette Stone, and Gordon Jameson

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

Also attending: Colleen Minton, TerraVITA and Sally Greene, Chapel Hill town council member

Welcome

Anthony Carey, in his first meeting as Chairman, called the meeting to order. Mr. Carey introduced Davis Whitfield, Commissioner of the North Carolina High School Athletic Assoc. Mr. Whitfield welcomed everyone and gave a brief overview of the association's history, goals and accomplishments.

Update on TerraVITA

Colleen Minton, Manager of TerraVITA, gave an update on the progress of the event. Ms. Minton reported that more than 30 chefs have been invited or requested to participate. National media is covering the event and she anticipates a strong 2013 event and subsequent events. She thanked the Bureau for their sponsorship confirming that the event would not have taken place with the tourism bureau's leadership. The schedule thus far includes a Media Cocktail event, held at TOPO for October 10, a Harvest Dinner also on the 10th that will include a panel discussion. Schedule for Oct 11 includes East meets West and Sustainable Classrooms at TOPO as well as Greenbridge, with the Grand Tasting concluding the event on the 12th in Southern Village on the Green. Q&A followed.

Update on hotel business

Mark Sherburne reported that Epic, a software company that provides a single patient-centric database for hospitals, brought in approximately 600 people over a 2 ½-week period to train Duke Hospital staff in new software. With a good portion staying in Chapel Hill hotels, June and the first week of July numbers were off the chart. Mr. Sherburne noted that a similar program through Epic, but smaller in size, will be here in 2014.

In other hotel news, Carrboro's new hotel to open this weekend or next. Laurie Paolicelli announced that The Siena Hotel is now part of the Marriott's Autograph Collection. Mr. Carey explained that they are now able to use Marriott's marketing power and accepts rewards customers although they are not managed by Marriott.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Carey requested a motion to approve the June 19, 2013 minutes. Dave Gephart so moved and Lee Pavao seconded. With all members in agreement, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Reports

Budget/Finance

Penny Rich, as newly elected finance chair, reviewed the FY 2013 year-end budget highlights stating that \$76, 821 was used from the \$150,000 fund balance appropriated. Ms. Rich also reported that FY 2014 budget was approved at 1.3 million with \$175,000 in support coming from the Town of Chapel Hill. Ms. Paolicelli reported that approximately \$400,000 is the unassigned fund balance and that Finance likes to keep reserves at around 15%. Mike Gering suggested earmarking the fund balance for capital expenditures. The board asked that when the 2013 audit was received, a discussion take place to ask the county to earmark visitor bureau fund balance for visitor related spending in 2014 and beyond.

Executive Director Report

Laurie Paolicelli discussed the issue of CTOPS and the commission hotels pay on hosting parents for this event. CTOPS is the nickname given to UNC's orientation program: Carolina Testing & Orientation Program Sessions. All incoming freshmen must attend one two-day CTOPS session, which are offered throughout the summer. At CTOPS students stay on campus but parents stay in local hotels. However this is a program that assesses hotels a fee (Aloft for example pays \$1500) in addition to asking hotels to deeply discount rates. Several hotels have asked why this rate/gift keeps increasing and whether UNC would consider eliminating or greatly reducing this fee which, to some, feels unfair. Paolicelli met with Laura Morgan, UNC board representative who discussed the CTOPS rates with UNC program director, April Mann, who agreed to meet with the VB and hotels to explain the benefits wrapped around CTOPS and the ways in which the program works. Paolicelli will meet with Ms. Mann in September.

Ms. Paolicelli revisited the mission and strategy of the Visitors Bureau and took the board through an updated SWOT analysis. The board engaged in Q&A surrounding strategy and mission.

Tourism in OC generated \$161 million in 2012. Paolicelli stated that if we did a hard audit on how much of that we influenced it would be about 10% or \$16 million a year; a 16:1 ROI that is given back to Orange County and Chapel Hill. Mr. Pease inquired on how Ms. Paolicelli arrived at the 10%. Ms. Paolicelli replied that it is based on leads generated and applied to a travel economic impact model. Mr. Pease suggested having a rationale to back those ROI's up when speaking to town officials. Continuing with her report, Paolicelli informed that 25% of visitor's expenditures go to food, more that accommodations and the Bureau does address the whole market. A full report can be found here <http://www.nccommerce.com/tourism/research/economic-impact/teim>

Orange County Arts Commission report

Martha Shannon reported that the commission is gearing up for fall in which the commission works cooperatively with the Emerging Artists Program and the Piedmont Laureate Program among others. She also informed that they are offering new training classes for ExploreChapelHillARTS.com in September.

Carrboro

Lydia Lavelle spoke on the progress of 300 E. Main Street, reporting that they are moving forward with the tearing down of the building that previously housed Seagrove Pottery to make way for a new building that will house Fleet Feet.

Downtown

Meg McGurk spoke on the students return to UNC, the Hometown Ambassador program headed by Missy Julian Fox and the coordination of bringing Tar Heel Town to Franklin Street for the Thursday Miami game.

UNC

Laura Morgan reported that East Cameron Street is now open. She also reported that the installation ceremonies for Chancellor Folt will be October 12, 2013 and broadcasted live on UNC TV. Morgan also reported that a free live concert at Memorial Hall is planned for the night before.

Hillsborough

Mike Gering reported that the Town of Hillsborough revised its ordinances for food trucks at the urging of Hot Tin Roof owners. The Town approved a 1.1 million dollar river walk fund with a 2-yr completion schedule. Mr. Gering also reported council is in the process of rezoning property near Gold Park – Zoning would permit condominiums, an event center, retail space, and include the Riverwalk. Laurie commented that Mike would not be running for council or Frances Dancy. When asked the names of new candidates, Mike replied Jenn Weaver, Meighan Lela Carmichael, and Kathleen Ferguson.

Sales Report

Ekeland reported that she has 28 confirmed appointments at the upcoming Connect Marketplace; this year, the Sheraton Chapel Hill will join the Bureau. In other business, Ekeland spoke on the upcoming October 4th Road Show targeting planners in and around the airport vicinity. Ten trade partners will participate. Concluding her report, Ekeland reported that the group market amounted to a 2.6 million dollar economic impact for fiscal year 2012-2013.

With no other business, Lee Pavao moved to close the meeting, Dave Gephart seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:46 am.

Minutes reviewed by: Laurie Paolicelli,
Executive Director

Date

Minutes accepted by: Anthony Carey,
Chairman

Date