

Approved March 16, 2016

MINUTES

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting February 17, 2016

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at
UNC Health Care – Hillsborough Campus, Hillsborough NC

Board Members Present: Debbie Hepp, Lee Pavao, Mark Bell, Rosemary Waldorf, Penny Rich, Meg McGurk, Mark Sherburne, George Cianciolo, Jeffrey Strickler, Andrew Strickland, Michelle Johnson, Shannan Campbell

Not Present: Karen DeHart, Aaron Bachenheimer, Nitin Khanna, Jill McCullough

Staff attendance: Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Allison Chambers

Also present: Allison Nichols-Clapper, Sara Stephens

Call to Order

Chair Rosemary Waldorf called the meeting to order at 8:06 am.

Introductions were given by all.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Waldorf requested a motion to approve the January 20, 2016 minutes. Lee Pavao so moved, Penny Rich seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Guest/host speakers

Jeffrey Strickler, Associate Vice President, UNC Health Care, Hillsborough Hospital served as host of today's meeting of the Chapel Hill Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors. He stated that the hospital is a unique entity from three aspects. First, it is an extension of the main campus. They built in their location to provide a point of access to patients in northern Orange County and are a sixty-eight bed community hospital. The facility is a surgical specialty center. UNC moved some of the surgical programs which include Ophthalmology, joint replacement (Ortho), spine surgery, general surgery and Urogynecology and Reproductive Pelvic Surgery to this location. The hospital is designed to grow to as much as a two hundred and fifty-eight bed hospital, which could be twenty years in the future. They are served by a Chapel Hill Transit bus that also goes to Durham Technical Community College and Orange County's Orange Bus. They move patients as needed with an UNC ambulance and there is no charge for this service. Staff and Physicians are dedicated to this campus and do not travel back and forth. They operate a Community Emergency Room which means there are some patients that EMS picks up that will be taken to a different hospital. EMS makes that decision. Most of their Emergency Room's patients are walk-ins, they serve 40-50 patients a day with an average wait time of eighteen minutes and average length of stay is three hours.

Executive Directors Report

Laurie Paolicelli introduced Sarah Stephens, CEO of the Hillsborough Chamber of Commerce and our newest Visitors Bureau Board member, representing the Chamber, Allison Nichols-Clapper of Maple Farms. Ms. Nichols-Clapper is taking the seat of Jill McCullough, who will be greatly missed.

Ms. Paolicelli introduced a presentation and discussion of the Visitors Bureau 2016-17 Proposed Operating Budget with a brief background of the Bureau and the occupancy tax that supports it and its evolution through the years to where we are today, branded as Visit Chapel Hill.

Budget Update

Next years proposed budget totals approximately \$1.5 million. Commissioner Rich highlighted the following requests in the proposed budget: the addition of a graphic artist to the Visitors Bureau Staff which would save expenses in operations going forward; moving the Arts Commission back into the Economic Development budget and out of the Visitors Bureau budget. The Arts Commission is a grants administration agency whose grants dollars come from the State and Orange County's general fund. The Commission is housed in Economic Development. Deb Hepp, the Orange County Arts Commission representative to this board, stated that her fellow arts commissioners support having this funded from the County's general fund because it is not their purpose to promote tourism in the county, but rather the arts. Discussion continued on the administrative fee (indirect costs) the Bureau pays to the county. Rich said that with direction from the board she would like to investigate the possibility of having the administrative fee eliminated or reduced. In addition, Rich (with Paolicelli) stated that we have budgeted 1.2 million in occupancy tax which is an increase of 7% over last year's budget. Also budgeted is a \$200,000 contribution from the Town of Chapel Hill and a request to appropriate from fund balance: \$100,000. One new item this next fiscal year is a feasibility study to investigate the potential for our community to support a conference center. Chair Waldorf is proposing the formation of a review committee to look at the scope and cost of all the proposals and to report to the board at our next scheduled meeting. She has asked Vice-Chair Lee Pavao, Mark Sherburne and Anthony Carey to join herself and Laurie Paolicelli on this committee.

After some discussion Chair Waldorf suggested we approve a motion to have the Arts Commission budget and the County Administrative Fee removed from the Visitors Bureau Budget. Deb Hepp moved that the Arts Commission be funded through Economic Development and Lee Pavao seconded the motion. Lee Pavao moved that the board request the Administrative Fee be removed, or reduced, in the Visitors Bureau budget. Mark Bell seconded the motion.

Sales Report

Marlene Barbera reported that this fiscal year she will do additional UNC Live Well Work Well which is backyard marketing and add two more trade shows. These shows are Expo NC, which is in the Triangle and Destination Southeast in May. She will also attend Connect and the Small Markets Meeting. Cyndi Golden is still onboard and making headway. She also shared how the RFP process works. So far this year, fifty-five leads have been sent out, each of which could go to five or six hotels. Ms. Paolicelli asked if she was making progress in attaching an economic equation to events that are held in the county. She reported that she was not asked that by the event organizers. Ms. Paolicelli suggested we come up with an economic impact calculator to help groups formulate this.

New Business/Roundtable

Vice-Chair Pavao acknowledged all for updates in their respective fields:

Michelle Johnson reported that the Board of Alderman will be discussing a proposed new hotel at their next meeting. The hotel developer has asked Ms. Paolicelli to attend the meeting.

Shannan Campbell reported that Hillsborough is trying to bring Hog Day back to the town. It is expected to be a smaller event. Revolutionary War Day is happening this coming Saturday. She is attempting to get some of their restaurants involved in Triangle Restaurant week. The Hillsborough Visitor's Center been experiencing a large increase in their Facebook page participation.

Sara Stephens, with the Hillsborough Chambers of Commerce shared that the downtown merchants association has agreed to become a subset of the Chamber. They are hosting a St. Patrick's Day fun run down the Riverwalk which will

be a fundraiser for Sam's Wish Fund. The event is sponsored by Maple View Farms and Morgan Stanley. Green ice cream will be served at the end of the run.

Meg McGurk reported the Downtown Partnership will hold its annual meeting on March 2. They will highlight what they have done this year as well as reporting on their plan for the coming year. They are doing the downtown pep rally before the first UNC game in September. They are orchestrating Art and Venue matchmaking.

Deb Hepp reported on the Shimmer event that was held on February 12. It increased the number of people at the Art Walk and was well attended despite the cold weather. It generated intense media coverage. She also shared that the Arts Commission is doing a review of their grants process and completing a market research process.

Mark Sherburne reported that the UNC Football schedule has been released and that there is one less home game than last year. He would like to see more downtown events on the weekends that include less popular games. Huron consulting is still providing business and at present UNC is their largest client. Huron brings 300 room nights into the market.

George Cianciolo reported that the Chapel Hill Town Council has approved the financing plan for the Ephesus Fordham roadway improvements. Those improvements will start in March and last about six months.

Vice-Chair Pavao adjourned the meeting at 9:28.

Minutes reviewed by:
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Date

Minutes accepted by:
Rosemary Waldorf, Chairman

Date