

Approved August 19, 2015

MINUTES

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting June 17, 2015

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at
The Courtyard by Marriott

Board Members Present: Libbie Hough, Lee Storrow, Debbie Hepp, Rosemary Waldorf, Jill McCullough, Aaron Bachenheimer, Lee Pavao, Penny Rich, Meg McGurk, Karen DeHart, Michelle Johnson, Nitin Khanna

Not Present: Anthony Carey, Mike Gering, Mark Sherburne, Annette Stone

Staff attendance: Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Susan Rice, Tina Fuller, Martha Shannon (EDC)

Also present: Colleen Minton, TerraVita and Eric Hallman, Town of Hillsborough

Call to Order

Vice-Chair, Lee Storrow, called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. Introductions were made by all.

Words from Hosting Hotel

Mr. Storrow recognized Sales Director, Erin Dale as our meeting host. Ms. Dale welcomed board members and introduced the Courtyard's new Sales Coordinator, Kristen Burger. Ms. Dale gave an update on the hotel stating that Interstate Hotels & Resorts began management of the Courtyard in February; also all their rooms will now have refrigerators and microwaves, not just the suites. Ms. Dale reported that aside from the normal slow months of July, December & January their market share is growing.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Storrow requested a motion to approve the May 20, 2015 minutes. Penny Rich so moved, Lee Pavao seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

TerraVita Update

Mr. Storrow recognized Colleen Minton for an update on TerraVita. Ms. Minton thanks the board for their support over the years. Ms. Minton shared attendee statistic results from last year's event stating that 1600 were in attendance; of those 20% were from 50 plus miles away and 10% of those were from out of state. Over 50% were new attendees, 64% were in the 35-64 YOA bracket, 60% reported having an income of over \$100,000 and 21% reported an income of over \$200,000. Minton gave an overview of this year's festival stating that she added one more sustainability class which would be on Saturday, as in the past, a percentage of ticket sales would go to charity, and the dates of the event are October 8-10. She also reported that she hired a PR person, Jennifer Noble Kelly. Laurie Paolicelli commented that TerraVita put Chapel Hill on the map, as Ms. Minton noted, several high profile food authorities and aficionados have taken notice with great reviews and or by participation. Ms. Paolicelli inquired how do we grow this event but also keep the event here in Chapel Hill/Orange County particularly when Raleigh and Durham have already requested the festival take place in their cities. Rosemary Waldorf inquired on the fundraising for TerraVita. Ms. Minton replied that they raised \$85,000 last year at a cost of \$45,000 but in order to grow, staff needs to grow i.e. a PR Director, Program Director, and Sponsorship Director. Minton said her goal is to raise \$50,000 more in sponsorships this year stating that any profits would go back into the community. Ms. Paolicelli stated that after the budget review later in the meeting, may be able to find extra funding to support the event. Penny Rich added that if any board member knows of potential

sponsors to contact Laurie, Colleen or herself. Paolicelli further added that she would like to see an additional \$10,000 used to offer complimentary tickets to a market sampling that would provide long term investment. Concluding her Terra Vita update, Minton suggested adding a program that would bring in top name people to discuss a topic such as Culinary Capital and offer it to a crowd of about 350 people at an affordable price. However she would need a venue that holds that many people.

Budget Update

Mr. Storrow gave the floor to Penny Rich for a budget update. Ms. Rich reported that the Commissioners approved the Managers requested 2015-16 budget last night. Ms. Rich reported that the fund balance has been spent down and still has the mandated reserve. She commented that experts are anticipating a good year for 2015-16 and the fund balance will again increase.

Executive Directors Report

Mr. Storrow turned to Laurie Paolicelli for her report. First, Ms. Paolicelli mentioned the anomalies last year that contributed to the 17.6% growth, naming Epic. She also shared Lydia Lavelle's concerns with Airbnb's tactics in sales tax collection but not occupancy tax and only with a few selected counties citing that it is unconstitutional. Paolicelli reported that the county attorney is now involved. Rosemary Waldorf recommended involving the League of Municipalities and Association of County Commissioners. Laurie Paolicelli went on to say that she would like to see a sports commission formed stating that there is much more here than UNC sports. Aaron Bachenheimer inquired if that would also include recreational sports such as bicycling, etc. Paolicelli replied yes. Penny Rich suggested finding out who those stakeholders would be and inquired who would sit on the committee, the stakeholders or our board of directors. Paolicelli replied stakeholders.

Ms. Paolicelli then spoke about the upcoming fiscal year's budget explaining the percentage portions of each segment. She reviewed Salaries and benefits and the possibility of a Kiosk at the new Hospital in Hillsborough however they may not be ready for the installation at this time. Ms. Paolicelli commented that the County is very flexible in allowing departments to move funds from one line item to another as opportunities arise. She informed the board that Ms. Rich and Mr. Pavao may request the \$51,000 administrative fee be reduced or dropped. Paolicelli mentioned that we would still do print noting that our visitor guide inventory at RDU is not moving as fast as previous and may be due to the night scene photo on the cover. She stated that she is working with Patty on a solution. Continuing with the budget review, Paolicelli spoke on the sales and marketing segment of the budget citing the importance of a website; she informed members that the previous website developer was not familiar with destination organizations and the VB has hired Simpleview, LLC which specializes in that field to develop the new website. She reviewed other line items: sponsorships and promotions & events noting the \$25,000 earmarked for sponsorship to TerraVita. Paolicelli turned to Debbie Hepp for an overview of the Arts Commission budget. Ms. Hepp reported their budget is static from previous years, with a little more money allocated to marketing.

Lee Storrow inquired if this board needs to approve the budget. Laurie confirmed yes. Mr. Storrow asked if it was Ms. Paolicelli's intention to increase the \$25,000 to TerraVita by \$10,000. Ms. Paolicelli confirmed yes. Rosemary Waldorf asked if this money would come from the fund balance or the approved budget. Paolicelli suggested from the approved budget. Rosemary Waldorf motioned to make a change immediately to move \$10,000 as additional funding for TerraVita, Lee Pavao seconded the motion. Penny Rich recused herself from voting as she is associated with TerraVita. Lee Storrow asked for those in favor and any opposed. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

Sales Report

Marlene Barbera reported on May year over year numbers stating bookings were up by 5 and leads were up by 30 from last year. Ms. Barbera discussed the need to revise the economic impact criteria in the DMS system to calculate more specifically by group. Barbera spoke on the trend that the new sales is service and is free through the Visitors Bureau noting that she is still receiving calls from ads placed in Chapel Hill and Durham Magazines depicting that message. She stated the ads will run again in September. Barbera spoke on her upcoming meeting with Clean Design to review advertising opportunities; her partnership with Strategic Database Company (SDR) a leads focused agency and concluding her report, Barbera spoke on the progress of hiring a new sales associate that would concentrate solely on lead generation.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss

New Business/Roundtable

Eric Hallman reported that the Town of Hillsborough approved the position that will oversee tourism.

Debbie Hepp reported a 30% increase in Arts Grants applications and their WCOM sponsorship for Friday night that spotlights the arts, 6-7pm

Meg McGurk announced the Chapel Hill Farmer's Market Pop Up begins July 12-2pm on Thursday s at the 140 West Plaza. She reported that QVC is working with the Town of Chapel Hill on details for a live on location airing of their show August 5th, atop the Wallace Deck. Ms. McGurk also mentioned she attended the recent Rusted Roots event at Daniel Boone Village and it was amazing.

Libbie Hough announced Hillsborough will host a July 4th celebration with a reading of the Declaration of Independence in front of the Old Courthouse on the lawn.

Michelle Johnson announced the Board of Alderman will hear an update on the Arts Innovation Center next Tuesday. She also announced the BOA approved three Sundays to close the streets, including Weaver Street so people will walk on the streets and shop the local stores and Carr Mill Mall.

Laurie Paolicelli announced the hosting of the Metropolitan Mayors group in September

Penny Rich reported the Commissioners are looking at ways to support the schools since the State has reduced their funding.

Aaron Bachenheimer reported that lots of camps are in session on campus as well as orientation for new students and their families. He also reported that he, Lee Storrow, Linda Convissor and Kristen Smith attended a Town and Gown conference – pushing Chapel Hill for an Inter-City visit.

Rosemary Waldorf thanked the Visitors Bureau for supporting the Hyatt Hotel Ground Breaking and 20th Anniversary celebration. Ms. Waldorf reported large crowds. She also announced that Music Maker Relief Foundation is presenting Bayou Blues Saturday June 20th on the Green.

Laurie Paolicelli announced that Soccer Watch Party with Mia Hamm will make an appearance Monday June 22nd at Southern Village 6pm – 10:30pm.

The next board meeting will be August 19 at The Carolina Inn, Chapel Hill. Gordon Merklein and Boris Bunich will be guests

With no other discussion or business, Vice-Chair Storrow adjourned the meeting at 9:27 am.

Minutes reviewed by:
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Date

Minutes accepted by:
Anthony Carey, Chairman

Date