

MINUTES

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting March 20, 2013

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at Ernie Williamson Athletic Center

Board Members Present: Annette Stone, Dave Gephart, Gene Pease, Greg Overbeck, Jack Schmidt, Karen DeHart, Laura Morgan, Lydia Lavelle, Meg McGurk, and Penny Rich

Not Present: Anthony Carey, Gordon Jameson, Jim Parker, Le Pavao, Mark Sherburne, and Mike Gering

Staff: Laurie Paolicelli, Patty Griffin, Martha Shannon, and Tina Fuller.

Presenting: Clean Design: Natalie Perkins, Travis Conte, and Stephanie Perri

Welcome

Chair Gephart started the meeting at 8:11 am with an introduction to the meeting hosts, Bubba Cunningham, UNC Athletics Director and Rick Steinbacher, Sr. Associate Athletic Director/External Relations. Mr. Cunningham spoke on the athletic department's strategic plan and their focus on aligning their organizational goals and programs with visitors, campers, students and citizens of Chapel Hill. Mr. Steinbacher added that they are open to all partnerships that will make stronger and benefit the University and Town alike. He emphasized that the October 17th Thursday night football game is real test for the town and campus and he hoped that there would be community support from local leadership.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Gephart requested a motion to approve the minutes, Lydia Lavelle so moved and Penny Rich seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as written.

Reports

Finance

In Mike Gering's absence, Laurie Paolicelli gave the finance report. Ms. Paolicelli reported that we are wrapping up the current budget and will end on target at about 1 million. 2013/14 revenue budgeted is projected slightly higher with the anticipated Hampton Inn opening in July. She also reported that using best practices, FY 2013/14 proposed budget expenditures will be 1/5 personnel, 1/3 marketing, and 1/6 operations. The budget will also include a part-time sales associate position. Ms. Paolicelli stated she and the County manager had an initial discussion about Visitors Bureau space in the future. Paolicelli was concerned about declining numbers of visitors and the cost per servicing each visitor based on the reduction in numbers and comments from visitors that the Center was so difficult to find. Finally, she informed members that she would present a 2013/2014 plan of action and budget at the next board meeting.

Marketing/Presentation of AAU Benchmarking Study

Clean Design presented the findings of the benchmarking AAU study. Outcomes for Usage showed 31% stayed overnight in the Triangle, Raleigh came in as the most stayed in town, however Chapel Hill tied with Durham for second. People stayed for leisure nearly as much as business. Outcomes for perception portrayed our area as 'good for young people', 'great for creative types', trendy', 'offers a rich cultural experience' and a 'great foodie town'. However, people responded that the area is mainstream and predictable and more information was needed on what to do outside the University.

Clean Design pointed out key objectives based on findings:

- Awareness: Keeping the Chapel Hill area top-of-mind and increasing the unaided and aided awareness
- Usage: Increase market share and overall usage
- Perception: shift the middle of the road perceptions to top perceptions, build perceptions beyond the university and generic small-town personality and leverage the positive perceptions
- Consideration: raise visitors likelihood to visit, increase likelihood to recommend

Ms. Perkins reiterated that this same study would be done one year from now and the most critical numbers to watch will be the feedback from 'most likely to visit in the future' and 'most likely to recommend'.

Ms. Paolicelli inquired on what Clean Design would recommend based on this research. Ms. Perkins replied that a lot of what we are already doing is on the right path; keeping the campaign going with some tweaks and an emphasis on marketing so people remember us but largely remain consistent.

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Penny Rich inquired how data from the hotels would get repeat business and or engage people. Jack Schmidt answered stating that data from hotels and other sources was given to Clean Design as a basis for the campaign and study. Mr. Schmidt also stated that he too felt we should stay the course; build mind share then build market share. Focus should be on bringing new business in rather than competition between hotels.

Ms. Paolicelli commented that it is the Bureau's role to help activate the sale

New Business

UNC

Laura Morgan reported that the candidate for the chancellor position would be announced soon. The Blue and White game is scheduled for April 13th and they are currently having a science fest on campus.

Orange County Arts Commission

Martha Shannon gave an update on the new 2013 Piedmont Laureate, John Claude Bemis.

Chair Gephart pointed out the new 2013 Official Visitors Guide

Town of Carrboro

Annette Stone reported That Carrboro is having its own CicLavia on April 13th from 10am – 3 pm. Lost in the Trees will be performing a free concert at the Cat's Cradle during Carrboro Day on May 5th

North Carolina High School Athletic Association

Karen Dehart stated has been a great weekend for High School basketball championships. Next year hope to have all 8 games in Chapel Hill at Carmichael.

Downtown

Meg McGurk informed that 140 West would have their grand opening on April 26th from 5-7 pm. Art piece dedication. Program Arts and Cultural entertainment. Lydia Lavelle summer construction confusing for visitors especially around Columbia Street – LP will send map and plan, timeline for alternative routes.

Concluding the meeting, Ms. Paolicelli informed members that a meeting to discuss saving the TerraVita event would be at Topo at 5pm.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:39 am

Minutes reviewed by: Laurie Paolicelli,
Executive Director

Minutes accepted by: Dave Gephart,
Chairman

Date

Date

Approved April 17, 2013