

## MINUTES

### Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting October 15, 2014

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at  
The Carolina Inn, 211 Pittsboro Street, Chapel Hill

**Board Members Present:** Anthony Carey, Lee Storrow, Greg Overbeck, Mark Sherburne, Jim Parker, Karen DeHart, Aaron Bachenheimer, Lee Pavao, Michelle Johnson, Mike Gering, Penny Rich and Annette Stone

**Not Present:** Dave Gephart, Meg McGurk

**Staff attendance:** Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Martha Shannon and Tina Fuller

**Also present:** Roger Stancil, Manager, Town of Chapel Hill, Joel Curran, Vice Chancellor for Communications UNC-CH, Linda Convisor, Director of Local Relations, UNC-CH, and Rosemary Waldorf, Project Manager, D.R. Bryan Properties and Libbie Hough, Communication Matters

### Call to Order

Chairman Anthony Carey called the meeting to order at 8:11 a.m. Carey asked for round robin introductions. Mr. Carey acknowledged Joel Curran Vice Chancellor of Communications. Mr. Curran discussed his background, and the focus of his department. Carey then acknowledged Linda Convisor with the Communications Dept., UNC, Roger Stancil, Chapel Hill Town manager and Rosemary Waldorf, D.R. Bryan Properties. Ms. Waldorf gave a brief update on the Hyatt Place at Southern Village and expects to meet the scheduled opening December 31, 2015. Chairman Carey then recognized Libbie Hough and welcomed everyone.

### Approval of Minutes

Mr. Carey requested a motion to approve the September 17, 2014 minutes. Lee Pavao so moved and Penny Rich seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

### Budget Update

Penny Rich reported that projected revenue is on target about 5% ahead of budget. With regard to the discussion of a fund balance management plan, Penny stated that as the Visitors Bureau is a department of the County, Clarence Greer, Assistant Manager and Finance Director has been brought into the discussion. Ms. Rich reminded everyone that \$192,000 of the fund balance was appropriated for marketing initiatives and research which left \$354,000 and of that, 18% is in safety reserves. Conversations are ongoing now, with respect to discussion on promoting Orange County itself. Ms. Rich inquired if Laurie Paolicelli had anything else to add.

Ms. Paolicelli reported that Mr. Greer is currently drafting an abstract for the Commissioners agenda in November. Paolicelli stated that the Visitors Bureau was asked by Mr. Greer to allow discussion between the county manager and the commissioners because she is so new. Feedback from the manager's office is expected in December or January of next year.

Anthony Carey referred board members to the Gross Receipts report noting that the tax revenue is up 34% compared to last year. That continues to be a trend and is correlates to all hotel rooms are back online and the opening of the Hampton Inn. With that said Carey mentioned that there are more renovations in the future and turned it over to Mark Sherburne for an update on the Carolina Inn. Mr. Sherburne reported that The Carolina Inn's Carolina Crossroads Restaurant and bar will undergo about a two million dollar upgrade and will be offline for about 12 weeks beginning

June 1st. Sherburne reported that they are looking to attract a younger demographic with a casually elegant atmosphere. Anthony Carey added that the Siena Hotel will also undergo renovations to their Restaurant and bar, about a half million dollar project, and be offline during the months of January and February.

Roger Stancil thanked Laurie for the Visitors Bureaus involvement with the MIP conference and the Carolina Inn for their hospitality. Mr. Stancil discussed current renovations at town hall; Mr. Stancil commented that his office is temporarily located at the library. 2020 continues to effect decisions and future development noting Fordham and Ephesus Church.

## **Executive Director/Sales Report**

Laurie Paolicelli acknowledged Libbie Hough noting she has been a huge help in marketing Hillsborough and navigating relationship complexities.

Paolicelli noted that periodically she likes to update board members on the progress and vision of the Bureau and with that through a PowerPoint presentation, she reviewed the bureau's strengths and challenges, new projects in the pipeline, tourism positioning and messaging, marketing initiatives, the Bureau's physical location; she touched on the possibility of a mobile visitor center. Paolicelli reviewed some of the past branding and promotional campaigns noting the "Three Towns for the Price of One". She discussed the decision to lead with Chapel Hill and she reviewed current advertising and marketing campaigns noting that the ways to advertise and reach targets has completely changed over the years.

Paolicelli discussed some of the challenges including our name and logo, Carrboro and Chapel Hill being contiguous but Carrboro wanting own identity, something that should be considered. Hillsborough is geographically and demographically different - they are more aligned with Durham and the Triad. Paolicelli discussed letting go of the edge campaign. She also discussed social media marketing and her concerns with Medstay, the hotel booking medium for UNC hospitals. Paolicelli discussed new markets as opportunities that need researched and concluding her report she turned it over to Marlene Barbera to discuss opportunities in sales.

Ms. Barbera first discussed some of her progress in last four weeks. Barbera explained that she is reaching out to county and town employees to let inform them of the services provided by the Bureau; she discussed some possible leads in construction and sports business; she is looking at other tradeshows in NC and SC other than AENC. Barbera mentioned that she has incorporated past accolades into her publication collateral to promote Chapel Hill and Orange County.

Paolicelli then thanked Roger Stancil for allowing Ms. Barbera to speak to some of his staff about the Bureau's services. Mr. Stancil replied that he is appreciative for the help in finding a venue for their GovCups conference. Mr. Stancil then explained the concept of GovCups, stating that the Town and the University have organized an event to encourage innovation and new ways to approach issues in the workforce. They are inviting innovators and entrepreneurial thinking people to attend.

## **New Business**

Chairman Carey called on Lee Storrow for a report on Chapel Hill. Mr. Storrow spoke on the Small Plate Crawl, the explosion of women's higher end clothing stores downtown, the proposal for a hotel on Rosemary Street, and Tar Heel Downtown. Discussion commenced on the impact of night games for downtown, consensus was bar business may but restaurants typically do not as people tend to tailgate.

Annette Stone reported on Carrboro. Ms. Stone spoke on upcoming events; the West End Poetry Festival, the Carrboro Film festival, Elf fair, the screening of the movie Frozen and Acme is doing a special Halloween event. Stone reported that Fleet Feet should take occupancy by the end of October and the Board of Alderman is taking a look at 300 East Main for discussion on the future of the Arts Center and Cat's Cradle. She briefly discussed the free showing of the movie Real Value as part of the Think Local First Campaign.

Libbie Hough and Jim Parker reported on Hillsborough's Riverwalk trail system and bridge and Ayr Mount's plans to connect; Hillsborough is looking at the possibility of becoming a trail town. Other mentions were the Handmade Puppet Parade this Sunday at 7pm, Ladies Night Out on Nov 20<sup>th</sup>. The Holiday parade is the first Saturday in December at 5pm along with the tree lighting, the Holiday Home tour on Sunday the 6th and that Mystery Brewing Company's Great American Beer Festival Silver Award for a traditional Belgium-style beer.

Linda Convisor spoke on the wayfinding program expanding on what was started several years ago. Convisor reported the University is also working on a common campus map with a loop road concept for online viewing.

Martha Shannon spoke on the fall grant cycle stating that the Arts Commission is hosting an informative meeting Thursday night at the Chapel Hill Public Library, meeting room C from 6-7:30pm. She made mention that Orange County resident Jackie Shelton Greene was inducted into the Literary Hall of Fame.

Karen DeHart reported on NCHSAA business, stating that their annual meetings have concluded. She also reported that as part of the annual NCHSAA Day, the 2014 inductees into the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame will be recognized Saturday night during the UNC/Georgia Tech football game.

Lee Pavao was honored by the Chapel Hill Historical Society for his commitment to make Chapel Hill more progressive, more socially conscious and more exciting.

**Other Business:**

Chairman Carey opened the floor for discussion on expiring board terms and vacant seats; the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Chamber of Commerce represented by Greg Overbeck, ends December 31st and the Orange County Lodging Association which became vacant with Mark Sherburne's move to represent Orange County Economic Development. The Nominating Committee recommended Nitin Khanna, GM for the Sheraton Chapel, for the OCLA seat. There was some discussion of Rosemary Waldorf's interest in filling the CHCCChamber seat. The recommendation for Mr. Khanna comes from his ongoing active participation in the Bureau's sales programs. Annette Stone inquired about Manish Atma. Laurie Paolicelli commented that she is very much in support of Mr. Atma, however, Mr. Khanna's commitment over the years is commendable.

Annette Stone suggested inviting hoteliers to upcoming board meetings, Paolicelli concurred.

With no other discussion or business, Chairman Carey adjourned the meeting at 9:27 am.

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Minutes reviewed by:  
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

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Minutes accepted by:  
Anthony Carey, Chairman

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Date

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Date