

Approved October 17, 2012

MINUTES

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting September 19, 2012

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at The Siena Hotel, Chapel Hill

Board Members Present: Annette Stone, Anthony Carey, Dave Gephart, Gene Pease, Gordon Jameson, Greg Overbeck, Jack Schmidt, Jim Parker, Karen DeHart, Laura Morgan, Lee Pavao, Lydia Lavelle, Mark Sherburne, Meg McGurk, Mike Gering, Valerie Foushee

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Laurie Paolicelli, Steve Brantley, Martha Shannon, Tina Fuller

Guest: Lynn Minges, Assistant Secretary of Tourism, Marketing, and Global Branding for the NC Dept. of Commerce.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gephart called the meeting to order at 8:13 am

As hosting hotel for the board meeting, Anthony Carey, General Manager of the Siena reported that Siena staff is gearing up for football season and wedding business. He also reported that 90% of the outside renovations are complete and the continuation of the interior renovations would pull some rooms offline until January, 2013.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Gephart requested a motion to approve the minutes. Lee Pavao motioned, with Anthony Carey seconding. All members were in favor and the minutes were approved as written.

Announcements

The BOCC officially appointed Jack Schmidt to the Visitors Bureau board of directors, representing the OCLA seat.

Introduction of Guest Speaker

Chair Gephart introduced and welcomed Lynn Minges, Assistant Secretary of Tourism, Marketing, and Global Branding. Ms. Minges reported on state and county travel statistics stating that North Carolina saw an 8% growth over last year. Orange County saw an 8.85% growth. Ms. Minges spoke on media mission partnerships between the state office and the visitors Bureau resulting in published editorials for minimal costs. She spoke on a current initiative- project 543, which will feature unique destinations

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within that mile range of NC. Orange County features will be the Carolina Inn, Southern Season and the Carolina BB Museum. She reported that four busloads of visitors from Germany will be traveling through North Carolina in November and concluding her report, Ms. Minges spoke on the film industry in North Carolina, noting that part of the filming of Iron Man 3 will be in North Carolina.

Committee Reports

Marketing

Anthony Carey introduced Stephanie Perri of Clean Design for a quarterly progress report on the recent edge of the triangle campaign. Ms. Perri stated that they are very pleased with the results so far- quoting a 25.5 million impression rate. She reported 15,000 clicks on digital ads for a 2.5 month time period with a cost below industry average noting that the click through rate is four times higher than the national average.

Ms. Perri proposed the possibility of a benchmark study beginning this quarter and repeated again in spring 2013.

Discussion: Mike Gering asked if we have an idea of how we are doing with this campaign compared to our last campaign. Ms. Paolicelli replied that we need this baseline study to analyze if the perceptions of our destination are changing. Ms. Perri explained that it would be difficult to compare the old campaign with this one because the previous campaign's emphasis was focused more on print whereas the current campaign's focus is more on digital. Anthony Carey moved to ask the Board of County Commissioners to appropriate \$25,000 for a benchmark study that would measure the number of individuals who visit Orange County and whether this number has been significantly generated by the Bureau's efforts, would help determine the percentage of individuals responding to the Edge of the Triangle campaign and assist in determining the productivity of print, on-line, tradeshow and web activity. Valerie Foushee seconded.

Discussion: Greg Overbeck inquired on what kind of questions they planned to ask; suggesting detailed would be better. Ms. Paolicelli agreed. Ms. Paolicelli stated that Equation Research or a comparable company would do the study separate from Clean Design. And with the conclusion of the discussion, Chair Gephart passed the motion with all members in favor.

Budget

Gering gave the floor to Laurie Paolicelli for an update.

Ms. Paolicelli reported that the budget is approximately 1.3 million. The support from Chapel Hill was raised to \$175,000 (from 150k). Expenses to date are status quo with the exception of building expense for landscaping, advertising and dues expense, which have either been encumbered and/or due at the beginning of the fiscal year.

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Mike Gering inquired again on the rationale for the administrative fee paid yearly to the county. Ms. Paolicelli stated that she has inquired and then requested if Steve Brantley would find out these answers, specifically: 1. why the Bureau pays nearly \$50,000 in rent; \$52,000 in administrative fees and building maintenance such as landscaping, utilities and equipment.

Mr. Gering posed the question of what percentage of the occupancy revenue would be affected with the Carolina Inn's six-month room renovation, taking 2/3 of their supply off-line; would we need to use the fund balance to offset the revenue loss. Jack Schmidt replied that he did not think it would have that great an impact. He said that he has met with the other Chapel Hill hoteliers to discuss this matter. He also said he would provide a penetration analysis to share with Laurie at the October 17th meeting. Gering also requested that the financial statements list the amount of the Bureau's fund balance.

New Business

Meg McGurk gave an update on downtown Chapel Hill. Ms. McGurk spoke about Festifall, Sunday October 6 and DTP's collaboration with the parks and recreation department and downtown businesses to ensure a successful event. Laurie Paolicelli commented that the Visitors Bureau opens that day from 9 am to 6 pm offering refreshments.

For Carrboro news, Annette Stone and Lydia Lavelle gave an update on the free Tift Merritt concert this Friday, stating 6000 vouchers were given out. Lydia noted that the Merritt concert is being held in the town commons and a first of its kind of this magnitude, so kind of an experiment. Carrboro's signature event, Carrboro Music Festival is Sunday Sep. 30th. Meg McGurk mentioned that they still need volunteers for that music festival.

Jim Parker spoke on Hillsborough events planned for October: Golf Tournament, Oct 5th, and Fresh Roots Festival, October 20th. Steve Brantley commented on his great experience at the recent Harvest Dinner.

Gordon Jameson and Martha Shannon spoke on the proclamation adopted by the BOCC for the Arts Impact study and the recent issuance of the Spring 2012 Grant awards to non-profits and schools, noting that the state art grant awards budget for 2012/2013 is \$30,482.

For hotel trends, Mark Sherburne reported that they (Aloft) had a successful summer, they were at 90% occupancy for August.

Karen DeHart informed members that the NCHSAA will have its 100th anniversary in 2013, many events are in the planning stages; the first one is January 12th at the Friday Center – board members are invited.

Old Business

Gene Pease gave an update on the parking and towing issues. Chapel Hill Town Council appealed the judge's decision to throughout the towing enforcement, he declined to give temporary ordinance and currently there is no towing ordinance in affect. Mr. Pease stated that council will stay vigilant on the issue and Mr. Pease requested feedback of any problems arising from the lack of an ordinance.

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Other Business

Ms. Paolicelli presented a proclamation to Valerie Foushee (rotating off the board in November), noting the successful relationship between the Bureau and Commissioner Foushee who has been the voice of tourism to the other County Commissioners and strong supporter of the Bureau.

Next Meeting Venue

Greenbridge in Chapel Hill

In conclusion and with no other business to discuss, Dave Gephart adjourn the meeting at 9:38 am.

Minutes reviewed by:
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Date

Minutes accepted by:
Dave Gephart, Chairman

Date