

Friday, March 3, 2017
Hamilton County Tourism, Inc.
HCCVB, 37 East Main Street, Carmel, IN 46032
(317) 848-3181
HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Minutes of the Meeting

Attending the Meeting: John Hughey, Amy Ahlersmeyer, Emily Lovison, Bob DuBois, Andrew Newport, Jeffrey Brown, Alaina Shonkwiler, Melody Jones, Jeremy Geisendorf, Jimia Smith. Not attending: Gary Miller, Jay Gladden and Al Patterson.

Also attending:

Brenda Myers, President/CEO; Karen Radcliff, Vice President/CSO; Tina Rodgers, Assistant Director of Resources; Ashley Ledford, Director Marketing & Promotions; Betsy Ekelof, Director of Operations; Laura Kelner, Director of Sales; Sarah Billman, Visitor Experience Manager; Sarah Buckner, Executive Assistant/Tourism Gives Coordinator; Christine Altman, Counsel.

I. Welcome

President John Hughey opened the meeting at 8:31 a.m.

II. Review of the Minutes of the February 2017 Annual and Regular Meeting Minutes

J. Hughey asked for approval of the February 2017 Annual Meeting minutes.

Jeffrey Brown moved to accept the minutes as presented, Melody Jones seconded. Motion passed.

J. Hughey then asked for approval of the February 2017 regular meeting minutes.

J. Brown moved to accept the minutes as presented, M. Jones seconded. Motion passed.

III. Metrics & Finances

Brenda Myers then presented current financial metrics:

A. Tax Collections Reports

- Overall tax collections through March deposit is \$870,437 gross or \$805,000 net
 - Less than 1% over budget; 2 hotels are unpaid (one paid but forgot to send report)
 - Estimate \$820,000 if all were paid or \$21,000 over budget forecast

B. Occupancy Reports

Through January 2017:

- Demand up 12.9% against an inventory increase of 13.8%
- Occupancy down .8 to 50.8%
- ADR up 5.2% to \$104
- Revenue up 17.6%
- Highest room demand growth in the comp set, most in weekday corporate demand

Through February 25, 2017:

- Demand up 6.1% against an inventory increase of 13.8%
- ADR down 2% to \$105.81
- Occupancy down 6.8% to 59.7%
- Revenue up 8.2%

C. Additional 2017 Budget Adjustments

B. Myers presented yet another budget adjustment for the year, essentially bringing the budget in line with the 2017 appropriations total from the county. The request also matches the Tourism Commission contract amount for the year. She explained the different iterations of the budget, which included pulling back in the fall after some

softness in the market was felt. But, she would now like to budget high and spend less if need be. She presented a chart that outlined the following:

May 2016: Appropriations request was \$4,550,000 net in collections after debt service, with \$4,430,000 to be used for the budget

November 2016: Adopted a budget of \$4,244,592 net budget, to include backstop of \$83,000 in estimated carryover from 2016 or a final budget of \$4,327,592

February 2017: Adopted a revised budget of \$4,244,592 in collections plus \$208,000 in “carryover” and unspent funds from 2016 for a final budget of \$4,452,592

March 2017: Adopt a final revised budget that matches the original of \$4,550,000 in collections, not using any in “carryover” or reserves but knowing \$187,000 in carryover is available plus reserves of approximately \$600,000 for a net final budget of \$4,550,000

She noted that in a best case scenario, the revenue would meet the goal and would still have about \$800,000 in reserves.

In the worst case scenario, revenues would be flat and we would fall short of the goal but use \$187,000 in carryover and draw back on a holiday promotion, not fund depreciation and use some reserves.

The “worst case” would likely be somewhere in between.

After reviewing this final iteration of the budget, Alaina Shonkwiler moved to approve the revised-revised budget. Andrew Newport seconded. Motion passed.

D. Budget Review

B. Myers noted that a profit and loss statement would be issued with the revised-revised budget on it to the board but that so far, spending is well on track for the first two months of the year. She presented a balance sheet that showed \$764,230 in checking/savings/cash on hand, \$500 in accounts receivable, \$107,194 in accounts payable (mostly pre-paid items that will be expensed as the year unfolds) for net cash on hand of about \$660,000.

E. Equipment Retirement

B. Ekelof provided a list of equipment, primarily old computers, to retire from the assets. Most were already at a zero value. Amy Ahlsmeyer moved that the assets be retired as presented. A. Shonkwiler seconded. Motion passed.

IV. Old Business

A. Building/LOI Update

Karen Radcliff updated the board on the building/letter of intent. The developer is in negotiations with the city and she would be following up on a timeline to determine next steps. Meanwhile, a financial advisor has been retained to review forecast projections, etc. to vet whether the organization truly could absorb the additional costs of the new building without distractions from the programming. That presentation will take place at the May Board meeting.

V. New Business

A. 2017 Marketing & Sales Plan

Ashley Ledford and Laura Kelner presented information on HCT’s plans for marketing and sales in 2017.

Marketing Department Overall Goals:

- Increase digital marketing to a 12-month program and build campaigns around low occupancy time frames
- Identify three new opportunities for promotions and partnerships
- Build a robust reporting system to deliver insights on campaigns, monthly trends and visitor experience and community development efforts
- Conduct four deskside visits in target markets to develop stories in both earned and social media
- Develop a baseline digital marketing strategy for sales and service

She then presented creative concepts for the print campaigns to appeal to traveler emotions and memories.

A. Ledford also presented the “digital visitor information wall” concepts, with the first pilot at the Grand Park Event Center in development. HCT will look for additional opportunities to install these walls in other areas where people gather.

Sales Department Overall Goals:

Laura Kelner noted the sports and group sales/trade show opportunities on the team’s calendar in 2017, including six social/bridal shows, four golf shows, seven group trade shows and four sports trade shows. She noted that in her month with the HCT, many opportunities have been identified, and she is getting to know the sports market segments. Major events will include: Connect Marketplace in August, including supporting a major client function with the entire sales and sports team; and, MPI World Congress in June, including collaborations with Visit Indy as it pre-promotes for hosting the event in 2018 in Indy. New market segment growth will include focusing on the Center for the Performing Arts and identifying opportunities for group growth there, as well as in sports, supporting Grand Park in its bid to serve as the Little League new national headquarters.

VI. Quick Area Updates

- **Operations:** Continuing to support and refine the budget process to help departments understand committed funds; focusing in information technology and helping understand needs of new office, and shape those needs. Audit scheduled April 25-27 with Bastin, Dorrell and Snyder. Will need Audit Committee volunteers.
- **Visitor Experience:** 9 “low tiered” events serviced so far in 2017 and planning for “mid” and “high” tiered events such as Carmel Marathon and USA Archery; Super Service training video updated; preparing a new ‘Tourism Ambassadors’ program; working closely with distribution of collateral to key partners.
- **Vision 2025/Resources:** 2017 department and organizational goals finalized and posted; quarterly progress report in development to support annual goals and new incentive pay program; 2017 business plan complete (copies handed out to board members, with extras on hand to take back to the office to share.
- **Community Development:** More than a dozen various research data sets/programs in development that will continue to increase business intelligence. Also working on agricultural life sciences and the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority train operations.

Special Note: Please attend an extended meeting with financial and economics research findings from 8:30-11 a.m., May 5.

A. Ahlersmeyer moved that the meeting be adjourned at 9:48 am.

J. Brown seconded. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned until May 5, 2017.