



Thursday, November 16, 2017
Hamilton County Visitors and Convention Commission
HCCVB, 37 East Main Street, Carmel, IN 46032
HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM COMMISSION
Minutes of the Meeting

Attending the Meeting: Paul O'Connor, Bill Smythe, Andrea Huisden, Donna Prather, Lisa Hanni, Brenda Tolson, Robyn Paucker and Christian Renner.

Also attending:

Staff member Brenda Myers and Christine Altman, legal counsel.

I. Welcome

President Paul O'Connor opened the meeting of the Tourism Commission at 5:45 p.m.

II. Review of the Minutes of the August 2017 Meeting

P. O'Connor then asked for approval of the August 2017 regular meeting minutes.

Bill Smythe moved to accept the minutes as presented; Christian Renner seconded. Motion passed.

III. Metrics & Finances

Brenda Myers presented current financial metrics.

A. Tax Collections

- \$4,505,067 gross received through December deposit; goal was \$4,360,000
- \$4,265,093 net received through December deposit; goal was \$4,120,026
- Tax revenues w/ 2016 carryover – 4% over appropriations
- Tax revenues w/o 2016 carryover (FYI) – 1% under appropriations
- Estimated year-end additional taxes = + \$140,000 if hotels that owe remit

B. Occupancy Reports

- 11.6% more rooms sold 12 months through September
- 10.6% more rooms available 12 months through September
- 69.8% occupancy year-to-date
- 74% weekday (up 2.8%)
- Weekday demand up 10.3%
- Weekend demand up 14.4%

C. HCT 2017 Budget (refer to budget print-out)

October 2017 budget transfers have been made, with some November payments reflected.

Other notes:

- Revenue will even out at year-end
- Marketing Services has a lot of committed funds, as usual
- Community development does not reflect Grand Park grant yet
- Overall, we are on track for year-end

N. Burns asked how sculpted the budget was. Betsy Ekelof explained that some of the ongoing expenses are budgeted as they are expected to be expensed, but some contracts are not. She noted that additional reports could be generated to help show this, and said she would report back at the February meeting.

Tourism Commission 2017 Budget (refer to budget print-out)

Expenditures for the last quarter other than normal costs such as the retainer for legal counsel and cost of the summer meal were presented.

D. 3 Q Dashboard Updates

B. Myers presented the third quarter HCT dashboard updates. These KPIs not only determine progress but also inform the incentive pay program. She will email a full report to the board for review. Every KPI is exceeding goal with the exception of group leads to hotels. And staff will attend shows in November that should enable them to come closer on that goal. Bob Dubois moved that the financial report be accepted as presented. N. Burns seconded. Motion passed.

IV. Old Business

B. Myers updated the board on the work toward obtaining a new office location. Karen Radcliff will present a proposal in February to the HCT Board, and the Tourism Commission as well then for information, to include:

- 1) Creating a plan to remain in space
- 2) Explore lease options (on and off site) for comparison
- 3) Continue exploring long-term options (buy/lease) if they become available

The original developer has a new plan to propose that more closely meets the requirements of the organization. That will be explored as the third option unless a better idea surfaces in the interim. All will be reported out at the February 2018 meeting.

B. Kincaid House Update

B. Myers reached out for an appointment with the land owner, and it will include legal counsel. She will update the executive committee and board when information is available. Meanwhile, the HCT Board agreed to exercise its option to purchase the land in 2017 from the Nickel Plate Arts, Inc. Board of Directors per the MOU signed Fall 2014. A report on those expenses is coming from Nickel Plate Arts but should be less than \$2,000.

C. Nickel Plate Heritage Railroad

B. Myers reported that she continues to search for funding for this project and hopes to have positive news by year-end. She did note that the Board had approved \$100,000 a year for five years in operating support, but that this money will be considered a financial backstop by the lenders and the terms may be longer as an obligation even if not as a cost item. That is, the bank may need to consider HCT, Inc.'s interests by asking it to assign lodging tax dollars as a backstop. The Board authorized the executive committee to move forward with an appropriate obligation if necessary before February 2018's board meeting.

D. White River Regional Master Plan

B. Myers reported significant developments on this project:

- \$50,000 new funds generously provided by the Hamilton County Drainage Board
- More than \$30,000 in other requests are out to potential partners

She noted that \$125,000 had been set aside by HCT in 2017, but funds won't be spent until 2018 now. Because HCT cannot encumber funds, she asked that the HCT Board executive committee be allowed to approve the transfer of any additional moneys thought available to projects for spending in 2017 to allow for this to be funded in 2018.

E. Legal Representation

New legal counsel had been selected by the Commission but has decided to take a position that does not allow him to do so any longer. Christine Altman agreed to stay on one more year and will write a statement of conflict disclosure for the Tourism Commission to review.

V. New Business

A. 2018 Preview

B. Myers presented the final budget for 2018, approved by HCT's Board earlier in the month, and walked through details of the budget and preview of focus areas for 2018. The total budget was passed out for review but included: \$5,067,000 in expenses against \$4,928,253 in revenue for a deficit of \$138,747. This would likely be covered by additional appropriations in 2018 for excess revenue in 2017. If not, by operating reserve. The reason for the deficit spending is to continue the robust marketing program given the increase in lodging inventory while also supporting the major White River, Nickel Plate Heritage Railroad and Grand Park Event Center improvement projects.

B. 2018 Contract

B. Myers presented the 2018 contract for review and approval by the Commission. It aligns with the appropriations amount from the county. It was noted that the contract automatically renewed at the end of September 2017 for three years but formal adoption is always done. The contract total is \$4,864,253, to be transferred in equal installments after an initial payment of \$500,000 in January. Donna Prather moved that the contract be approved. Chris Renner seconded. Motion passed.

D. 2018 Meeting Calendar

B. Myers presented the 2018 meeting calendar, and it was decided to move the November meeting to much earlier in the month. For 2018, the meeting dates will be as follows: February 15, May 10, August 9 and November 1. Note, the November 1 is a different sequence of dates and is there to avoid holiday activities and the Legacy Fund dinner.

E. Commissioner Terms

The following Commissioner appointments are due for renewal by the Hamilton County Commissioners: Renner, Hanni, Huisden, Prather and Wechsler. Wechsler has indicated he cannot renew but the others have said yes. Those names will be forwarded to the Commissioners' office for review.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned until February 2018.