

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau
Advisory Board Meeting
Hampton Inn & Suites Carrboro
May 15, 2024
8:00 – 9:15 AM

Board Members Present: Sharon Hill, Karen DeHart – Chair, Sam Vadgama, Spring Council, Jon Hartman-Brown, Wendy Smith, Anna Richards, Jeri Lynn Schulke, Matt Hughes, Paris Miller-Foushee, Randee Haven-O'Donnell, Steve Peck, DR Bryan, Meredith Saybe

Not Present: Grace Holtkamp, Tanya Moore, Heidi Werner Dawson

Staff Attendance: Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Hannah Hemphill, Jaleah Taylor, Katie Murry

Guests: Jessica Herrschaft, Malik Herron, Sarah Potter, Carter Hubbard, Stephanie Colbert, Tim Hoke, Patrice Toney

Call to Order

Karen DeHart, Chair called the meeting to order 8:08 AM.

Round Table Introductions

- Welcome to Jaleah Taylor, UNC Student Body President and summer intern for the Visitors Bureau.
- Welcome to Patrice Toney, Carrboro Town Manager.

Approval of Minutes

Karen Dehart requested a motion to approve the April 17, 2024 minutes. Sharon Hill made a motion to approve the minutes and Sam Vadgama seconded the motion. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Executive Director's Report

- Summer marketing focused on Soccer and Trolley
- Website redesign is underway.
- We are doing our first Economic Impact Study with UNC Athletics. A lot of sports events cannot be hosted in Orange County because we need more fields and courts. Results expected closer to the end of the year.
- Summer Soccer Match Update:
 - We are working on advertising and increasing ticket sales for the second year.
 - Ticket sales and hotel blocks are not selling on the same scale as the first year. This year's teams do not have the same fan base as last year.
 - Manchester City – Oscar Bobb and Erling Haaland will be promoted.
 - Celtic FC will take over at the Carolina Inn.
 - The Town of Carrboro and the Visitors Bureau have commissioned a trolley to loop to and from Chapel Hill between 1 and 9 pm.
 - We want to promote the trolley to locals as well as “explore your own backyard.”

Marketing Update

Approved June 12, 2024

- Clean, Inc. presented several creative projects that they have been working on including Sneak Piques (presented by Malik Herron) and posters for Small Town Pride (presented by Jessica Herrschaft). There are four versions of the poster available for pick up at the Welcome Center.

Budget Preview

- We are currently closing out the 2023/2024 fiscal year, which ends June 30th.
- We used \$150,000 from the fund balance to increase meeting and conference advertising.
- In addition to the 3% occupancy tax funding by Orange County, we also receive an annual contribution from the Town of Chapel Hill in the amount of \$200,000 plus 50% of any occupancy collections over 1 million. These payments totaled \$457,438.50 which included an additional \$82,438.50 above the anticipated revenue. We have requested this be allocated to advertising.
- For fiscal year 24/25 the County is recommending a total budget of \$2,477,255. The county has recommended operations budgets remain the same, with a cut in travel budgets.

New Business

Matt Hughes (Town of Hillsborough):

- Special meeting this summer around affordable housing, 2cent property tax increase, and a 7.5% increase in water and sewer rates.

Steve Peck (Historic Alliance):

- Excursion day in Hillsborough this weekend, to include an archeological dig at Ayr Mount, games, Old Town Cemetery Tour, Preservation Tour that covers Masonic Lodge, Oak House, Dixon House, Eno Cotton Mill.
- Moorefield's has an open house on the last Sunday of every month.
- The Handmade Parade will be on May 31.
- Documentary presentation The Road to Brown at the public library
- June 15th Black & Indigenous History Walking Tour

Katie Murray (OC Arts Commission):

- Uproar coming back August 2025
- Hosting NC Statewide Pastel Exhibit, Triangle Jazz Orchestra at First Friday in June.
- Enrollment for summer camps is open, which is great for kids who work well in smaller groups and last 9 weeks.

Anna Richards (Orange County Commissioners):

- Budget updates for Orange County, which includes a decrease in projected sales tax which has led to decreases in budget recommendations. Orange County will also be looking at tax increases and a ballot measure.

Jeri Lynn Schulke (Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership):

Approved June 12, 2024

- Retreats with the board for 12–18-month plan, which will hopefully lead to a new strategic plan.
- Conversations with UNC Athletics and Visitors Bureau for “Game Day Weekends”
- Jeri Lynn has a small theater company and will have a play called Art that will be touring in Hillsborough in June.

Randee Haven O’Donnell (Town of Carrboro):

- Upcoming events in Carrboro include Freight Train blues, Pride Month, Bike Month, and 2nd Friday Artwalk.
- Florafetti displays are still in bloom.

Marlene Barber (Visitors Bureau):

- The Welcome Center’s 3rd Annual Open House will be on May 16 from 4-6pm. The event will feature live music by The Nomads, a caricaturist, live painting, and food.

Paris Miller-Foushee (Town of Chapel Hill):

- The town is working on a land use management ordinance rewrite.
- There is an upcoming bond referendum being voted on tonight for 15mil for affordable housing, 15mil for public facilities, 7.5mil streets and sidewalks, 4.5mil parks and rec, and 2 mil for greenways.
- The bond will not increase people’s taxes.

Adjournment and viewing of trolley’s commissioned by the Town of Carrboro and the Visitors Bureau for the summer soccer tournament.

Next meeting: *Wednesday, June 12, 2024 at the Sheraton*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 AM.