

For Approval September 15, 2021

**Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau
Virtual Board of Directors Meeting
August 18, 2021**

Board Members Present: Pam Hemminger, Manish Atma, Aubrey Williams, Tanya Moore, Sharon Hill, Kayla Dempsey, Mark Bell, Anthony Carey, Lydia Lavelle, Beverly Jo Payne, Mark Sherburne, Daniel Mayer, Spring Council, Jon Hartman-Brown, Matt Gladdek, Lil Engelhardt, and Sally Greene.

Not Present:

Staff Attendance: Steve Brantley, Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Patty Griffin, Tina Fuller, Susan Rice, Leslie Wilcox, Katie Murray, and Shannan Campbell.

Also present: Lee Davis, Jon Parker, Jessica Herrschaft, and Glen Fellman - Clean Inc. Barbara Foushee, Mayor Pro Tem, Town of Carrboro.

Call to Order

Chair Anthony Carey called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Anthony Carey requested a motion to approve the June 16, 2021 minutes. Pam Hemminger so moved and Dan Mayer seconded the motion. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Chair Anthony Carey requested a motion for Anthony Carey to continue as chair and make Daniel Mayer co-chair. Pam Hemminger so moved and Mark Bell seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Chair Anthony Carey introduced two new members to our board, Sharon Hill who will be representing Orange County Economic Development Advisory Board and Lili Engelhardt representing

Executive Director's Report

[Tourism Orange County, North Carolina Summer 2021 Presentation.](#)

Presentations

Marlene Barbera, Sales Director provided recent sales statistics and meeting trends.

- Two confirmed bookings in since July 1, 2021, the beginning of the new fiscal with 585 room nights and worth about \$181,000 in economic impact.
- 13 leads sent.
- With the Delta variant, things are back in the “unknown” on what to expect with group meetings. Hybrid meetings continue.
- Hotel response to RFPs is overall good and responsive but, due to loss of staff because of the pandemic, sometimes deadlines are missed and/or Marlene needs to follow-up with sales teams to ensure response to customers.
- Marlene explained the CVENT event platform.

Glen Fellman, Clean Design, Inc.

[Clean Design, Inc. Campaign Refresh presentation](#)

New Business/ Roundtable


- Mayor Pam Hemminger – Town of Chapel Hill
 - Orange County leaders met a few weeks ago and decided, since we are nearing 5% positive in COVID testing, that we would mandate indoor mask wearing.
 - The Town of Chapel Hill has decided to stay virtual until the end of September. All Town meetings and Advisory Board meetings are virtual through the month of September. Council has its first meeting after summer break on September 1st.
 - The Town of Chapel Hill had a housing study commissioned in partnership with UNC over the summer and the results will be presented at the Council Committee on Economic Sustainability on September 10th. They looked at all the housing in Chapel Hill and with the university needs and what the growth patterns are going to be and have determined that we actually don't need more student housing. What we need is more housing for young professionals. We have a huge magnet, a job center, here, of young faculty, young medical professionals and professionals in all areas, and they are finding it difficult to live here in Chapel Hill, close to work. They don't want to live with undergraduate students and they don't have the resources to buy the \$1M homes. This is important as we have over 40 development proposals. Also interesting is the census information shows that Chapel Hill grew by 5,000 in the past 10 years. It's slower than our neighbors in Durham and Wake County but it is more diverse.
 - The Rosemary Street parking deck has been demolished and construction will start soon. The goal is to have the deck completed by next August before students return to UNC. We've taken over some surface parking spaces to aid with the reduction of almost 300 parking spaces while this parking deck is under construction.
 - New tenant to occupy 136/137 (old CVS Tower) who will bring many jobs to town. Can't say who yet.
 - Escape Room moving in to 140 W. Plaza. We expect it to be very popular.
 - Laurie inquired about Tar Heel Sports for September. Mayor Hemminger responded that the Town and UNC are in regular communication and watching COVID trends, ready to pivot if the data warrants it. The hope is that Tar Heel Sports can resume. With 86% of students and 79% faculty vaccinated, we are in a better place than a year ago.
- Tanya Moore – Associate Vice Chancellor, UNC-Chapel Hill
 - Tanya restated that 86% of registered students and 79% of our faculty and staff are vaccinated and the UNC policy is get vaccinated or get tested weekly. That policy is for students, faculty, and staff.
- Mayor Lydia Lavelle – Town of Carrboro
 - Town of Carrboro has a new Town Manager starting next week.
 - Town of Carrboro staff are back working in-person.
 - Our first Town Meeting isn't until September 14th so we are watching the COVID data to determine if that will be in-person or not.
 - Carrboro United Food Hub closed on June 26. It was a great bridge that helped many Carrboro businesses survive the pandemic.
 - Carrboro had a great Pride Celebration outdoors in Carrboro Town Commons in June.

- On July 4th we had the Frederick Douglas reading “The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro” with guest speaker Cheri Beasley.
- We unveiled another Truth Plaque at the intersection of Brewer Lane and Merritt Mill Rd. on the property of St. Paul’s Church right between Chapel Hill and Carrboro and it recognizes the former Freedmen’s School in Carrboro.
- The Grata Café has opened up where Elmo’s used to be in Carr Mill Mall.
- Tesoro is a small, Italian restaurant that just opened across from Weaver Street.
- Cat’s Cradle has had several outdoor concerts this summer in what they call the Cradle’s Backyard.
- Jon Hartman-Brown has been working hard on getting as many grants out to our local businesses, particularly our BIPOC businesses.
- Shannan Campbell – Economic Development, Town of Hillsborough
 - The organizers of Hog Day are still trying to make that happen.
 - The Carolina Tarwheels are still doing their big bike fest.
 - We saw a big boom in our restaurants and hotel occupancy in the spring but there is an unknown landscape again with the Delta variant.
 - Last Fridays has been a huge hit. They’ve taken small entertainment and put it at a bunch of different venues in downtown and West Hillsborough.
 - Hillsborough is leading our marketing campaign with “The getaway you’ve been waiting for . . .”
 - We’ve added some new walking tours and itineraries on the website and we are seeing a lot of clicks on that.
 - We just wrapped-up a campaign with WRAL that we received a lot of good feedback on.
- Commissioner Sally Greene – Orange County Board of Commissioners
 - I was invited to sit in on a meeting of restaurant owners to see if they can come together and work in concert on how to be after the pandemic. What are restaurants going to look like moving forward. The wholesale price of food has tripled, in some cases. There is a need to pay employees higher wages. One prediction is that restaurant dining will become more expensive so that it will become a less frequent but more special occasion. There is also discussion of highlighting vegetarian menu not only for health but to help save money.
 - The Orange County Board of Commissioners is going back to virtual meetings at least through September.
 - We’ll be choosing Mark Dorosin’s replacement during our meeting on September 2nd.
 - The Broadband taskforce has been working over the summer and next week we will finalize an RFP to put out. The RFP is for a partner to work with us and take the next step with us, not to lay the fiber yet. The County has committed \$5,000,000 of our ARPA money to the Broadband Project. The goal is to provide the 5,000 residents who don’t have broadband or have lousy broadband and provide them fiber. Fiber-level is what is required if you use ARPA funds.
 - The Transit Policy Steering Committee continues to meet. More on that in the fall.
 - The Orange County Housing Collaborative, which is four elected officials and staff, met in early summer and we are going to meet again this week and we will be hearing from an organization who understand and are capable of modeling which mobile home owners can become resident home owners at their property if there is a seller willing to sell.

- Manish Atma – President, Atma Hotel Group
 - Sheraton is supposed to open next week depending on inspections.
 - We are hosting the UNC football team for overnight lodging this season. They are going to move from RTP to Chapel Hill.
 - July was a good month but we are starting to see some cancellations trickling in for future dates, especially in September and October.
 - Staffing is a nightmare. We've brought all our employees to a living wage of \$15/hour or higher. Due to cost raising, operations, labor, and food, we are all forced, as hoteliers, to increase rates even though demand is not where we want it to be.
- Mark Sherburne – General Manager, The Carolina Inn
 - Mark echoed Manish's statement that summer was very strong. Stronger than most people had anticipated with orientation not being in-person and limitations on sports camps.
 - Right now fall is extremely strong but with the Delta variant and the new mask mandate we are fielding lots of calls of people inquiring about fall protocols.


Next meeting: *Wednesday, September 15th*

Meeting adjourned at 9:18 a.m.

DocuSigned by:

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Minutes reviewed by:
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

9/16/2021

Date

DocuSigned by:

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Minutes accepted by:
Anthony Carey, Chairman

9/16/2021

Date