

Approved April 19, 2023

**Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau  
In Person Board of Directors Meeting  
March 15, 2023**

**Board Members Present:** Spring Council, Heidi Werner Dawson, Lili Engelhardt, Karen Hart, Sharon Hill, Tanya Moore, Beverly Payne, Damon Seils.

**Not Present:** Manish Atma, Mark Bell - Chair, Lisa Gantermiller, Jon Hartman-Brown, Grace Holtkamp, Earl McKee, Karen Stegman.

**Staff Attendance:** Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Susan Rice, Katie Murray

**Also present:** Jeri Lynn Schulke.

**Guest Speaker:** Jessica Hershaf; Clean Design, Group Business Director

### **Call to Order**

Damon Seils, substituting for Mark Bell – Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:11 a.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Damon Seils requested a motion to approve the Feb. 15, 2023 minutes. Lili Engelhardt so moved and Sharon Hill seconded the motion. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

### **Introductions**

### **Executive Director's Report**

- Laurie Paolicelli spoke on the Community Tribute – [Celebration of Life of John Jeffries](#) to be held on Saturday, March 18, 2-4:45pm at the Passmore Center, the public is welcome, there will be speakers and refreshments.
- [Airbnb regulation updates](#): Chapel Hill Airbnb's must be registered now with inspections and follow safety regulations.
- Laurie discussed a proposed development in Hillsborough by [Summit Engineering for a conditional zoning](#) request for a potential project on Lawrence Road that she would like the Board to provide feedback on. This project was brought to her attention by developer and Laurie confirmed with Planning Board in Orange County. Lawrence Road development is applying for a special zoning request. When completed it would include a Charter School, daycare, plus indoor and outdoor sporting fields as well as other amenities.
- The project has potential for tourism/economic development for Orange County, sporting events could become big business for the area (adding revenue to hotels and restaurants)

- Visitors Bureau commissioned the firm Conventions, Sports and Leisure International (CSL) in 2017 and would share this with the Orange County Planning Board.
- At her conclusion, many board members asked questions. Damon Seils stated he didn't think it was the Visitors Bureau place to weigh-in on this. Laurie said that she felt it merited VB Board discussion due to research that showed the potential economic impact of youth and high school athletics tournaments in a community.
- Board member Karen DeHart who is with the North Carolina High School Athletics Association requested more information but agreed that more facilities in Orange County would make a positive addition to their efforts.
- Discussion concluded with Paolicelli saying that she wanted to send board the background, suggested letter and copy of the 2017 sports study for input. (Note: Materials were sent that night and it was agreed to refrain from taking a position due to the Charter School involvement with project and the land use issues that is presented with adding a charter school to development).
- Paolicelli gave an overview of a hot topic in front of state legislators that would impact tourism. A bill filed in the North Carolina House Monday would legalize online sports gambling across the state. Paolicelli said that revenues from sports gaming will be allocated in part to Title 2 schools and HBCU institutions. She wants our board to be knowledgeable and has invited Charlotte Motor Speedway CEO to speak at our April board meeting and update Orange County hospitality industry on this potential milestone legislation. Guest speakers will be present at the April CHOCVB meeting to explain what this is and the impact it would have in our community.
- The ADA booklet was presented by Laurie, the link can be found on the VB website. The [2023/24 Accessibility Guide](#) includes listings of wheelchair accessible restaurants and hotels in Orange County.

**Jessica Herrschaft with Clean, Inc. presented on current advertising campaign in place, new Carrboro visitor brochure, new photography, and creative materials and strategy in development for Orange County tourism**  
**Jessica's Presentation - <https://tinyurl.com/fpahnh2>**

### **Katie Murray – UpRoar Festival Updates**

- 60 large scale sculptures - 20 in each town, 80 applications received
- Awards will be given along with cash prizes, the public can vote for favorites
- Trying to be ADA compliant, Audio offered, trolley in Chapel Hill (provided by the Visitor Bureau), buses in Hillsborough for transportation
- Requesting sponsorships – applications accepted through April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Site plans and volunteer lists will be looked at in April
- A lot of new things going on at the Eno Arts Mill – First Fridays, Gallery & Monthly Openings, Classes, Summer Camps, etc.

## New Business

### Marlene Barbera

- Reporting on the Visitor Bureau's Open House May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2-4pm
- Run down on what to expect: speakers, food, music, screen printing.
- Marlene said the event was titled "The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Visitors Bureau Open House," which replaces the annual holiday gathering.
- The current space is better designed for outdoor parking lot gatherings and podium, with food displayed on porch. Several local partners will speak.

### Spring Council

- The family is selling the restaurant building on Rosemary St.
- Working on franchising Mama Dip's Kitchen
- Possibly opening a smaller footprint Mama Dip's restaurant

### Tanya Moore

- Commencement will be Sunday, May 14<sup>th</sup>
- Commencement speaker: Bryan Stevenson - The civil rights lawyer and leader of the Equal Justice Initiative
- Finley Golf Course construction to be finished in September.
- The Community Relations Director position previously held by Kristen Young, will be replaced, and moved under the University's Public Affairs department.

### Karen DeHart

- NCHSAA Basketball Championship went very well in Chapel Hill at Smith Center last week with attendance way up.
- N.C. Senate Bill (SB 52) NCHSAA subject to the state's opening meetings law could possibly change/effect their 501C3 status
- Digital tickets are offered now, possibly have to do cash transactions
- Karen said they were learning a lot from this process and would keep the board informed on how paperless tickets impact business operations.

### Jeri Lynn Schulke

- Clean & Green will start today (Mar 15<sup>th</sup>) on the 100 block of East Franklin, program is paid through the next 2 years from ARPA funds
- New public mural to be painted on Lantern's building
- Festivals are being planned for downtown this spring/summer

Heidi Werner Dawson

- Carolina Inn will be celebrating 100 years throughout the year
- Carolina Brewery is making the Inn their own ale called “1924”
- Fridays on the Front Porch will start April 7<sup>th</sup>
- The Carolina Inn is working on designing their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary ornament
- Room renovations begin May 15<sup>th</sup>
- Fridays on the Front Porch to begin in April

Damon Seils

- Carrboro Open Streets will be April 16<sup>th</sup>
- Freight Train Blues – lineup is being announced, went from 6 weeks to now 8 weeks
- Carrboro will soon have a new mural painted on the side of Golden China restaurant
- June is pride month, working on events plus the Gay Pride parade
- Carrboro added a link to diversity restaurants and businesses on their website and gave a nod to Visitors Bureau efforts for their work to increase awareness of BIPOC businesses.

Beverly Payne

- Revolutionary War Living History Day, March 25, 10am-4pm at the Hillsborough Visitors Center
- Beverly invited everyone to the Celebration of Life for John Jeffries
- On Mar 23 there will be a Zoom meeting with Lawrence Dunmore, historian about the Occaneechee Band of Saponi Indians. Beverly will share link.

**Next meeting:** *Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at the Carolina Inn*

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 a.m.