

**Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau
Board of Directors Meeting at Carolina Inn
November 15, 2023**

Board Members Present: Mark Bell – Chair, Karen DeHart, Karen Stegman, Spring Council, Damon Seils, Grace Holtkamp, Jon Hartman-Brown, Tanya Moore, Sharon Hill, Beverly Payne, Heidi Werner Dawson, Rebecca Mormino

Not Present: Shannan Campbell, Earl McKee

Staff Attendance: Laurie Paolicelli, Hannah Hemphill, Marlene Barbera, Tina Fuller, Susan Rice

Guests: Jon Parker, Jessica Herrschaft, Wendy Smith, Sam Vadgama

Call to Order

Mark Bell, Chair called the meeting to order at 8:09 AM.

Introductions

- Heidi Werner Dawson welcomed the board to the Carolina Inn, which is gearing up for the 100 anniversary with their Centennial lager, collaboration with coffee roaster, and a 100 year anniversary schedule now available on the website. The Holiday Market will be on December 3rd, 7th, and 14th.

Approval of Minutes

Mark Bell requested a motion to approve the October 18, 2023 minutes. Sharon Hill made a motion to approve the minutes and Beverly Payne seconded the motion. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Executive Director's Report

- The Visitors Bureau has been focusing on media, outreach, and service with new curiosity and leisure campaigns.
- Our click through rate (CTR) is higher, with Raleigh-Durham being the strongest performing DMA with Charlotte also driving new business.
- “Find a New Rhythm” campaign performing the best, demonstrating the need to focus on the soul of the area.
- Dynamic events and restaurant and visit have high CTR on Visit Chapel Hill website.
- Audience tends to be females 55-64, followed by users 25–34-year-old who has a higher CTR than 35–44-year-olds.
- Our mainstream platforms are performing well, except for YouTube. We hired a YouTube specialist (CirclePark, LLC) to develop content and create a more cohesive channel. They are working on 6 videos by the end of the month.
- Survey launching today, please take the survey – MGY NEXTFactor to benchmark tourism industry in Orange County to include all towns.
- Overall, tourism business is doing well with Carolina Inn having record breaking months and the Carrboro Hampton Inn is doing well, although the labor shortage continues to hurt the hospitality

For Approval January 17, 2024

industry. Group business is coming back. Festivals, restaurants, and nightlife still being the rock of the tourism industry.

Clean, Inc. Presentation on Creative and Media Plans

Click here to view presentatoin

- Meeting campaign creative has been updated. It includes a focus on RDU, hotel meeting space refresh, and keeps the “Let Curiosity Lead You Here” tag line.
- Expanded the target for the meeting campaign to include Atlanta, Tampa, and NYC through March 2024.
- A new expanded business traveler campaign creative for the first couple months of 2024 with 25-65 age range. Targeting locally in Chapel Hill/Orange County but also competitive targeting in Durham and RTP. Will be advertised on trip advisor, display and native ad, and digital, including a video wall at RDU.
- Sneak Piques: short video to show on social and website
 - Videos around 20-25 seconds
 - Introduce viewers to people who own, operate, and work at establishments that make up the soul of Orange County
 - Currently at 12 videos
 - [Click here to view videos](#)
- Sights, lights and bites!
 - Focused during COVID on restaurants and bars with outside lights/heaters.
 - Many of these assets are still available to be updated, including the landing page.
 - Is there interest in drawing business to outdoor spaces?
 - Do we divert dollars to a 6-month hyper regional campaign?
 - The board voted in favor of this idea.
- Next steps are finalizing creative for business traveler plan and sneak piques.

Gift

Grace Holtkamp of Merry Hill Hemp presented a gift of CBD Lavendar Salve to the board. This is a locally harvested product that can help with anti-inflammation, alleviating joint pain or muscle pain. CBD is working its way into higher end skin care as an alternative to traditional skincare that can include a lot of harsh products, i.e. retinol, collagen, hydraulic acid.

New Business

Beverly Payne The Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation

- Annual powwow was successful.
- Beverly will be rotating off the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough board, and therefore there will be a new representative for the CHOCVB Advisory Board
- Hillsborough Parade will be on Sunday, December 4th at 4pm followed by the tree lighting.

Sharon Hill

- Economic development board will be putting together a strategic plan.

Wendy Smith, Representing the Arts Center

For Approval January 17, 2024

- Participation up 70%, afterschool completely full, sold out show on Friday, second Friday ArtWalk and gallery opening.

Karen DeHart

- Spoke to School Board Association in Greensboro.
- December 8 and 9th will see several thousand people coming into town for a Football Championship at Kenan Stadium.

Karen Stegman, Town of Chapel Hill

- Organizational meeting December 18th with new board assignments with newly elected town officials
- Downtown mobility study to learn more about how have better mobility for all types of traffic (cars, bike, buses, etc)
- Parking deck construction continues to move forward.

Rebecca Mormino, Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership

- Collecting information about what's going on downtown in the winter.
- Raising Canes has opened and has a lot of interest (lines out the door!).

Sam Vagdama

- Record breaking October and trending up in November.
- Open breakfast and bar open to the public. Had a Halloween event for locals to patronize their bar.

Mark Bell, Town of Hillsborough

- Town of Hillsborough organizational meeting on December 11 to decide who will be representative on the CHOCVB Board. Will be sworn in as mayor at this meeting.

Spring Council

- Mama Dips is preparing holiday meals for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years meals
- Tonya's Cookies and Bake Shop will have a grand opening on Friday, December 6 from 9-6 on Elliot Rd. The pecan crisp cookies won Oprah's favorite thing Christmas of 2020. She will open a café next year.

Grace Holtkamp

- Focusing on carbon neutral efforts and cannabis equity. Featured in Vogue and other farming magazines, and will have more events and agrotourism in the spring.

Jon Hartman-Brown, Economic Development Director, Carrboro

- Carrboro Christmas tree lighting December 8th and the parade is the 9th

Damon Seils, Mayor of Carrboro

- Organizational meeting on December 10th
- Downtown property manager with aggressive towing, predatory towing and charged exorbitant fees.
- More/better signage around downtown Carrboro for parking with the 203 project including more downtown parking.

Marlene Barbera

- UNC Planner Meeting event on December 7th at the Friday Center to include other companies that service the industry (photographers, print, swag, event support, etc.), in addition to hotels.
- 218 people are currently registered.

Next meeting: *Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at the Sheraton Chapel Hill*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 AM.

For Approval January 17, 2024