

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau
Advisory Board Meeting
Carrboro Hampton Inn & Suites
August 21, 2024
8:00 – 9:15 AM

Board Members Present: Tanya Moore, Sam Vadgama, Jon Hartman-Brown, Wendy Smith, Paris Miller-Foushee, Rande Haven- O'Donnell, Meredith Saybe

Not Present: Grace Holtkamp, Karen DeHart, Heidi Werner Dawson, Anna Richards, Matt Hughes, Steve Peck

Staff Attendance: Steve Brantley, Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Hannah Hemphill,

Guests: Martina Brooks- Atma Hotel Group, Jenae Ward – UNC Friday Center, Jess Ackman – UNC Friday Center, David Putnam – Town of Chapel Hill Economic Development, Dale Wilson- Residence Inn, Spring Council, Jason Boyer – Media Two, Niki Bell- Media Two, Jess Herschaft- Clean

Call to Order

Laurie Paolicelli called the meeting to order at 8:07 AM.

Round Table Introductions

Ratify nomination of Karen DeHart to continue as Chair and DR Bryan to serve as Vice Chair

Meredith Saybe requested a motion to ratify the nomination of Karen DeHart as Chair and DR Bryan as Vice Chair. Sam Vadgama seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

Ratify May minutes

Meredith Saybe made a motion to ratify the vote from the June 12th meeting approving the May minutes and Rande Haven O'Donnell seconded the motion. All were in favor and the May minutes are approved.

Approval of Minutes

Rande Haven O'Donnell requested a motion to approve the June 12th, 2024 minutes. Meredith Saybe seconded the motion. All members were in favor of approving the minutes.

Overview of key summer 2024 Tourism initiatives

- Carrboro music scene – QR code to Spotify list to show case musicians at Carrboro Music Festival
- [Music Sponsorship – Sonark Session Live from the Barn](#)
 - Music festival at Blackwood farm
 - Focus on food, live music, national jazz festival in 2026/27 collaboratively with Steve Raets
 - Sonark Harvest Festival
- Soccer Game Overview of Manchester City vs Celtics
 - 27k seats sold (half of the crowd last year)
 - One night sell out of hotel
 - Trolley – well received and should continue in summer

Approved October 16, 2024

- Cost of \$29,000
 - \$12,000 for trolley rental and \$5,000 for supporting printed materials
 - \$12,000 to advertise
- Lodging revenue up \$4 million
- July also saw increased demand
- Changing Visitor Amenities in Orange County
 - Hockey Arena at Carraway
 - Wyndham Elements Hotel
 - Residence Inn Apartments
 - Golf Invitationals at Finley

How are we reaching visitors and meeting planners

- Media Two – media buying agency contracted through the marketing contract with Clean, Inc. They manage digital and traditional in-house advertising.
- Diverse background working with industries, including education, finance, government, travel and tourism, B2B, etc.
- **Leisure Campaign**
 - FY24 Trends
 - Tripadvisor was costly and not a valuable placement
 - Orange County had record breaking visitor spending in 2023, with the highest increase of all NC Counties (13%)
 - 2x more conversations were recorded year over year, with the search conversion rising 227% year over year
 - Media drove 37% of new users to visitchapelhill.org
 - Overview
 - Budget \$372,000
 - July 1, 2024- June 30, 2025
 - Demographics 21-64 year olds
 - Geography: In state and Out of State, with a new presence in Asheville and Myrtle Beach
 - Media Strategy
 - FB & IG, search, display, digital video, publisher direct, Connected TV (streaming devices)
 - Meredith Saybe asked about forecasting the budget allocation between the different media channels. Niki Bell discussed that the media strategy is flexible and can shift depending on demand and trends.
 - David Putnam asked about demographics and who is the main customer. Niki Bell explained that we mostly see 45+, although depending on the event demographics shift. Search skews a little younger than other platforms.
- **Business & Conferences**
 - FY24 Trends

Approved October 16, 2024

- 9x higher rate of conversion compared to 2022 campaign
- Paid search drove most of the conversion volume at 59%
- LinkedIn contributed the most impressions with 88% of times people saw ads was on LinkedIn
- Expand Reach from specific DMAs/Cities to statewide
- Overview
 - Budget: \$125,000
 - Timing: 6 months (Oct-Nov + Feb-May)
 - Target Audience: Corporate meeting/event planners and decision-makers of businesses
- Media strategy
 - Display and publisher direct, social (LinkedIn), search & remarketing (Display/Social)
 - Marlene discussing how it's impacting RFPs directly – ten training meetings awarded to the Sheraton
 - Jenae Ward asked about which social meeting platforms are being utilized with younger meeting planners coming in. Nikki Bell answered that LinkedIn is still the best place to reach people who are in a “business state of mind” and more intent focused. Other platforms can be hard to reach people on for business.

Next meeting: *Wednesday, September 25, 2024 at Courtyard Chapel Hill*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 AM. Chapel Hill swag available to meeting attendings