

**Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau  
Advisory Board Meeting  
Innovate Carolina Junction  
October 16, 2024  
8:00 – 9:15 AM**

**Board Members Present:** Tanya Moore, Karen DeHart- Chair, Heidi Werner Dawson, Jon Hartman-Brown, Wendy Smith, Anna Richards, Jeri Lynn Schulke, Matt Hughes, Paris Miller-Foushee, Randee Haven-O'Donnell, Steve Peck, DR Bryan- Vice Chair, Meredith Saybe

**Not Present:** Sam Vadgama

**Staff Attendance:** Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Hannah Hemphill, Pix Walsh, Katie Murray

**Guests:** Jerry Jones, David Putnam – TOCH Economic Development

**Call to Order**

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

**Round Table Introductions**

Joined by Pix Walsh, new Welcome Center Front Desk Manager, and Jerry Jones, Executive Director of Workforce Development at Durham Tech

**Approval of Minutes**

Karen DeHart requested a motion to approve the minutes from August 21, 2024 and September 25, 2024 board meetings. DR Bryan made a motion to approve the minutes for both meetings and Meredith Saybe seconded the motion. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

**Welcome to the Junction**

- Durham Tech's Small Business Center now has space at the Junction in addition to their main location at the Chesterfield Building, allowing for more collaboration with UNC.

**Arts Economic Prosperity** – Katie Murray, Orange County Arts Commission

**The State of the Arts of Orange County – Arts & Economic Prosperity 6**

**A. Overview of Arts & Economic Prosperity 6**

- **Survey Overview:** Conducted by Americans for the Arts, covering 373 study regions across all 50 states and Puerto Rico.
- **Local Partnerships:** Collaborations with Orange County, Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough.
- **Economic Modeling Tool:** Utilized IMPLAN to analyze two data sets:
  - Nonprofit arts spending
  - Audience spending
- **Findings:**
  - Total annual spending: **\$107 million**
    - Audience spending: **\$22.4 million**
    - Organizational spending: **\$84.6 million**

Approved November 20, 2024

- Noted that overnight lodging represents a lesser area of spending from arts attendees, which could improve by hosting more large-scale projects.

### **B. Current Challenges in the Arts Community**

- Limited availability of spaces for artists to learn, work, live, and create.
- Insufficient venues for performance, teaching, or sales of artistic work.
- Artists are relocating from Orange County due to high living costs.

### **C. Support and Preserving Our Creative Community**

- Recommendations for support include:
  - Paying a living wage to artists.
  - Involving artists in community planning.
  - Supporting agencies that employ artists.
- Noted a national decrease in private support for the arts.
- Arts initiatives receive bipartisan support in the NC State Legislature.
- Emphasis on supporting initiatives that enhance the community, such as creative spaces and artist-led initiatives.
- Upcoming event: **Raffle for the Arts.**

## **Executive Director's Report**

### **A. Logo Update**

- A survey has been distributed at the request of Wendy Smith to assess the need for greater representation in the logo design. This survey will be resent for additional feedback.

### **B. Branding Strategy**

- Discussion on maintaining the branding of “small town charm” while accommodating growth in the area.
- Continued promotion of outdoor activities to attract visitors looking for alternatives to mountain hiking.

## **Budget Report**

Hannah Hemphill reported on the budget with the following key points:

- The Visitors Bureau has requested to appropriate \$201,842.00 from the fund reserve to offset the increase in advertising spending due to the opportunity to sponsor Sonark Media’s PBS Special and increased meeting advertising costs.
- Occupancy tax reports have shown that they are tracking with the revenue we expect to see, and occupancy rates are staying on par with last year.
- We are continuing to monitor budget line items that were cut during the budget cycle, including travel.

**Next meeting:** *Wednesday, November 20, 2024 at the Carolina Inn*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 AM.