

For Approval August 15, 2018

MINUTES

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting August 15, 2018

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at
Residence Inn, Chapel Hill

Board Members Present: Kayla Dempsey, Penny Rich, Lydia Lavelle, Anthony Carey-Chair, Andrew Strickland, Tim Hoke, Jeff Stickler, Aaron Bachenheimer, Mark Bell, Rachel Schaevitz, Mark Sherburne, Annette Lafferty, David Brooks, Elinor Landess

Not Present: Lee Storrow, Rosemary Waldorf-Vice Chair, Libby Hough, Shannan Campbell

Staff attendance: Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Allison Chambers

Also present: Sam Vadgama, General Manager, Residence Inn; Jill Rheutan, Director of Sales, Residence Inn; Lynn Minges, NC Restaurant and Lodging Association; Joel Curran, Vice-Chancellor for Communications, UNC-CH; Tanya Moore, Senior Director of Communications Planning and Special Projects, UNC-CH

Call to Order

Chair Anthony Carey called the meeting to order at 8:07 am.

Introductions were given by all and Laurie Paolicelli introduced Elinor Landess to the board as she is temporarily filling the ED role at the Downtown Partnership; she has been with the Partnership for two years.

Host Welcome

Sam Vadgama and Jill Rheutan welcomed the board to the Residence Inn.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Carey requested a motion to approve the June 20, 2018 minutes. Penny Rich so moved and Mark Bell seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Finance Report

Finance Chair Penny Rich reported that staff has recently closed out the year and occupancy tax collections are up almost 6% over collections in the previous fiscal year, likely due to the increase in rooms available in Orange County. The Bureaus post audit fund balance should exceed \$1 million and will be drawn down to cover additional advertising and special promotions. She reported that she and Laurie Paolicelli met with the deputy county manager and county attorney to talk about potential policies the commissioners could set to regulate AirBNB and also the need to include the municipalities in the discussions.

Guest Speaker Report

The board heard from Lynn Minges, President of the North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association. She thanked Lydia Lavelle for Carrboro's efforts to be the first to get the brunch bill passed. Her organization employs three lobbyists and tracks on average two hundred bills per session of the General Assembly which include mandates, tax changes, health requirements that effect their member restaurants and hotels. She highlighted some of their more recent efforts that include: the brunch bill which gave municipalities authority to approve the sale of alcohol beginning at 10 am on Sundays; they got the attorney general to agree that recipients of a poster about human trafficking and how to identify it did not need to be displayed in lobbies but rather in employee workrooms in an attempt not to scare customers,

specifically children. In talking about AirBNB she reported that it is larger than the Hilton Hotels chain and is growing, last year in NC AirBNB hosts earned \$100 million which means they collected \$6.7 million in sales tax and \$5.8 million in occupancy tax. Five years ago AirBNB agreed that they would collect sales tax and occupancy tax and remit it according to local laws, but there is no oversight with the business operating largely underground. Her association is not opposed to AirBNB; they think there needs to be some regulations or policies put into place to level the playing field. The General Assembly does not like to create new regulations on businesses. In Asheville 3000 rooms have been added to the market per night by Airbnb's which is equivalent to three Grove Park Inns. Asheville has banned AirBNB in the city limits but there is no way to enforce it so the problem still exists. Her organization is asking the NC General Assembly to put a requirement on shared service platforms that they cannot list any property in the NC that does not have a registry number. This is not a punitive action as it just requires registration.

Joel Curran, Vice-Chancellor for Communications at UNC-CH, offered the board an update on the University and in particular the changes being made in the university's visitor's center. The university first opened its visitor's center 25 years ago during the bicentennial to open the door to those who might not otherwise have access to help them understand what the university does and what it brings to the state. For the last ten years, Chapel Hill native, Missy Julian Fox, has served as the center's director. The center has known for about three years that the Morehead Planetarium will undergo renovation soon and that they will have to move. They hope to open their new space in January 2019. The center's new director will be Ronda Beatty. As the university gets ready to celebrate their 225th anniversary on October 12 new banners will be installed on Franklin St. displaying the 225th anniversary logo. Research shows that UNC is a trusted institution expected to tackle the important social issues of our time. Mark Sherburne ask him to speak to concerns among hoteliers regarding the weakness and sequence of this year's football schedule and he responded by saying that it is being driven in large part by television. In the future he thinks we will see better non-conference opponents. Currang offered to convene a meeting with Orange County hotels and the Athletic Director, Bubba Cunningham. Anthony Carey suggested the university schedule events like family weekend on less desirable football weekends to bring visitors at that time to stimulate the economy.

Executive Director's Report

Laurie Paolicelli shared that the move for the UNC visitor's center is a sound one on their part. This will require the Chapel Hill Orange County Visitors Bureau to look at its relevancy, which has already been happening. The bulk of the visitors we see want to relocate or retire in Orange County and they want to chat, to get a sense of the place and that may not be what the university is looking for or have to capacity to help these visitors, and we don't have the capacity to give tours. We have a great collaborative relationship with UNC, noting the Ackland Art Museum will celebrate their 50th anniversary on September 20 and we are working with them to supply valet parking after hours in our parking lot. Our next focus is on UNC Health Care and elevating the quality of services to visiting patient families, and we appreciate board member Jeff Strickler's help.

Sales Report

Marlene Barbera reported that she is working this summer to improve the experience of the medical travelers in Chapel Hill. She will be publishing a monthly meeting planner newsletter that will go out to planners she has met at the tradeshow she has attended and she will be attending tradeshow again the first week in September and the last week in October. In late September she will host a third party familiarization tour with local hotels hosting 35 meeting planners overnight to showcase their properties with eleven hotels participating.

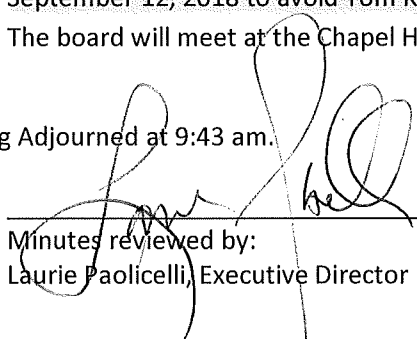
New Business/Roundtable

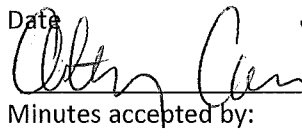
Chair Carey acknowledged all for updates in their respective fields:

- Annette Lafferty reported on the progress of the 230 Project which is the new Carrboro Branch Library of the Orange County Library, Carrboro Parks and Rec, town offices and possible ArtsCenter on Greensboro St. This will be a community hub with a lot of collaboration opportunities.
- Mark Bell reported that the refurbishment of the Colonial Inn is working its way through the planning/permitting process with the Town of Hillsborough. They are proposing a restaurant, bar and event space so there are many details to work out. Jeff Strickler reported that the Hog Day 5K run will be sponsored by UNC Health Care in Hillsborough. Starting in September, shops on Churton St. will be open on Sundays through November.
- Rachel Schaevitz reported that there are two new sculptures downtown on UNC Campus as part of Arts Everywhere. Maurice Jones, the new Town Manager, arrived two weeks ago and Roger Stancil will retire in September and she is excited about his interest in private/public partnerships. The council is working with downtown restaurants to figure out outdoor dining possibilities.
- Kayla Dempsey reported the fall sports are underway for area high schools. First Friday Night Football will begin August 17. She shared that she had done a lot of traveling recently and she got her information and tips about what to do from blogger sites and this is how she planned her trip.
- Aaron Bachenheimer reported that students are moving in at the end of the week. Monday, August 20 they will hold the annual Good Neighbor Initiate door to door walk and he invited board to participate. The annual block party is September 6 at the Hargrave Center. Tar Heel Downtown will be September 14 at 140 west.
- Tim Hoke reported that the Arts Commission has just finished their grants application season and received more application that they have in the past with grant awards being announce the beginning of September. The handmade parade will be on October 14 in Hillsborough and the Plein Air Paintout will conclude on October 21.

Date Change: Penny Rich made the motion to change the date of the September meet to Wednesday, September 12, 2018 to avoid Yom Kippur. The motion was seconded by Anthony Carey. The motion passed. The board will meet at the Chapel Hill Police Department on MLK, Jr. Blvd. in Chapel Hill.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:43 am.


 Minutes reviewed by:
 Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director


 Minutes accepted by:
 Anthony Carey, Chairman

9/12/18
 Date