

Approved September 20, 2017

**MINUTES**  
**Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting**  
**August 16, 2017**

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at  
The PTA Thrift Shop YouthWorx on Main

**Board Members Present:** Kayla Dempsey, Aaron Bachenheimer, Meg McGurk, Penny Rich, Lydia Lavelle, Jeffery Strickler-Acting Chair, Mark Bell, Mark Sherburne, George Cianciolo, Andrew Strickland, Shannan Campbell, Annette Lafferty, Tim Hoke, Anthony Carey

**Not Present:** Lee Storrow, Rosemary Waldorf-Chair

**Staff attendance:** Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Allison Chambers, Katie Murray

**Also present:** David Andrews, Town Manager, Town of Carrboro; Dan Mayer, Executive Director, The Arts Center; Barbara Jesse-Black, Executive Director, The PTA Thrift Shop; Tabitha Blackwell, Director, Youth Forward; David Brooks, Triangle Polo Club

**Call to Order**

Acting-Chair Jeff Strickler called the meeting to order at 8:04 am.

Introductions were given by all.

**Approval of Minutes**

Acting Chair Strickler requested a motion to approve the June 21, 2017 minutes. Mark Bell so moved and George Cianciolo seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

**Host Introduction**

Barbara Jesse-Black welcomed the board to the PTA Thrift Shop YouthWorx on Main. The PTA Thrift Shop has been in existence since 1952. YouthWorx on Main was a project brought about by a plan to create sustainability for the organization. They have a 10 year strategic plan which began in 2010 and has been part of the reinvestment phase. This collaborative space for youth serving organizations, primarily in Chapel Hill and Carrboro, has been open since July 1, 2017. They currently have six tenants and are partnering with Youth Forward who will handle the capacity building for the facility. The goal is to help organization to build capacity and do their work better. They have a day rate for non-profits that have a youth component. Tabitha Blackwell reported to the board that Youth Forward is partnering with the PTA Thrift Shop in three ways: providing grants to non-profits who serve youth; capacity building that includes providing training and support to non-profits. After seven years, the PTA Thrift Shop is done with their capital improvements and they are moving forward.

**Finance Report**

Finance Chair Penny Rich reported that in fiscal year 2016-17 tourism is up in Orange County, we have increased the tax base and brought in new jobs. It is important to talk about tourism as an economic development driver. The Visitors Bureau budget for 2017-18 is \$1.5 million. Allocations are as follows: 50% personnel, 42% marketing and 10% administrative costs. Laurie Paolicelli stated that the bureau is ending the year on a high note. Our tourism growth rate was higher than the previous year. Mark Sherburne shared that HB2 has primarily hurt the association market that traditionally books further out and so will impact hotels in years to come. They have been somewhat successful in filling

that gap by bringing in corporate business which pays a higher rate. Ms. Paolicelli added that we are continuing our “All Are Welcome” campaign. Commissioner Rich reported that the Bureau’s fund balance is at approximately \$260,000, which is an unaudited number. Lydia Lavelle asked Laurie Paolicelli to speak to the new line item in the budget “Bike Safety”. She responded that Orange County Community Relations has been tasked with creating a signage program that reminds of safety issues. The county came to the bureau for help with media reach to get that message out. The general fund will provide \$10,000 with the Visitors Bureau contributing \$5,000 to help spread the word.

### **Guest Report**

Annette Stone reminded the board that by statute all of the occupancy tax they collect must be spent on travel and tourism. Two thirds must go to promote travel and tourism with one third going to tourism related expenditures, which includes capital expenditures. The CTDA leases space in the 300 East Main Street Parking Deck, which is not owned by the town. The full lease amount is \$90,000 and the CTDA pays \$45,000 of that amount. \$25,000 is spent on advertising. Carrboro festivals and events are a \$35,200 expenditure as follows: Carrboro Film Festival, \$9,200; Poetry Festival, \$2,000; Carrboro Music Festival, \$11,000 and the Freight Train Blues, \$13,000. Community events total \$20,850: Elf Fair, \$2,600; 10x10, \$5,000; Terra Vita \$4,000; Tomato Day, \$2,000; Shimmer \$1,500; Florafitti \$750; NATJA, \$5,000. The \$25,000 advertising expenditure includes: Indy Beer Guide, Indy Eats, Indy Finder, Carolina Performing Arts, Chapel Hill Magazine Relocation Visitors Guide, Durham Magazine Relocation Visitors Guide, Chamber Relocation Visitor Guides/Maps, hotel guides located in the Hampton Inn, Carolina Inn and the Sienna. Carrboro has one hotel, The Hampton Inn, and it experiences higher than average Occupancy Rates, and higher than average Daily Rates than the average Orange County hotel. Most guests come from the Triangle followed by Charlotte, Washington, DC, Atlanta and the Triad. Possible priorities for 2017-18 include: funding for wayfinding; increased funds for the parking deck, new advertising strategies and digital media promotion. Lydia Lavelle reminded the board that the Hampton Inn has been a very good thing for Carrboro’s downtown and that they are looking forward to the second hotel. Carrboro Town Manager, David Andrews stated that parking will be a challenge with the opening of the new hotel, but a new deck is being planned as part of the 203 S. Greensboro Street development. Laurie Paolicelli interjected that we need more sales generators. A concept plan of the 203 S. Greensboro Street development is available on their website. Greensboro Street in front of South Green has reopened and the roundabout will be started soon. At present several restaurants and a nail salon have signed leases.

### **Executive Director’s Report**

Laurie Paolicelli thanked the board for a very productive fiscal year, as it comes to an end. She introduced the board to its newest member, David Brooks of the Triangle Area Polo Club, who will represent the Hillsborough Chamber of Commerce. At the request of the US Polo Association he started a club about 5 years ago and they are now a model of what can be done in a small market and are a tier three club. The club does charitable events. In September they have a “battle of the blues” between UNC and Duke employees and alumni. Ms. Paolicelli reported that she is serving on the American Legion Committee looking at possible recreational or economic development uses for the property. George Cianciolo reported that the majority of the Chapel Hill Town Council would like to see something on the property that produces revenue for the town as there are two more payments to be made on the purchase. Blue Dogwood will open as a food market in the side of the old Fowlers Grocery (behind Vespa) building in October 2017 with 13, 10 x 10 booths. The Old Town Hall work group has reported to the town council and it is now in their hands to decide what to do with it. It will cost \$3 million to gut. The Chapel Hill Town Council has no interest in selling the building. Commissioner Rich shared that during public hearings residents had expressed a need for more space for art to be displayed. Rosemary Street is being redeveloped. A sub-committee of the Visitors Bureau is looking at Ad Agencies through the County’s RFP process. They have completed one round of interviews and are going to look further as the process moves forward.

Hillsborough is finishing a major sidewalk renovation and the Mountains to the Sea Trail is, and will be, a huge draw going forward.

### **Sales Report**

Marlene Barbera reported that she will travel to three trade shows over the next month and a half. She attends Connect, Destination Southeast and Small Market Meetings. Between the three meetings she should have one hundred appointments to sell the destination. She will send a local video as a pre-promotion. Meetings with planners at these shows are like speed dating, as she will get six minutes with each planner. She will have pictures and maps to share. Laurie Paolicelli thanked Marlene for her work on NATJA. Jeff Strickler asked when we would expect to see some output from writers that attended the NATJA conference. Marlene answered that we saw digital stories immediately, but print takes longer. Stories are still coming out from their conference three years ago. Marlene reminded the board that we launched a contest for the best article published within a year of the conference. Ms. Paolicelli shared that the trend we see is an increasing demand for music. Trends at the Visitors Center right now include: music, weddings, visiting friends and family and history tours.

### **New Business/Roundtable**

Acting Chair Rich acknowledged all for updates in their respective fields:

David Brooks name was put into nomination to fill the vacant seat of the Hillsborough Chamber of Commerce. The motion was made by Mark Bell and seconded by George Cianciolo. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Dan Mayer shared that the ArtsCenter has launched a new initiative to increase music offerings, using their space in a little different way.

Kayla Dempsey reported that July 31 was the first Football Friday in NC. The 2017 State Football Championship games will be held on December 9 in Chapel Hill.

Aaron Bachenheimer reported that classes start at UNC on August 22. South Rd. has reopened after a long summer closing. They will host a block party/family night out on September 14. On October 9 UNC will start its public campaign. Their goal is \$3.2 billion, 49% of which has already been raised. UNC's first football game will be in Chapel Hill on September 2. It will continue until 2022.

Shannan Campbell reported that the following offerings are coming up in Hillsborough: Hog Day, Last Fridays, Hillsborough Half Marathon, River Park Concert, Sundays in Hillsborough (to boost weekend trips), Yup Rock 20, Halloween history tours, and Myers House Halloween event. The sidewalk project is almost complete.

Meg McGurk with the Downtown Partnership shared upcoming events with the board: Meet the Heels was held downtown to introduce the new uniforms which included a pop-up shop on the Plaza; Tar Heel Downtown's First Friday event will be held on September 1; Morehead Planetarium is holding an eclipse party on August 21 and are expecting 5,000 people; 140 West has been taken over by a new company and new businesses are moving in; Launch has doubled its footprint; Porthole Alley has opened as a pedestrian walkway connecting the downtown, highlighting the arts, to the University

Katie Murray announced that the Orange County Arts Council will be partnering with the NC Arts Council on October 5 at 6 pm at Leland Little in Hillsborough for a press event to announce the finding of the *Americans for the Arts, Arts and Economic Prosperity Survey*. October 25-27 the county will host an event in which artists come to the area and paint local scenes culminating in a Wet Paint Sale on the Friday night. She further shared that the Orange County Arts Commission is no longer on probation with the NC Arts Council. Tim Hoke and the board thanked Katie. He also

reminded the board of the Bee Hotel coming on November 4 and announced the map that is on the Arts Council website and will be coming out in printed form.

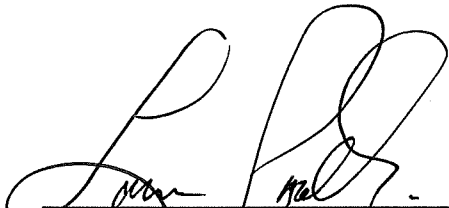
George Cianciolo reported that: the Chapel Hill Town Council Meeting will move to Wednesday nights on an experimental basis for two months; the council delayed their vote on earlier retail sale of alcohol until the University was back in session so they could participate in that discussion; the town will lease land from UNC to build a new Police Station; the town will continue its review of the Amity Station project; on September 16 the council will hold the first public hearing for Wegman's.

Annette Stone reported that the Town of Carrboro will honor Jesse Kalisher with an art exhibit at Town Hall. They are expecting the second Friday Art Walk to be a special event.

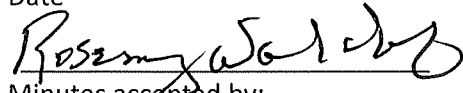
Andrew Stickland announced that the new AC by Marriott on Rosemary Street will open on October 15.

We will meet next month at the Residence Inn in Chapel Hill.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:25 am.

  
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Minutes reviewed by:  
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director  
10-17-2018

Date

  
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Minutes accepted by:  
Rosemary Waldorf, Chairman

10-18-17  
Date