

For Approval August 21, 2019

**Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting
June 19, 2019**

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at
The Carolina Club, 104 Ridge Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27517

Board Members Present: Kayla Dempsey, Anthony Carey, Annette Stone, Andrew Strickland, Tanya Moore, Penny Rich, Mark Bell, Tim Hoke, Lydia Lavelle

Not Present: Jeff Strickler, Racheal Schaevitz/Pam Hemminger, Rosemary Waldorf, Mark Sherburne, David Brooks, Libby Hough, Shannan Campbell

Staff attendance: Marlene Barbera, Allison Chambers

Also present: Anna Murphy, Expedia; Sarah DeGenero, Alliance for Historic Hillsborough; Heidi Werner Dawson, Director of Sales, Carolina Inn

Call to Order

Chair Anthony Carey called the meeting to order at 8:10 am. Chair Carey reported that Executive Director, Laurie Paolicelli would not be joining us this morning as she is attending the PRSA Travel and Tourism Conference in Philadelphia with Communications Director, Patty Griffin. He will co-lead the meeting today with Director of Sales, Marlene Barbera.

Introductions were given by all.

Welcome by Host

Chair Carey offered a history of the Carolina Club, whose membership is open to alumni and the general public.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Carey requested a motion to approve the May 15, 2019 minutes. Mark Bell so moved and Andrew Strickland seconded the motion. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Finance Report

The Board of County Commissioners approved the 2019-20 Operating Budget at the June 18, 2019 meeting and that budget, of course includes the budget of the Visitors Bureau. Budgeted revenues are increased 2% while the Arts Commission expenditures is seeing a 15% increase from Occupancy Tax collections. The Arts Commission is forming a non-profit arm that will be set up as a 501C3, or non-profit, so it can raise money for the support of its programs. We are under contract with Clean Design to promote tourism in Orange County for the budget year. The budget reflects an 11% increase in the county's Administrative Fee charged to the bureau. Commissioner Rich reported that there are individuals interested in buying the building that houses the bureau and the bureau would need to find new space. This could be in the next coming year. She also talked about the possibility of a partnership with the new UNC Visitor Center that will be located on the 100 block of E. Franklin St.

Guest Presentation

Anna Murphy, Expedia Market Manager, spoke to the board about her work with hotels from the Triangle to Fayetteville helping them understand how they can use Expedia's tools to sell their hotel rooms. She hopes that some of the information she will share will be helpful to the board in their fields on a day to day basis. Expedia is the place that many people turn to when searching flights and hotels, but they are also the parent company of such online services as Hotels.com, hotwire.com, orbitz.com and many other online travel search engines that make up Expedia Data. They

comprise 200 websites and hundreds of different languages. All generations of travelers are touching an Expedia data site. They cover hotels, cruises, airlines, and car rentals, VBO and Home and Away. They do not run Airbnb. The top origin markets, for RDU, by airfare are New York, Boston, Newark and Chicago. The fastest growing markets are Detroit, New Orleans and San Diego. Their stats show that 2018 wasn't a great year for hotels in the area, but ADR was up so the totals came out well. So far in 2019 there has been a growth in the market and that trend is expected to continue. ADR has been much higher in Chapel Hill in the last three months than Raleigh or Durham and yet people are still willing to stay in Chapel Hill hotels. A view of booking windows shows 18% book the same day, 19% book 1-3 days out, 14% is 4-7 days out which means that 14% of visitors can be impacted through tourism marketing before they make final decisions on where to stay. Statistics show Raleigh and Durham have a shorter time to make that impact while Orange County can tailor a visitor's stay more often. Guests are staying in hotels 1-3 days. 34% of all bookings are made on mobile devices, which includes tablets and 5% of bookings are made internationally. In summary, 2019 looks like a great year for hotels in our area compared to 2018. Chair Carey asked if Expedia could provide data on VBO and Home and Away in Orange County and Anna will send it if Expedia is able to extract those numbers.

Executive Directors Report

Anthony Carey reported that he is on an advisory group that is working with the Town of Chapel Hill to navigate the short-term rental explosion. He, Rosemary Waldorf and Manish Atma are partnering with The Chamber, and community organization CHALT to work with the town on this issue. He reminded the board that the Visitors Bureau is not taking a stance either way on this issue as its mission is to grow overnight stays in the county, not to dictate how it ebbs and flows. The Visitors Bureau has provided data to help all the groups get this right. Mayor Lavelle added that the NC General Assembly is probably going to address the short-term rental questions across the state. Hoteliers would like to see the same rules apply for all overnight lodging. The group Carey is a part of will speak at the town council meeting tonight. They will ask for the approval of an advisory committee to assist the town with the matter of short-term rentals.

New Business/Roundtable

Chair Carey acknowledged all for updates in their respective fields:

- Lydia Lavelle reported on the progress of the Carrboro Library Project. The Carrboro Board of Aldermen doesn't want to commit to building design until they have a final parking plan in place. Design has been on hold since the ArtsCenter dropped out earlier this year. They are presently working on achieving a parking balance. Penny Rich added that the ArtsCenter will announce the plans for their new building on June 20.
- Penny Rich shared that the BOCC approved a Climate Change Initiative as part of their 2019-20 Operating Budget approval on June 19. It was an addition to the Manager's Recommended Budget and passed 4 to 3. It is intended to reduce our carbon footprint. The first steps will be to help people weatherize their homes.
- Mark Bell reported that the interior of the Colonial Inn has been gutted by the developer and the back of the building has taken off and open. They have excavated the footprint of the new addition. The goal is to restore the old part of the building with the addition being detached. The end product will triple the rooms of the old building.
- Sarah DeGennaro reported that visitation in Hillsborough has increased with the arrival of the summer months. At the end of June the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough is sponsoring Picnic in the Park. On June 29 they are giving a restoration workshop at the Burwell School. Los Altos, the former food truck, has moved into a store front on King Street. UNC has been holding an archeological dig at the occoneechee village site that is visible from the River Walk. Ayr Mount and the Alliance will partner on October 13 to hold "Outlandish Hillsborough".

- Tanya Moore shared that UNC is holding two forums with candidates to be the University's next police chief. They plan to have that process completed this summer. UNC is working with the General Assembly to get the go ahead to sell alcohol at sporting events in hopes of curbing binge drinking before events.
- Tim Hoke congratulated the BOCC for taking this initiative on climate change. The Arts Commission will spend the summer reviewing the grants applications they have received. The new non-profit status the Arts Commission will pursue will make it possible for them to receive addition funding to build the arts in Orange County by creating a fundraising arm of the Arts Commission. Plein Air paint-out and wet paint sale will be held September 25-27 (Paint-Out) and conclude with an Exhibit & Sale at the Last Friday Art Walk in Hillsborough.
- Annette Stone shared that June is Pride Month and Carrboro has celebrated with several events. The freight train blues events were very well attended by a large number of people from other triangle communities. Carrboro held Latin X on Saturday, June 15 and the town is hopeful it will return next year. A close out party will be held at the farmers market on Wednesday, June 26. The town will be redoing the intersection of North Greensboro Street and Estes Drive Extension beginning in August. It would be best to avoid this intersection if possible during that construction.
- Kayla Dempsey reported that most of their staff is leaving for Indianapolis to attend the National Federation of State High Schools Conference. There will be workshops on facilities and navigating relationships with CVBs. Twenty-five new athletic directors and new schools will meet at the Friday Center in July. Football practice starts August 1.
- Heidi Werner Dawson reported that the staff of the Carolina Inn a receiving training during the month of July as their new sales systems come on line followed by the changeover of their reservations systems, all to be completed by the middle of September, all as a result of their transition to Hyatt. They will host a social media conference at the end of August.

Next Meeting: *Wednesday, August 21, 2019 at the Hyatt Place in Chapel Hill.*

Meeting Adjourned at 9:25 am.

Minutes reviewed by:

Laurie Padlicelli, Executive Director

Date

Minutes accepted by:

Anthony Carey, Chairman

Date