

For Approval September 18, 2019

**Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting  
August 21, 2019**

The Chapel/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at  
Hyatt Place Southern Village 3690 S. Columbia St, Chapel Hill, NC 27516

**Board Members Present:** Penny Rich, Lydia Lavelle, Shannan Campbell, Annette Stone, Andrew Strickland, David Brooks, Mark Sherburne, Anthony Carey, Mark Bell, Kayla Dempsey, Pam Hemminger, Tanya Moore, Matt Gladdek, Libbie Hough

**Not Present:** Katie Murray, Tim Hoke, Rosemary Waldorf, Jeff Strickler

**Staff Attendance:** Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera

**Also present:** Steve Brantley, Director of Orange County Economic Development; Sarah Paris, Alliance for Historic Hillsborough, DR Bryant, Southern Village Developer, Sam Vadgama, GM Residence Inn

### **Call to Order**

Chair Anthony Carey called the meeting to order at 8:05. He thanked the group for being back for a new year and asked for introductions by all. DR Bryant, developer with the Hyatt Hotel, welcomed group to the Hyatt.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chair Carey requested a motion to approve the June 19, 2019 minutes. Penny Rich so moved and David Brooks seconded the motion. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

### **Nomination Committee Report**

Mark Sherburne reviewed what board positions are currently open including an opening from the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Chamber of Commerce. Rosemary Waldorf is currently in position but will be vacating early. Sherburne asked that Dixon Pitt be considered as a nomination with ultimate approval by the Board of Orange County Commissioners. Dixon has a lot of experience with development and special events and serves with Bryan Properties and worked closely with Waldorf and DR Bryan. Another board opening is the Orange County hotelier seat currently held by Andrew Strickland who has left his Orange County hotelier position. Sam Vadgama of Residence Inn Chapel Hill is being recommended for consideration. The third opening is appointed by Town of Chapel Hill Economic Development. Annette Spring Council of Mama Dip's is the recommendation. She would bring Orange County hospitality heritage and a strong foodie/restaurateur background to the board. The fourth opening is Town of Chapel Hill appointed. Currently, Town Council member Racheal Schaeviz is on board but due to time conflict, would like Mayor Pam Hemminger to take the seat.

All candidates are currently in the application process.

Mayor Lavelle reminded that diversity on the board is important. Committee agreed. Chair Carey agreed.

Chair Carey made a motion to officially recommend to the commissioners the prospective board members for them to consider and approve. Mark Bell so moved Carey's motion. With all members in favor, the motion was approved.

### **Finance Report**

Commissioner Rich reported that occupancy tax collection was up 5% over last year. She thanked staff for ending the last fiscal year with a balanced budget. She reviewed the budget breakout for 2019-2020 and reminded that the majority of the budget is allocated to advertising and marketing; staff and then operations. She thanked the hotels and industry for an impressive June and July, typically a shoulder season but months that are now seeing growth.

## Executive Directors Report

Laurie Paolicelli led the board through a comprehensive tourism strategy the Visitors Bureau will implement in fiscal year 2019/20. The presentation included an overview of budget and expenditures, overriding goals, advertising, public relations, sales benchmarks and community engagement through events, and related partnership. See attached Strategic Plan. A question and answer session ensued. Lydia Lavelle asked that Orange County's occupancy tax contributions (highlighted on budget page) go into more detail to show that Carrboro and Hillsborough were included in those numbers.

Paolicelli agreed to modify page to show further explanation.

## Guest Presentation

Orange County Economic Development Director Steve Brantley shared what's new in Orange County's economic development queue. Swiss industrial equipment maker ABB plans to add more than 400 jobs in Orange County by consolidating its distribution and manufacturing hub near Buckhorn Road. Brantley said other projects are in the pipeline and he remains optimistic about the activity currently in place through his department. ED also has an advisory board of 10 members including Anthony Carey and previously Mark Sherburne, who also are board members for the Visitors Bureau. ED helps small businesses with the county's loan and grant programs. ED has had a busy year with more inquiries asking about which sites are open, buildings, funds and resources. More businesses are calling and business recruitment is positive. County is looking to improve our product with commercial office space, either new or renovations, new site for light industrial off Eubanks Road and Launch Program. Commissioner Rich stated these businesses are utilizing Durham Tech as well. Chair Carey said community colleges can help train people for the new jobs the new companies will bring in, and new trade jobs. This will help us connect with RTP. Mark Sherburne commented that this is good for weekday hotel business.

## Sales Report

Sales Director Marlene Barbera reviewed last year's numbers (see strategic plan, page 31). She also presented what is upcoming this fiscal year and tradeshow she will be attending.

- CONNECT Marketplace- Aug 2019. Just confirmed 45 one-on-one appointments with planners
- MPI Business Exchange Exhibitor Sept 2019
- Destination SE- Oct 2019
- IPEC. Jan 2020
- Rendezvous South. March 2020
- AENC- Winter 2020 and spring 2020 conference. Feb and May
- March Madness Venue showcase for UNC Planners. March 2020

She also shared some hotel staffing changes in the market; the GM for the Courtyard is now the GM at the AC Marriott. And that the previous GM at the AC Marriott, Andrew Strickland, is now back with Summit Hospitality. She also mentioned that the Franklin Hotel sold for \$20 million and will become a Graduate Hotel. They will remain as the Franklin Hotel, just not a Hilton property anymore, until they fully renovate in 2020 and convert to a Graduate Hotel. Also, the Sheraton Chapel Hill and the Courtyard Marriott have sold to Atma Hotel Group. The Sheraton will undergo a \$10-12 million-dollar renovation next year.

## New Business/ Roundtable

- Matt Gladdek shared that a new hotel/condo project is possibly going to be built new to the old town hall. 140 rooms. See related story for details. <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/counties/orange-county/article234218302.html>
- Mayor Hemminger shared that the CVS tower has been sold and will turn into an entrepreneurial space. The new owners are required to invest money into the community. The Carolina Ale house is being renovated and will bring 80 new employees to downtown. They are working on re-doing the parking situation behind the Courtyard. Other big projects right now are; Wegman's, Carraway Village and UNC Hospital Eastowne Drive project.



- Tanya Moore shared that there are no updates on when the UNC visitor center will open.
- Shannan Campbell reported that Hillsborough has their 1<sup>st</sup> mural. Tourism funds sponsored the project and they are looking to do another one. And looking at places now. The theatre project is moving forward. Events upcoming include: Outlandish, Hog Day, River Park Concert Series which brought 5-6k folks into town. The Chamber has events on Sunday in hopes to bring business into town Sun-Tue. David Brooks asked if Riverwalk is open to bikes. Shannan said that Ayr Mount owns that portion of Riverwalk and does not want bikes on that portion of the trail. Also that Orange County Speedway Trail now connects to Occoneechee Mountain trail and is about 2.14 miles long.
- Sarah Parris reported on the Outlandish event which is a weekend long event. They have secured grants and sponsorships to support event. This is a Scottish themed festival with a focus on Hillsborough which is featured in the series.
- Annette Stone shared that there have been several restaurants that have closed recently, but new ones are coming. The former Milltown restaurant now has an occupant and there are things happening at The Station, which won't be the same model. Coronato is now open. Also, everyone is trying to collaborate to promote the festivals. That there is always something going on in Carrboro.

**Next meeting:** *Wednesday, September 18, 2019 at The Residence Inn Chapel Hill.*

Meeting adjourned at 10:00am.

Minutes reviewed by:

Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Date

Minutes accepted by:

Anthony Carey, Chairman

Date