

For Approval February 20, 2019

MINUTES

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting January 16, 2018

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at
Extraordinary Ventures, 200 S. Elliott Rd., Chapel Hill 27514

Board Members Present: Kayla Dempsey, Lydia Lavelle, Anthony Carey, Chair, Tim Hoke, Jeff Stickler, Rosemary Waldorf, Annette Stone, Elinor Landess, Lee Storrow, Rachel Schaevitz, David Brooks, Libby Hough, Penny Rich, Mark Bell, Mark Sherburne, Matt Gladdick

Not Present: Andrew Strickland, Tanya Moore, Shannan Campbell

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

Also present: Joel Sheer, Sheer Associates, Inc.

Call to Order

Chair Anthony Carey called the meeting to order at 8:05 am.

Introductions were given by all.

Host Welcome

Extraordinary Ventures is experiencing a staff shift and they were not available to welcome the board and offer a tour. Chair Anthony gave the board background on the operations of the facility and their mission.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Carey requested a motion to approve the November 14, 2018 minutes. Mark Bell so moved and Penny Rich seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Chair Carey asked Matt Gladdick, the new Executive Director of the Downtown Partnership, to introduce himself. Mr. Gladdick stated that he lived in Chapel Hill while attending graduate school at UNC from 2008-2011 and has most recently worked for the City of Durham. He will be meeting with stakeholders to better understand the needs of the downtown community. They will look at what the town and county are already doing and decide the best uses for their resources.

Finance Report

Penny Rich reported that the budget is on target for this point in the fiscal year. The November occupancy tax was up 17% over last year. Chair Carey and Mark Sherburne both attributed this increase over November 2017 to the number of home footballs and basketball games in November 2018 plus there were several events held, such as the Black Alumni Reunion. The Visitors Bureau is a sponsor of the Black Alumni Reunion. Airbnb paid approximately \$8,000 in occupancy tax for the month of November 2018. The bureau ended their contract with FleishmanHillard as of December 1, 2018 as they found that working with an agency that was not local did not get the results they needed and at a higher price. The bureau will work with Clean Design through a 90 day contract until the end of February. In the meantime an RFP will go out and more interviews will be held in order to select our next agency. The new agency will start in March. The bureau is drawing down \$180,000 from available fund balance to put toward the advertising budget and promotions. Lydia Lavelle shared that a new LGBT affinity group has formed a UNC and suggested they may have meetings that we might sponsor in the future. Laurie Paolicelli agreed that that, like sponsorship of BAR, is aligned with our goals.

Guest Presentation

Chair Carey introduced Joel Sheer who has completed a Stakeholder Study at the request of the bureau. The interviews were conducted between November 15, 2018 and December 10th, 2018. These interviews were conducted on the telephone on a one-on-one basis to assure a more accurate measure of concerns and sentiments. Forty people were selected to participate in this study and seven did not participate. We intentionally sought key stakeholders who influence and are influenced by the Visitor's Bureau. These groups included: Orange County Commissioners (3), Chapel Hill Town Council (3), Hillsborough Commissioners (2), Town Mayors from within Orange County (3), Hotel Managers within Orange County (5), Economic Development Directors from the County and Towns (1), Downtown Partnerships and Alliances (1), Arts Community (1), Chamber of Commerce Directors (1), UNC Officials (2), Key Restaurant Owners and Groups (2), Key Citizens & Organizations (7), Local Media (2). The goals of this study were: To test and validate our assumptions with our stakeholders in a more structured manner; to seek opinions on the quality of the Visitors Bureau's outreach efforts, marketing, and positioning of our towns; to better understand the qualities people are looking for in their Visitors Bureau and to determine the extent it participates in these qualities; to inform the Bureau's Board of Directors on the role the Visitors Bureau serves in the community and where it can make the greatest difference moving forward.

The report containing responses to these questions is an attachment to these minutes and was shared with board members electronically.

The board felt that further study is necessary and Rosemary Waldorf made the following motion:

*Ask the staff of the Visitors Bureau to review Joel Sheer's findings as well as the SWOT analysis. Further, make a recommendation to the board on how to move forward with a long term strategic plan that addresses opportunities and concerns for the entire Orange County. Staff will bring a plan for next steps back to board. **Rosemary Waldorf made the motion and it was seconded by Mark Bell. The motion passed.***

Laurie Paolicelli suggested starting in the second part of this fiscal year and finishing with a presentation during the first part of the new fiscal year. This is an opportunity to look at the county as a whole. Raw data could be translated into a simple achievable plan presented to the community. Rosemary shared that it is important for our community leaders to know about us, but it is important for us to deliver that information in a well-reasoned, comprehensible manner that has some action steps to go along with it. Penny Rich suggested holding an event, as they do in Raleigh, and bring the county's visitors bureaus together and share information all at once, which would be a good way of getting our message out. Laurie shared that the Raleigh meeting looked at all of Wake County.

Executive Director's Report

Laurie Paolicelli shared the following updates with the board: The Visitors Bureau sponsored this year's Hog Day event for \$3,000 and the event never took place because of weather and their inability to find a suitable weekend to reschedule. The Hog Day committee would like sponsors to allow them to keep the money to either use for local charities they support or use it for future events and the bureau said no as we would like to use those funds to support another event this fiscal year in northern Orange County. The bureau will continue to ask for this refund. Laurie met with Aaron Nelson from the Chamber of Commerce and a group of hotel GMs who agreed that they would like the chamber to ask for regulations for Airbnb. They agreed these restrictions should not apply to local residents renting their home or part of their home, but rather developers who are renting out apartments or whole apartment buildings.

Sales Report

Marlene reported that next week she has arranged for a group of third party meeting planners to come for an overnight stay and a familiarity tour. Five planners, who were vetted through a survey about what kind of business they have, and come from at least 1.5 hours away will visit hotels and learn about what they offer. Some of these planners have hospital business coming up in the next year. She will be traveling to a tradeshow in February for independent meeting planners. The Carolina Club has offered to host this year's March Madness event and it will be an afternoon reception rather than lunch, as was the case most recently.

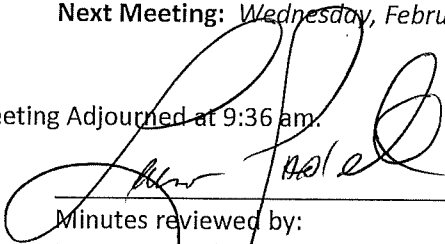
New Business/Roundtable

Chair Carey acknowledged all for updates in their respective fields:

- Rachel Schaevitz report that the Chapel Hill mayor has put together a taskforce comprised of downtown professionals and artists to meet monthly for six months to talk about what is needed to get folks downtown to shops, restaurants and hotels, and talk about what's missing and what can be done about it? The town is interested in offering a walking tour focusing on Chapel Hill's history. On March 12 a German Wanderbus will arrive in Chapel Hill for the day as part of a diplomatic tour..
- Lydia Lavelle, Mayor of Carrboro, along with Annette Stone reported that the Carrboro TDA is working on next year's budget. The 203 project is moving forward and the ArtsCenter has decided not to be part of the project. They continue to look at parking solutions during construction.
- David Brooks reported that the Hillsborough Chamber will hold their awards gala February 1 at Croasdale.
- Katie Murry reported that first lady Kristen Cooper was in Orange County last week with the NC Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources which is what the NC Arts Council falls under. They were in Hillsborough to kick-off the NC Year of Music. She has been tasked with working with stakeholders on the improvements needed at River Park. The Arts Commission is looking at the possibility of partnering with the Orange County Artists Guild and local hotels to promote packages in November during the guilds hugely popular two week Open Studio Tour.
- Kayla Austin reported that NCHAA Basketball championship will hold four games at the Smith Center on March 16. Laurie Paolicelli suggested inviting UNC's new football coach, Mack Brown, to a board meeting.

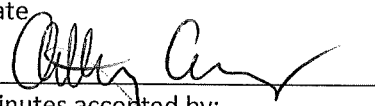
Next Meeting: *Wednesday, February 20, 2019 at The Franklin Hotel in Chapel Hill.*

Meeting Adjourned at 9:36 am.


Minutes reviewed by:

Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Date


Minutes accepted by:

Anthony Carey, Chairman

2/20/19
Date

