

For Approval June 21, 2017

Approved August 18, 2017

MINUTES

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting June 21, 2017

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at
Courtyard by Marriott, Chapel Hill, NC

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

Not Present: Allison Nichols-Clapper, Lee Storrow, Lee Pavao, Tim Hoke, Rosemary Waldorf-Chair, Anthony Carey

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

Also present: Lydia Chitwood-Intern, Town of Carrboro, Chris Blue-Chief of Police, Town of Chapel Hill, Eric Hallman, Executive Director, Piedmont Food and Agriculture Processing Center, Lisa Ganzermiller-General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott, Rob Stern, Sales Consultant, Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau

Call to Order

Acting-Chair Penny Rich called the meeting to order at 8:05 am.

Introductions were given by all.

Approval of Minutes

Acting-Chair Rich requested a motion to approve the May 24, 2017 minutes. Mark Bell so moved and Lydia Lavelle seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Host Introduction

Lisa Ganzermiller, General Manager of the Courtyard by Marriott, Chapel Hill thanked the board for allowing them to showcase their newly renovated hotel. During their renovation they added an additional boardroom with updated audiovisual equipment, updated all their guest rooms, additionally they updated their bistro breakfast and added a shuttle service. She will offer tours of the hotel at 9:30 to anyone who would like to stay.

Guest Presentations

Chapel Hill Police Chief Chris Blue joined the board to talk about gun laws in North Carolina. He shared that over time gun laws in our state have become more simplified. There is presently a bill in the legislature that addresses concealed carry permits that, if passed, will effectively get rid of those permits. It is becoming increasingly difficult at a local level to discern where guns can legally be carried. He shared some thoughts that he thought might be helpful to the board in their workplaces or businesses, including tourism destinations in Orange County.

- North Carolina is an open carry state and it is legal for people to do that as long as they are not violating any other law at that time
- The number of places you cannot openly carry a gun has been declining and places such as the town's Halloween celebration is now open to guns. You can now carry a weapon into bars and restaurants that serve alcohol
- A business owner can restrict customers from carrying a gun on the premises. If the person refuses to leave it is not a firearms law that is being broken, rather they could be charged with trespassing

- Penalties for violations of gun laws are very low. Most are misdemeanors. Repeated offenses can turn into felonies
- Two years ago the NC General Assembly passed legislation that makes it very difficult for municipalities to regulate where guns can be carried
- He encouraged everyone to invite him, or Carrboro's Police Chief, to speak with their staff about the best ways to handle these situations
- Guns are not permitted on athletic courts, at swimming pools and facilities used for athletic events. When unsure call 911 and ask that it be checked out

Mark Sherburne shared that the Carolina Inn asks guests to leave firearms in their cars and not bring them into the Inn. Chief Blue stated that on the UNC campus you can have a gun in a locked container which effectively means a glove box or trunk of your car. This was echoed by Aaron Bachenheimer in that the University wants to provide a safe environment for all its students while recognizing individual rights. Currently UNC housing contracts prohibit keeping a gun in a dorm room. Penny Rich asked, how do we as tourism professionals respond to inquiries from out of state guests about NC gun laws? He suggests posting a sign that you either allow firearms in your establishment or that you do not. Laurie Paolicelli recommended posting that information on the Visitors Bureau website.

The board also welcomed Eric Holeman from the Piedmont Food and Agriculture Processing Center. The center opened in 2010 as a vision of Orange, Durham, Chatham and Alamance counties to be a food incubator for food entrepreneurs. It occupies 10,000 sq. ft. of space in the repurposed Orange Industries building. The building and equipment were paid for from \$1.3 million in grants. They have 50 clients from as far away as Forsyth County and Fayetteville. While they are providing services to some caterers and food trucks their main focus is manufacturers. The value of the product produced last year was \$2.6 million, with 70-80 jobs being created. They have recently received a \$145,000 grant to expand their equipment and reach out to more growers. They are helping local residents with a passion for food get their products in stores. They are open 24/7 and could accommodate another 25 clients.

Executive Director's Report

Laurie Paolicelli thanked the board for a very productive fiscal year as it comes to an end. We have seen new hotels open as well as restaurants. There have been additions of tourism focused staff. Mark Sherburne added that we continue to struggle to increase weekday business and that while June is usually a strong month, so far this year that has not been the case. Our market continues to absorb the new Hyatt Place while new hotels open on our borders. Ms. Paolicelli shared that 10,000 square feet of space is being added in Carrboro through the building of the new Hilton Garden Inn adjacent to the Hampton Inn. Visitors Bureau and Hillsborough Town Staff met recently to talk about how they can work together. We are looking at ways we can use social media to give the towns we serve the accolades they deserve. As is required by state statute every five years, we must go out for bid for a contract as large as our ad agency contract. We issued a RFP and received seventeen proposals and our current agency, Clean Design was not one of them, as they feel they have been bidding for the last five years and have not ask for a rate increase in that time. The sub-committee of the board will receive presentations from three agencies (BCF, Silverback and Dana Communications) on August 7. At the moment we do not have a contract with an agency but will continue to work with Clean Design on a per project basis. Laurie announced that Lee Pavao's term on the board has expired and since he was Vice-Chair we need to elect a new Vice-Chair. She recommended Jeff Stickler and a motion was made by George Cianciolo, seconded by Mark Sherburne. The board voted unanimously to approve Jeff Stickler as the board's new Vice-Chair.

Finance Report

Finance Chair, Penny Rich reported that the Visitors Bureau budget for the upcoming fiscal year is balanced. We did realize some unbudgeted revenues for 2016-17 and those will go into the fund balance. We depleted last year's fund balance with a LGBT campaign, NATJA and the Summer 2017 commercial in the triangle and Charlotte. The 2017-18 budget includes a 5% increase in revenue. Laurie Paolicelli brought the board up to date on our membership in the local chambers of commerce. The Orange County Board of County Commissioners is looking at the parameters of county departments relationships with the chambers. For the first time last year the Visitors Bureau paid to be a member of both county chambers rather than our historical approach of paying by event. At the end of this fiscal year she has let both chambers know that she does not feel the Bureau gets anything more from a paid membership than we do from incremental purchases. Penny Rich shared that the BOCC voted on June 20 to have one membership as an umbrella for the entire county government with those dues housed in Economic Development. That said, the Visitors Bureau is now a member of both the Chapel Hill Carrboro Chamber of Commerce and the Hillsborough Orange County Chamber of Commerce as part of the Orange County Government's membership. Ms. Paolicelli thanked George Cianciolo for his assistance once again in working with the Town of Chapel Hill, which is contributing at least \$200,000 to the Visitors Bureau Operating Budget from their occupancy tax revenues. The Orange County Manager has asked the towns of Carrboro and Hillsborough to contribute from their occupancy tax revenues as well.

Sales Consultant Report

Rob Stern, Visitors Bureau Sales Consultant reported on a recent meeting he and Ms. Paolicelli attended with the UNC Alumni Association. He stated that some of the best stewards of Chapel Hill and Orange County are UNC Alumni and their ability to know who we are. In addition to the traditional *Alumni Review*, and its digital counterpart, we will be advertising in the *Our Blue Newsletter* which comes out the first Tuesday of each month, which reaches 158,000 people and experiences twice the open rate of the average online newsletter. He wants to remind alumni that Chapel Hill is not only a place to return to for homecoming and alumni events, but also a place to bring associations they may belong to for training, seminars, small meeting and conferences. There will be an emphasis on reaching out in key locations to active alumni groups in New York, Boston, Chicago and Washington and give them the chance to bring some business back.

Sales Report

Marlene Barbera reported that the Bureau is placing mannequins dressed by local retailers in the Visitors Center to promote shopping locally.

New Business/Roundtable

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

Shannan Campbell reported on the sidewalk closing happening in Hillsborough to widen Churton St. sidewalks for more outdoor dining and on street shopping. They hope to have this completed by October or November. The Tar Wheels Ride, which attracts about 1,000 cyclists is coming up in July. The Riverwalk is closed periodically when the Eno floods due to heavy rain. The town will keep residents updated via their website about conditions. The Mayor and two Commissioners seats are up for election this fall.

Meg McGurk reported that Target is scheduled to open July 15. Carolina Square is 75% leased out on apartments and retail but not office space. People will start moving into the apartments when Target opens on a staggered basis, with all moved in by the end of August. She has learned that all the graphics for Google around the world are done from their offices across Franklin St. from Carolina Square.

Jeff Strickler reported that a new perioperative tower will be built as an addition to UNC Health Care in Hillsborough with construction beginning in 2021. Health care is moving more toward population based care rather than fee for service care. They house all lower joint replacement surgeries at the Hillsborough campus and draw those patients from all over the state.

Katie Murray shared the national results of the Arts & Economic Prosperity Survey (AEPS), showing the arts are a \$166 billion industry, providing 4.6 million full-time jobs and generating \$25 billion for local, state and federal governments.

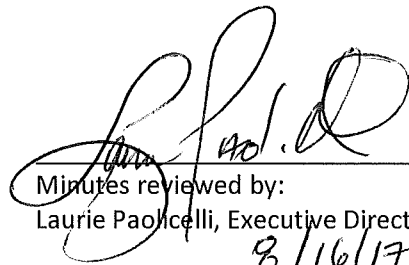
George Cianciolo shared that the Town of Chapel Hill has been removing trees downtown as they have discovered they are dying from the inside and in danger of injuring people on the street.

Lydia Lavelle spoke about the new building that is going to be at 203 S. Greensboro St. The Orange County Branch Library will be on the Main floor. Town offices and a possible partnership with the Arts Center would occupy the floors above it. The Carrboro Board of Alderman has had the opportunity to view a concept plan. The presentation of the plan to the board is posted on Carrboro's website.

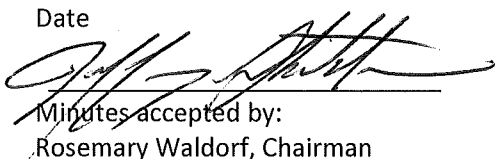
Steve Brantley reported that he is working with Hillsborough and a small woodworking company. He is currently hosting the fourth Asian company to visit Orange County recently as they view sites to move operations to NC.

We will meet next month at the YouthWorx in Carrboro.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:30 am.



Minutes reviewed by:
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director
8/16/17

Date


Minutes accepted by:
Rosemary Waldorf, Chairman
8/16/17
Date