

Approved June 20, 2018

## **MINUTES**

### **Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting May 16, 2018**

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at  
Aloft Chapel Hill

**Board Members Present:** Kayla Dempsey, Penny Rich, Lydia Lavelle, Annette Lafferty, Anthony Carey-Chair, David Brooks, Rachel Schaevitz, Tim Hoke, Rosemary Waldorf-Vice Chair, Mark Sherburne, Shannan Campbell, Aaron Bachenheimer, Mark Bell

**Not Present:** Jeffrey Strickler, Andrew Strickland, Libby Hough, Anthony Carey, Lee Storrow

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

**Also present:** Matt See and Kristen Bilger, FleishmanHillard; Rachel Heggen, Communications Director, Town of Carrboro; Tom Ferrell, General Manager and Katy Walsh, Director of Sales, Aloft Chapel Hill

#### **Call to Order**

In Anthony Carey's absence, Penny Rich called the meeting to order at 8:06 am.

Introductions were given by all.

#### **Host Welcome**

Tom Ferrell, General Manager of the Aloft Chapel Hill welcomed the board to the Aloft with the assistance of Katy Walsh, Sales Director.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Penny Rich requested a motion to approve the April 25, 2018 minutes. Rosemary Waldorf so moved and Mark Sherburne seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

#### **Finance Report**

Finance Chair Penny Rich reported that the Board of County Commissioners is taking resident comments on the Manager's Recommended 2018-19 budget and she does not anticipate many changes being made at this point. Laurie Paolicelli will attend the June 7 budget work session to answer any questions the board may have regarding the Visitors Bureau budget request. This year's budget request will spend down additional fund balance over recent budgets with those funds going towards promoting new hotel inventory. Board members will meet over the summer to identify a person from UNC to assume the seat on the board now filled by Aaron Bachenheimer as he rotates off the board in December 2018.

#### **Guest Speaker Report**

The board received an update from the Visitors Bureau ad agency, FleishmanHillard. Matt See and Kristen Bilger presented on behalf of the agency. In understanding online reviews (i.e. yelp) we know 68% of consumers will read four or more reviews before they can trust a business, and 95% of survey respondents have shared a bad experience with a brand versus 87% who have shared a good one. Travelers are four times more likely to select a hotel with higher review scores when prices are the same. They held a workshop the day before this meeting and invited businesses in Orange County to participate to learn how to help themselves with online reviewing sites like yelp. They emphasized the importance of being responsive to those reviews whether they are negative or positive. This is a service they would like

to continue to offer to Orange County businesses and will do this again, possibly in the fall. Paid Social included the following details: Campaign launched on March 24, terms on tourism and activities are driving to clicks, the campaign is above benchmarks of PPC and CPC, specific ad copy relating to the keywords is driving the high CTR and making the ads relevant to searchers, the campaign drove a mix of clicks from people in Chapel Hill as well as the surrounding areas. They are following key words that work well. *(Pay-per-click (PPC), also known as cost per click (CPC), is an internet advertising model used to direct traffic to websites, in which an advertiser pays a publisher (typically a website owner or a network of websites) when the ad is clicked.* Next steps will include: incorporating more wedding keywords to drive traffic from Chapel Hill searches, expanding reach of meetings and weddings search words and continuing to test and monitor ads to ensure relevancy for ad delivery. They have also been focusing on more video content such as Facebook Live and Instagram stories. A priority of their work is going to be producing video and fresh photography in addition to rerunning the very successful, "You Just Have to" 2017 TV spot. Facebook Live should draw 20 to 30 thousands views. Looking ahead to 2019 they will look at the creative, what is Chapel Hill and Orange County's tourism brand and how to we refresh that? In the 2019 fiscal year they will add display ads including display banners that follow people around on the internet. They will continue with Cvent (Convention Event platform) to bring in meetings.

### **Executive Directors Report**

Laurie Paolicelli feels that our area is at a pivotal turning point and she would like to see FleishmanHillard capture that. There is an inherent part of branding that is concerned with positioning, and it is different from their competitor's. What is our positioning since we are not the village anymore? She recommends using fund balance to do some research into who Orange County is today. Who are we and how are we positioning ourselves? She is concerned that our Visitors Center numbers are down. When people arrive on Franklin St. they already know where they are going so the current location does not produce incremental new visitors. She would like to work with Steve Brantley, Travis Myren and Commissioners to examine possibilities at interstate exits. Carraway Village looks like an ideal position for a Visitors Center. Mark Shore, Director of Marketing for VisitNC, will join us next month to share how they are positioning North Carolina Next. They have just undergone a complete rebranding focusing on photography and people of color. Mark Sherburne reported that everyone did great numbers during graduation weekend, with business being steady. Shannan Campbell shared that the Hillsborough tourism board is dipping into their fund balance to offer more support to the Hillsborough History Museum, which is a non-profit and is working on a new strategic plan. They have been actively fund raising and will host some adult evenings on special topics.

### **Sales Report**

Marlene reported that the bureau will launch a micro site for UNC Health Care to target their visitors and be their first stop for information. The site will have a direct booking tool to take guests directly to their hospital rates. The bureaus restaurant map will be on the site and users will be able to see what is around them such as grocery and drug stores. This will target a different type of traveler. This will give visitors another avenue to book rooms. UNC Health Care does not want clutter at their patient information desks and any change with that going forward will start at the Hillsborough hospital. She is currently working on a project with the Association of University Museums. If this works out the association meeting would happen here during the third week in June 2019. Lydia Lavelle suggested get the art museum at NCCU involved.

## New Business/Roundtable

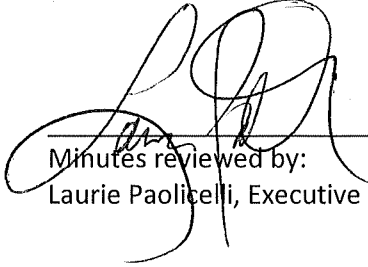
Acting Chair Rich acknowledged all for updates in their respective fields:

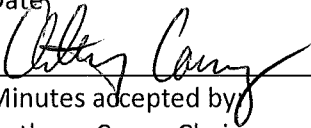
- Rosemary Waldorf reported that she accompanied Patty Griffin, Visitors Bureau Communications Director to the NC Women's Prison in Raleigh to meet with the inmates who answer the telephone in their call center when prospective visitors call VisitNC. Eighteen women, who have been well trained and are very knowledgeable, work in the call center.
- Shannan Campbell shared that they have started their Last Friday's and attendance has been good. The Tourism Board continues to support the Burwell School and run the Visitors Center. They are increasing the Visitors Center event marketing this year by \$5,000 and will add photo op areas to the Visitors Center property and rocking chairs to the front porch as well as improving the gardens. The Tourism Development Authority will continue to work on additional collateral materials. They are redesigning their map and will print soon and are working on a small relocation guide as well as updating their walking tour map. They will also produce a rack card to advertise their hotels. A new bar has opened on King Street and the Village Diner has reopened. A new steak and oyster restaurant will open on Hwy. 70 in the fall. Food and Beverage tax collections have increased.
- Rachel Schaevitz reported that the town council has just received the results from the Community Satisfaction Survey which revealed the quality of life and overall attractiveness of Chapel Hill Carrboro is well above the national average. These report results are available on the town's website <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/town-hall/news-events/current-issues/community-survey> Chapel Hill Economic Development has written a paragraph that explains where the town is going in the future. A new hotel may be approved later in May at 1740/1742 Fordham Blvd. and is planned to open in 2020. The Future Land Use Map was published last week and is part of the process to rewrite the land use ordinance. The website for the FLUM is [Chartingourfuture.info](http://Chartingourfuture.info).
- Tim Hoke shared that the Arts Commission has just enjoyed their Annual Gala and fundraiser. They are presently in the arts grants process.
- Meg McGurk reported that 8 new businesses have opened downtown in the last two months, 6 businesses are coming or going through fantastic changes, 13 special events are happening in downtown this summer. The downtown ambassadors program will kick-off in June with 15 ambassadors on the streets to welcome visitors. 300 public parking spaces have been added in the last month.
- David Brooks reported that the ribbon cutting at the King Street Bar is tomorrow, May 17 and May 18 is the date for the ribbon cutting at the new Dodge dealership in Hillsborough. The Hillsborough Chamber is hosting a local affairs breakfast May 29 in which there will be discussion about Waterstone and Settlers Ridge.
- Aaron Bachenheimer shared that spring sports are wrapping up at UNC and summer camps will begin soon.
- Kayla Dempsey shared that Spring High School sports are holding their championships over the next two weeks.
- Penny Rich reported that the county is redoing their website and that it will be up and running in August. The BOCC is in the middle of the budget process.
- Annette Lafferty reported that the Carrboro TDA will hold a work session later this week to discuss content and will build a designated website separate from the town's website. The TDA has also awarded three arts internships. South Greensboro St. will be closed from June 11 through the middle of August so they will be working with downtown businesses to let customers know they are still open and will host a block party on June 17 to emphasis how wonderful it is to be downtown. They will hold the July 4<sup>th</sup> and peoples parade as in years past. The Latino Festival will be held August 26<sup>th</sup>. Freight Train Blues will wrap up this Friday evening May 18.
- Steve Brantley reported that the county is updating their Comprehensive Economic Report and will meet with debt writing agencies next week. UNC Health Care in Chapel Hill is adding a six story surgical campus and the

Hillsborough campus is adding a bed tower that may double the number of employees there. UNC Health Care will also redevelop the East Town office park area of Chapel Hill.

We will meet next month at The Carolina Inn, 211 Pittsboro St., Chapel Hill

Meeting Adjourned at 9:48 am.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Minutes reviewed by:  
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Date  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Minutes accepted by  
Anthony Carey, Chairman

6/20/18  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date