

Approved June 21, 2017

MINUTES
Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting
May 24, 2017

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at
Hyatt Place, Chapel Hill/Southern Village

Board Members Present: Tim Hoke, Rosemary Waldorf-Chair, Kayla Austin, Aaron Bachenheimer, Meg McGurk, Penny Rich, Lydia Lavelle, Jeffery Strickler, Lee Storrow, Lee Pavao, Mark Bell, Mark Sherburne, Anthony Carey

Not Present: Allison Nichols-Clapper, George Cianciolo, Andrew Strickland, Shannan Campbell, Annette Lafferty,

Staff attendance: Marlene Barbera, Allison Chambers, Patty Griffin, Katie Murray

Also present: DR Bryan, Developer; Mark Nelson, Director of Marketing and Communications, Carolina Performing Arts; Kim Tesoro, CEO Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce

Call to Order

Chair Rosemary Waldorf called the meeting to order at 8:14 am.

Introductions were given by all.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Waldorf requested a motion to approve the April 19, 2017 minutes. Lee Pavao so moved and Lydia Lavelle seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Host Introduction

Chair Rosemary extended welcome to all from the Hyatt Place and introduced D.R. Bryan, Developer and owner of the recently opened Hyatt Place. He shared that when the plans for a mix use development were approved by the town council in 1993 that they would allow a hotel on site, one with only 30 rooms. Twenty-seven years later that sentiment has changed making it possible for this hotel to be built. He explained that the hotel is accessible to Hwy. 15-501 in the front and the Southern Village community on the back. He introduced Jody Rumble, General Manager and Kristi Kaas, Director of Sales. Kristi shared that the hotel has 110 rooms and she will be directing a tour after the meeting. Jody Rumble, who has had extensive Hyatt experience in the Midwest, thanked the board for their support during the development of the hotel.

Guest Presentation

Mark Nelson of Carolina Performing Arts joined the meeting to share information about some of the exciting new performances that will be coming to the Current Artspace + Studio that will be part of the new Carolina Square opening in the summer of 2017. **Current – powered by Carolina Performing Arts is coming to Carolina Square in 2018.** Experiences offered during their first season will include Paul Drescher Ensemble's musical installation *Sound Maze*, GOB Squad in *Revolution Now!*, 600 Highwaymen as they invite you in to *The Fever* to examine the distance between you and your neighbor, and the space between you and a stranger. Reach out and speak up in community conversations with Tosi Reagon and Robin Frohardt. With children, explore *FARFALLE* by Comopagnia Tpo. Their season will kick-off on February 2, 2018 and continue through May 6, 2018. All of the activity at Current is about you, we, us, now – the experiences that compel our community to think, act, and share every day. For more information visit

CURRENTUNC.ORG. Katie Murray asked Mr. Nelson if the Studio portion of the space would be available for use by local artists, he responded that it could be, possibly a gallery or community space in the heart of downtown.

Finance Report

Finance Chair, Penny Rich reported that the Orange County Board of County Commissioners received the Manager's recommended budget on May 2, 2017. The Board of County Commissioners will hold two budget public hearings and four budget work sessions on their way to approving the budget on June 20, 2017. The Visitors Bureau has proposed a \$1.5 million budget for fiscal year 2017-18. Of that amount \$500,000 is for advertising which includes website, print and video advertising, \$150,000 is for the Arts Commission, \$200,000 for sponsorships and partnerships. The Visitors Bureau has a staff of six. The executive committee of the Visitors Bureau Advisory Board met to review RFPs received from ad agencies and will interview four of those agencies at a meeting scheduled for August. She will report back to the board at our June 21, 2017 about the budget, as it will have been approved at that time.

Sales Report

Chair Waldorf heaped glowing praise on the Visitors Bureau Staff for their efforts with the North American Travel Journals Association Conference held in Orange County May 16 – 18, 2017. Marlene Barbera who brought the conference to Orange County reported that NATJA called the conference a "roaring success" and stated that it is one of the best they have had. She thanked the board for their help and support throughout the conference. She asked for impressions from those that attended events: Aaron Bachenheimer commented on the wonderful Barn at Valhalla; Lee Storrow shared that the art work that was displayed was great and offered a chance for local artists to showcase their talents. Marlene expressed her appreciation to Katie Murray, Arts Counsel Director, for her wonderful work in collecting a mix of art and artists to participate in the opening night event at the Barn at Valhalla. She shared that the participants reported feeling a sense of community throughout the conference as they toured around the county. Marlene further reported that everyone did the job they were asked to do exceeding well. As of Friday, May 19 the conference had generated eleven million impressions on twitter. She hopes to invite all our partners to a screening of the NATJA video so they can see all the pieces of the event. The Visitors Bureau will give a \$500 prize for what we see as the best published article within the first year following the conference. Marlene pointed out that articles by conference attendees are still coming out two years after that conference ended. She has received a huge amount of positive feedback. Patty Griffin shared information about the post-tour she hosted for eight writers in Chapel Hill from May 19-21 following the conference. The Hyatt Place hosted the writers for those nights and the Sienna hosted them for dinner. DR Bryan, of the Hyatt Place hosted the group for dinner on May 20, 2017 in Southern Village.

New Business/Roundtable

Chair Waldorf acknowledged all for updates in their respective fields:

Katie Murray reported that the Arts Council will host two meet and greets in the county to bring the creative community together prior to the annual grants cycle. The grant application process has begun and more applications have been received than in the past. There will be an unveiling for a new arts piece at Orange County Animal Services on June 29, 2017.

Meg McGurk reported that the fully built guestrooms of the AC Marriott are being installed. The process is drawing a lot of attention from viewers on Rosemary St. It will only take fourteen days to place all the rooms. The Downtown Partnership is doing an economic impact study of National Championships with good baselines to work with having not won in 2016, and then winning in 2017. The study should be complete in September and will include a look at how it affects our community the rest of the year.

Mark Sherburne shared that 2017 Commencement Weekend was very successful with thousands of people passing through the Carolina Inn during the three day weekend. They are sold out for Commencement 2018. Fridays on the Front Porch has begun with some new bands this year. As a part of the university, they too are in the middle of budget season.

Kayla Austin reported from the NCHSAA that state sports championships are in full swing. Track and Field, Tennis and Lacrosse. Soccer, with Carrboro High in the finals, baseball and softball are coming up. They have just signed a contract with Duke for Wallace Wade Stadium to host some of the football playoffs in the fall so that all game will be at Wake Forest, Duke, State or UNC next year.

Lydia Lavelle reported that Carrboro is working on passing their budget while keeping an eye on the General Assembly to see what they do and how it may impact them. Carrboro is in the midst of Bike Month which will include Bike Ride with the Mayor which will leave from the Carrboro Town Hall at 8:30 am on Wednesday, May 31, 2107. Starting May 26, for four Friday nights, the town will host the Freight Train Blues event.

Lee Storrow reported that his Old Town Hall committee had their last meeting on May 22, 2017 and will present their report to the Chapel Hill Town Council on June 26, 2017. The charge to this committee was to look at: does it work to have a visitor's center and a community history center/historic cultural hub in the Old Town Hall. The general consciences is that they think it works but that there are many limitations. When asking for public comment on the use of the space it has become apparent that using the space for the arts is of great interest. Penny Rich interjected that the space was only 900 square feet and that it has been renovated and repurposed several times. The town is not interested in selling the property. He recommended that the board meet to decide how it feels about this possible move and Chair Waldorf agreed. Chair Waldorf also wondered why we would limit our discussion to that one building.

Anthony Carey also stated that Commencement weekend was a great success and he was happy to see that new hotel rooms in the County did not water down their occupancy levels. He is looking forward to being back on the board and working with other General Managers to keep the Chapel Hill brand and rate integrity strong.

Aaron Bachenheimer pointed out that graduation has just passed and there are still lots of people in town and that camps and orientation will begin very soon. The University is wrapping up this fiscal year and planning for the next.

Tim Hoke reported that the Carolina Inn has a call out for art that they are promoting throughout the state.

Mark Bell noted that they are in the midst of receiving grants requests in the town of Hillsborough for tourism dollars. Last Fridays has begun, their July 4th celebration will be on Sunday, July 2nd this year. Construction on Churton St. will continue throughout the summer.

Jeff Strickler shared that The Alliance for Historic Hillsborough has met to review the past year and plan the one coming up. The UNC Health Care hospital will be adding a perioperative tower with ground breaking taking place in the next two years. It will be a nine story building housing all of their operating rooms.

Kim Tesoro with the Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Hillsborough Tourism Board, reported on the upgrades to Churton St.

Chair Waldorf gave each board member a framed print entitled *Heart of Orange County* by textile artist Elaine O'Neal. The gift was a thank you from the Orange County Board of County Commissions for their volunteer service.

We will meet next month at the Courtyard by Marriott in Chapel Hill.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:17 am.

Minutes reviewed by:
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Date

Minutes accepted by:
Rosemary Waldorf, Chairman

Date