

Approved January 18, 2023

For Approval January 18, 2023

**Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau
In Person Board of Directors Meeting
November 16, 2022**

Board Members Present: Mayor Damon Seils filling in for Chair Mark Bell, Spring Council, Manish Atma, Karen DeHart, Jon Hartman-Brown, Matt Gladdek, Sharon Hill, Tanya Moore, Beverly Payne, Karen Stegman, Lisa Ganzzermiller, and Grace Holtkamp

Not Present: Mark Bell, Earl McKee, Lili Engelhardt, Heidi Werner, and Katie Murray with Orange County Arts Commission

Staff Attendance: Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Mary Salvarezza

Also in attendance: Carrie Currie, Director of Alliance for Historic Hillsborough

Call to Order

Mayor Seils called the meeting to order at 8:16 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Seils requested a motion to approve the October 19, 2022 minutes. Spring Council so moved and Sharon Hill seconded the motion. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted

Introductions

Tourism and Travel Updates, Executive Director

- We are seeing a positive trend in demand for lodging, largely due to rate. Visitors Bureau is looking at new providers of short term rental information. AirDNA is “scraping data” not providing accurate information on long term renters versus visitors. Working on a new vendor to get accurate numbers. To this point, Manish updated board on Chapel Hill’s short term rental regulations- The Town Council is regulating short term rentals and requiring permitting. Some people need to go thru the permitting and registration process in a couple of zones so state taxes will be paid. Hard to police. Short Term Rental (STR) supply is down, many were sold. Manish commented that he is supportive of accurate data with new company.
- Paolicelli attended a state Tourism Conference and one of the topics of conversation is how the occupancy tax being diverted to other areas in many counties, with [Currituck County currently in litigation](#) with the NC Travel and Tourism Coalition.
- Tourism business is coming back to Orange County communities powerfully on weekends and in the leisure sectors (football, basketball, arts, and weddings). We are still struggling with midweek demand from business travel and conference travel.
- The Visitors Bureau’s marketing is focused on this area.

Guest Speaker: Jessica Herrschaft, CLEAN Design, Inc.

CLEAN Design, Inc. Presentation

- The tourism leisure campaign runs thru June 2023. This campaign will be updated to include restaurants, live music, lighted businesses and activities in OC
- Meetings campaign runs thru the end of 2022 with plans to extend through 1st and 2nd quarter 2023. DC and Atlanta will be continued in second flight of ads. After group discussion, Bureau will look to adding these two key mid-Atlantic markets.
- WRAL's coverage on Bureau's new BIPOC businesses received 700 views.
www.explorediversitync.com
- Matt Gladdek commented on changing Twitter platform: "Before Twitter implosion we all had seen better results engaging the younger crowd and local audiences."
- All agreed that we will continue to monitor new ownership of Twitter and how it impacts our usage of this platform.

Jessica: never focused on Twitter, always done better with Facebook and Instagram

PowerPoint presentation link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KTZsGqrzSjK4iFtyQ6wVCwK80Qatn_UC/view?usp=sharing

Grace Holtkamp, Merry Hill Farms, representing Hillsborough Chamber of Commerce

- Merry Hill Farm has been growing Hemp for the last five years
- Merry Hill Hemp Farm's products are sold online to customers all over the US
- Grace explained how hemp is produced and distributed. USDA Regulations, licensing
- Hemp has shown health benefits such as helping with joint pain, inflammation and anxiety. Hemp can also be enjoyed through smoking, in food or beverages or as topical skin treatments.
- The protection of the crops is really important so safety measures are in place.
- The community was invited to tour the farm to understand what growing hemp entails, including picking your own

Grace also shared samples of their popular products

Laurie suggested a BOD field trip to visit Merry Hill Farms in the future

<https://www.merryhillhemp.com/buy.html>

Marlene Barbera

- The Bureau's MixnMingle roll out was on Nov 3 at The Sheraton, 14 venues participated, Colonial Inn and Siena hotels didn't participate. Sent surveys to attendees and venues representatives
- The attendance dropped from original invitees but had a very successful event
- Many planners enjoyed the event and touring the Sheraton space for consideration of future events

New Business

Damon Seils

- Thank you Grace Holtkamp for getting the meeting started.
- Any questions for Merry Hill Farms, please contact Grace directly
- Mayor Seils spoke with Asheville's mayor, at the recent Intercity Visit. In terms of tourism, that town is spending more funds on the product development needed in Asheville instead of marketing right now because during COVID, Buncombe County saw record breaking demand for tourism due to the outdoors and "safe breathing" mentality of fearful tourists.

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Tanya Moore

- Winter ceremony, December 11 at 2pm in the Smith Center, the speaker will be Daniel Wallace, J. Ross MacDonald Distinguished Professor of English
- Spring ceremony will be on May 14, 2023 9am in Kenan Stadium, speaker TBD Commencement will be moved to Saturdays in 2024. This is due to the continuing feedback that Mother's Day conflicts with many things, including the ability to bring speakers to Chapel Hill.

Matt Gladdek

- Early 2023 Rosemary St. Hotel will break ground.
- Office space on 137 East Franklin will be ready in January 2023
- Henderson & Rosemary, mixed used space will be ready to break ground after September 2023
- 140 apartment homes will be built at the corner of Columbia and Rosemary if approved by council
- Longfellow Development purchased 306 Rosemary St and surrounding buildings and will be developed as wet lab space in the next two years
- Laurie asked: "From a tourism perspective: what happened to the old Chapel Hill, how do we put out a positive message about growth while honoring the past? How to be part of the change?"
- Matt: Our work on Franklin Street continues to be based on smart land use planning and a need to meet the demands of the future.

Jon Hartman Black

- Old CVS lot approved for a three-story office/retail space.
- Changed some streets to one way
- New bookstore coming next month in Carr Mill, [Golden Fig Books](#).
- Construction underway on the 203 Project.
- Work continues on holiday and 2023 event planning.

Beverly Payne

- The Orange County Historical Museum in partnership the Chapel Hill Historical Society will present 'Everything you should have learned in HS about the Declaration of Independence', November 20 at 3pm, at the CH Public Library.
- The Holiday parade is planned; and many holiday events will take place in Hillsborough.
- Bev is happy that the Oconeechee Village Replica Site is seeing interest among Hillsborough visitors and special groups.
<https://visithillsboroughnc.com/things-to-do/replicavillage/>

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Laurie Paolicelli

Paolicelli provided an overview of what tourism information she gathered during her October trip to Asheville with 80 local community members:

- Asheville Convention and VB, budget is \$40 million. Fund balance is \$40 million.
- They are in a position where they see tourism push back. That city council will divert some of the fund dollars toward infrastructure and product development, looking at what they will need in the next 10-20 years.
- TDA requirement is 2/3 marketing and 1/3 infrastructure. They are flipping this. Investing in trails, parks, revitalizing areas
- Visitors Bureau and Asheville Chamber of Commerce are working together and using funds to support economic development. One example of their partnership revolves around the Visitors Bureau placing ads in commercial sectors where economic development leaders are scouting, such as Bio-Tech, light manufacturing, Tech.
- During Covid-19, the demand in the mountains was off the charts. Charlotte, Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Durham suffered considerable due to the more "land locked" position. The beaches and mountains saw a boom.
- Our fund balance is growing which will enable us to have a more aggressive advertising campaign

Karen Stegman

- Council hired consultant from Toronto, working on how to grow the town smartly.
- Affordable housing is a priority
- Townhomes will be built on Homestead Road; property on Legion Road will be developed. More details will be available after the Council's December meeting.
- Building townhomes for young professionals.

Next meeting: *Wednesday, January 18, 2023, at The Sheraton Chapel Hill*

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 a.m.