

For Approval November 16, 2022

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**Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau  
In Person Board of Directors Meeting  
October 19, 2022**

**Board Members Present:** Mark Bell - Chair, Shannan Campbell, Spring Council, Heidi Werner Dawson, Lili Engelhardt, Jon Hartman-Brown, Karen DeHart, Matt Gladdek, Sharon Hill, Tanya Moore, Beverly Payne, Damon Seils

**Not Present:** Manish Atma, Lisa Ganzzermiller, Grace Holtkamp, Earl McKee, and Karen Stegman

**Staff Attendance:** Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Susan Rice, Mary Salvarezza, Katie Murray

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

### Call to Order

Chair Mark Bell called the meeting to order at 8:12 a.m.

### Approval of Minutes

Chair Mark Bell requested a motion to approve the September 21, 2022 minutes. Damon Seils 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 recovery, the good news is that revenues/collections are at an all-time high. Most of the recovery shows on the revenue side more than occupancy side
- Part of the challenge is we are not seeing major conferences or business travel due to higher rates, room blocks and residual effects of Covid19 (large groups still losing attendance due to Covid19 fears)
- Some companies are holding back business travel
- Our reports show we have already exceeded revenues based on our initial forecast
- From a tourism offering standpoint, Monday's are a challenge because so many Orange County businesses are closed that day
- Kudos to all October event organizers, including FestiFall and Piedmont Food & Processing Center events in Orange County

Heidi Dawson

- Some tech companies have hiring freezes in place
- Pre Covid19 the Carolina Inn hosted 85-100 weddings a year. Projecting 65 weddings this coming year 60 at higher rates

- Staffing issues continue
- Commencement 2023 is sold out at \$900 per room, 3 night minimum, and no cancellations
- Guests will see improvements and renovations in 2023
- The Carolina Inn promoting the whole family experience in OC to reflect the increased questions on activities that can be done with families
- The Monday dilemma – restaurants & venues closed on Mondays

Marlene

- September and October were busier months, with the staff seeing many RFPs, new business leads for March and October 2023
- Corporate and association business increasing
- A large conference coming in 2023, UNC faculty referral
- Pre Covid19 VB Perception Study, for the most part positive responses. Some comments from residents that don't like change
- This Board is committed to diversity. Our CH Diversity website is ready

**Guest Speaker:** Lynn Minges – President and CEO – NCRLA

### NCRLA Presentation

<https://ncrestaurantlodgingassoci.box.com/s/msijofovxg5xkv8pqkqjvv45sszifmlq>

<https://www.ncrla.org/nc-hospitality-industry-information/>

Carolyn Griffin, NCRLA Food Safety & Lodging Regulations  
[info@ncrla.org](mailto:info@ncrla.org)

Innecity Trip to Asheville (Laurie requested Asheville insights from speaker Lynn Minges who travels the state)

Asheville is leisure driven, locals don't like huge spike in tourist numbers (note: During COVID19 the mountains and the beaches were in huge demand), rising problems with street crime, drugs, homeless and attacks on business owners. The community doesn't feel safe and the town "restructured" the police department. Short-term rentals compete with hotel business

Throughout the state, all destinations are experiencing staffing issues, customer service complaints, cost of recruiting, housing, transportation, hiring bonuses

<https://www.ncrla.org/> resources page details the impact of the pandemic related to workforce issues

### New Business

Damon Seils / Jon Hartman-Black

- New Art Center building ribbon cutting last month. Finalizing construction plans

Matt Gladdek

- Currently debating efficacy of lighting parts of downtown due to rising costs, electrician demand and related service workers available for installation

Karen DeHart

- National trend: mean people, mostly parents, in sidelines at North Carolina High School Athletics Association. The tensions we are seeing in the restaurants are also mirrored on the athletic fields. Short tempers, low tolerance and increased stress among coaches, parents
- Shortage of game officials
- Football Tournament December 9th-10th returning to Kenan Stadium so Orange County will see an economic infusion from parents that weekend

Katie Murray-

- Katie reported her pride at being invited to present to Board of County Commissioners the prior evening, with a group of grant recipients in attendance
- The OCAC has experienced success in classroom sizes at the Arts Mill and special events hosted throughout town, including the October Plein Air Event
- Katie touched on holiday events, and reviewed preparations and meetings currently in place for a signature 2023 Summer event

Beverly Payne

- New Fall Pow Wow, Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> 10am-6pm in Alamance County, website: [obsn.org](http://obsn.org)
- 'What is your Flavor' at the OC Historical Museum with installations by local artists
- November is Native American Heritage Month

Chair Mark Bell

- Pride Parade in Durham was a success and many board members participated with Chapel Hill transit. Should Orange County have a more significant event/presence for Pride Month 2023? Paolicelli said, Yes, and that the Visitors Bureau will commit to organizing events and putting everything under a marketing umbrella to attract more out of town guests

Laurie Paolicelli

- Will work on 2023-2023 budget to put resources behind major pride events.
- CLEAN will have a presentation at our next meeting on 2023 marketing, public relations, merchandise, and strategy

**Next meeting:** *Wednesday, November 16, 2022, at The Residence Inn Chapel Hill*

Meeting adjourned at 9:18 a.m.