

# Visit Dublin Ohio Board Meeting

## February 23, 2026

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### Meeting Information

Date: 2026-02-23 11:59:35

Location: Dublin Library

*Board Members Present:* Betty Clark, Tim Lecklider, Jessica Rexer, Lindsay Weisenauer, Dave Cecutti, Eric Belfrage, Craig Baldrige, Dr. John Marschhausen, Meghan Kwast, David Babner, Jeff Kasler, Ian Montgomery, Dr. Ben Bring, Mitchell Briant, Brian Harman.

*Board Members Absent:* Deniz Akyuz, Sharon Baker Magee, Heather Ditty, Mary Jobe, Rachel Stuart, Dr. William Burke, Clay Rose

*Guests:* Paul Ghidotti and Matt Canterbury/Daimler; David Kozar and Janet Boissy/Indus)

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### Action Items

- **@Board Members** - Sign the mandatory Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality statements located in the packet or via email.
- **@Scott** - Email the board later in the week with the results of the finance committee meeting regarding the five-year funding contract.
- **@Attendees** - Provide referrals for Columbus Zoo job applications, which launch on March 2nd.

### Key Decisions

- **Consent Agenda Approved** - The consent agenda was approved following a motion by Tim Lecklider and a second by Dr. John Marschhausen .
- **Executive Committee Appointments** - Ian and Rachel were approved to fill vacancies on the Executive Committee (Motion: David Babner; Second: Mitchell Briant).

- **Office Lease Renewal** - A five-year lease extension for 9 South Life Street was approved, running through December 31, 2031, following a price reduction and tenant allowance offer.
- **“Human Shamrock” Record Strategy** - The organization will forego an official Guinness World Record application due to the prohibitive \$20,000 cost, opting to market an unofficial “own little world record” instead.
- **John Shields Road Realignment** - A decision was made to realign John Shields road and remove some parallel parking to increase the median width by 80 feet, improving pedestrian safety.

## Detailed Minutes

[05:29-06:29] **Opening remarks included a welcome to new guests and an acknowledgment of the leadership transition.**

- Betty Clark, The new president, opened the first meeting of their tenure, acknowledging the significant role left by predecessor David.
- Guests from the Daimler Group and Indus.
- [06:29-09:57] **The “Mission Moment” segment highlighted the economic impact of the new Espresso Martini Trail, demonstrating a 50:1 ROI.**
- Scott introduced the “Mission Moment” to regularly demonstrate how Visit Dublin translates into economic impact and the betterment for Dublin residents.
- **Espresso Martini Trail Results:**
  - Launched in November to drive business during the “shoulder season,” the digital pass (via “Bandwango”) allows check-ins at 20 participating venues.
  - Over 9,500 check-ins resulted in over \$120,000 in direct spending on martinis alone.
  - **Total Economic Impact:** Including food and other drinks, the impact is estimated at ~\$400,000 to \$500,000.
  - **ROI:** With a marketing spend of ~\$10,000, the campaign achieved a significant 50:1 return on investment.

[09:58-12:25] **Financial highlights were presented followed by the approval of the consent agenda.**

- **Financial Update:**
  - Final 2025 bed tax numbers were up 6% YoY. However, current December numbers were down 10%, highlighting the need for winter initiatives.
  - The balance sheet (as of Feb 2nd) shows 738,000, *including* 350,000 in reserves.

- **Administrative:** Attendees were reminded of AI recording protocols prior to the consent agenda approval.

**[12:25-12:32] New members were approved to fill vacancies on the Executive Committee.**

- Due to vacancies, Ian Montgomery and Rachel Stuart were nominated and approved by the board to join the Executive Committee.

**[12:32-14:30] Administrative updates covered the office lease renewal, tax filings, and accreditation status.**

- **Office Lease:** The organization renewed the lease at 9 South High Street through 2031 after the landlord lowered the rate and offered a \$9,000 tenant allowance.
- **Operations:** A larger storage unit was acquired, and the annual 990 tax form was submitted.
- **Accreditation:** Visit Dublin is undergoing reaccreditation with Destinations International, a distinction held by only 6% of 4,500 CVBs worldwide.

**[14:30-15:32] Board members were requested to sign mandatory governance documents.**

- Members must sign Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality statements as a best practice for the new year.

**[15:32-17:30] An update was provided on bed tax distribution and a potential new contract with the City of Dublin.**

- **Context:** The 6% local bed tax generates ~\$4.2 million annually. Visit Dublin receives a statutory 25%, plus an *additional* 10% from the City's portion (totaling 35%).
- **Negotiations:** Discussions are underway with the City Finance Department to secure a five-year contract guaranteeing this additional 10% funding.

**[17:30-18:29] The "Navigate Conference" is currently being hosted in Dublin to showcase the city to meeting planners.**

- Approximately 200 regional meeting planners are in Dublin for the conference at Embassy Suites, offering a strategic opportunity to showcase the community for future bookings.

**[18:29-20:29] Marketing efforts focused on the "Love in Dublin" campaign to boost shoulder season engagement.**

- **Campaign:** A mock dating app concept was created to highlight romantic and family-friendly activities during the slow months of January and February.
- **Collateral:** A new Destination Guide and coupon book featuring illustrative styles were released.

**[20:29-22:29] Upcoming initiatives include the Irish Festival package and “America 250” planning.**

- **Irish Festival:** The 10th annual hotel package is expected to generate 300-400 room nights.
- **America 250:** A committee is planning events, including history seminars and a parade theme. The Historical Society will celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> as well throughout the year.

**[22:29-24:59] Plans for the “Christkindlmarkt” aim to revitalize December tourism without cannibalizing local restaurants.**

- A European-style market will launch at Riverside Crossing Park from Thanksgiving through year-end to address slow December tourism.
- **Strategy:** The market will offer “tabletop food” to drive spillover traffic to local restaurants rather than compete with them.
- **Projections:** Daily attendance is estimated at 8,000–10,000 visitors.

**[24:59-27:08] Update on the management transition and capital improvement planning for the Sports Ohio Complex.**

- **Management:** The Sports Facilities Companies (SFC) have successfully taken over operations.
- **Capital Improvements:** A plan is forthcoming to transition fields to multi-use turf to mitigate weather cancellations and align with industry trends.
- **Strategic Goals:** Establish the complex as a regional tournament destination while maintaining it as a community resource.

**[27:08-29:40] Logistics and promotional strategy for the “Largest Human Shamrock” world record attempt.**

- **Goal:** Gather 1,200 participants (beating the record of 815) for a PR event post-parade.
- **Decision:** The board decided to market an unofficial “own little world record” rather than paying the \$20,000 Guinness application fee.

**[29:40-37:34] Presentation by the Dahlinger Group regarding the vision and specifications for the “Bridge North” development project.**

- **Overview:** Located north of John Shields, this project is a seamless extension of Bridge Park, designed with consistent architecture.
- **Specs:** 294 luxury apartments, a 150-key hotel, 60,000 sq. ft. retail/restaurant space, 75,000 sq. ft. office space, and a 650-space parking garage.
- **Public Space:** Features a central park with a 23-foot grade change, utilizing tiered interactions and an amphitheater layout.

**[37:36-38:35] Overview of the Tempo by Hilton brand positioning and current development pipeline.**

- The hotel partner for Bridge North was revealed as **Tempo by Hilton**, a lifestyle brand comparable to AC Hotels but with a focus on wellness and flexible workspaces.
- The property targets a 2029 opening and will feature high-quality fitness facilities and a premium coffee program.

**[38:35-41:35] Interior programming and site planning for the new hotel development.**

- **Interiors:** The lobby features a large fireplace and two outward-facing F&B outlets. 2,500 sq. ft. of flex meeting space is located on the ground floor to serve local businesses.
- **Architecture:** The north facade will feature a large art piece to anchor the development.
- **Exterior:** F&B areas will spill out into a communal park featuring waterfalls and covered seating.

**[41:38-44:05] Project construction timeline, economic impact, and infrastructure.**

- **Timeline:** Groundbreaking is targeted for early 2027, with delivery in 2029. Total development impact is estimated at \$250 million.
- **Infrastructure:** The parking garage will hold ~650 vehicles. Traffic adjustments include a right-turn-only lane near Moody.

**[44:06-45:12] Road realignment and pedestrian safety enhancements at John Shields.**

- **Safety Redesign:** John Shields road will be realigned and parallel parking removed to widen the median by 80 feet, creating safer pedestrian crossings and areas of respite.

**[45:12-46:33] Q&A regarding building height, amenities, and bridge accessibility.**

- **Bridges:** A bridge connecting the garage will offer scenic overlooks for residents, while a second bridge crossing the park is intended for public access (estimated 80% utilization by visitors).

**[46:49-47:48] Overview of the Downtown Dublin Strategic Alliance.**

- The alliance meets monthly to unify “Bridge Park” and “Historic Dublin” into a single “Downtown Dublin” destination brand.

**[47:48-48:48] Status update on the funding and timeline for the new bridge connection.**

- The group discussed the estimated \$30 million funding need for the John Shields Bridge (Tuller Road to the hospital). Federal funds are being explored.

**[49:19-50:56] Industry Roundtable: Market updates from restaurants, schools, and North Market.**

- **Restaurants:** Iam noted a strong start to the year, though operational costs (e.g., beef) remain high.
- **North Market:** Per Meghan, celebrating its 5th birthday. Panini Opa has opened; a candidate for the Oyster Bar space is pending.
- **Schools:** John said Dublin Schools redistricting is beginning, and Scioto High School is completing a large addition.

**[51:31-54:00] Industry Roundtable: Running and walking community event schedule.**

- David said the local running community now hosts over 100 events. Upcoming highlights include the Arnold Festival 5K, the Memorial Tournament 4-Miler (50th anniversary), and the Run Wild 5K with the Zoo.

**[54:03-55:14] Industry Roundtable: Columbus Zoo status update.**

- Brian updated that the Zoo outperformed expectations early in the year. Job applications launch March 2nd, with referrals requested.

**[55:22-56:26] Announcement of a new live music venue, Bristol Republic.**

- A country/rock live music venue, Bristol Republic, is expected to open in May or June.

**[56:26-58:41] Industry Roundtable: City of Dublin updates and upcoming events.**

- **State of the City:** Scheduled for March 5th with the theme “America 250 Adjacent.”
- **Events:** St. Patrick’s Day parade is set for the 14th.
- **Finance:** The Finance Committee will meet regarding the hotel/motel tax fund contract.

**[58:42-59:30] Meeting adjournment following sports registration updates.**

- Spring sports for Dublin Youth Athletics registration closes February 28th.
- The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM.