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ELKHART COUNTY INNKEEPERS TAX COMMISSION

Minutes of Public Meeting

Friday, January 14, 2022, at Elkhart County Visitors Center, 3421 Cassopolis Street, Elkhart, IN

PRESENT: Ms. Gita Patel, Commission Vice President
Mr. Rick Jenkins, Commission Secretary/Treasurer (via Zoom)
Mr. Scott Baker, Commission
Mr. Anant Patel, Commission
Ms. Beth Ronzone, Commission (via Zoom)
Mr. Doug Risser, Commission (Zoom)

ATTENDING: Mr. Levi King, Board of Directors President
Mr. Dan Bearss, Board of Directors Vice President (via Zoom)
Mr. Larry App, Board of Directors Secretary/Treasurer (via Zoom)
Mr. Arvis Dawson, Board of Directors (via Zoom)
Mr. Brian Hoffer, Board of Directors (via Zoom)
Ms. Brittany Short, Board of Directors
Mr. Jon Hunsberger, Executive Director
Ms. Janis Logsdon, Assistant Director
Mr. Terry Mark, ECCVB Staff Recorder
Ms. Amanda Eckelbarger, ECCVB Staff (Zoom)
Ms. Cindy Ostrom, ECCVB Staff (Zoom)

ABSENT: Mr. Dan Shoup, Commission President and Board of Directors

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:07 a.m. by Ms. G. Patel.

APPROVE NOVEMBER MINUTES

Mr. R. Jenkins moved to approve the November minutes as presented. Mr. A. Patel seconded. It was approved with all in favor.

- Roll call vote results: (Yes: Baker, Jenkins, A. Patel, G. Patel, Risser, Ronzone; No: None)

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. L. App presented the December financials, which are included in the printed board report. He said cash balances are looking very good, with revenues better than expected. He said innkeepers tax revenue was higher than projected by \$600,000. This allowed the marketing team to accomplish more. He said expenses were in line with expectations. He said the Elkhart County CVB staff continues to make adjustments in the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

C: Mr. S. Baker moved to approve the financial report. Mr. A. Patel seconded. It was approved with the following roll call results.

- Roll call vote results (Yes: Baker, Jenkins, A. Patel, G. Patel, Risser; No: None; Not voting: Ronzone)

ELECTION OF COMMISSION OFFICERS

Ms. G. Patel presented the slate of officers presented in the November meeting — Mr. D. Shoup for president, Ms. G. Patel as vice president, and Mr. R. Jenkins as secretary/treasurer). There were no other nominations from the floor, and nominations were closed.

Mr. R. Jenkins moved to accept the slate as presented. Mr. A. Patel seconded. It was approved with the following roll call results.

- Roll call vote results (Yes: Baker, Jenkins, A. Patel, G. Patel, Risser; No: None; Not voting: Ronzone)

BUREAU UPDATE

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the live wall in the Visitor Center is in transition. There were issues with keeping the plants alive, plus controlling insects were a problem. The live plants will be removed, and Elkhart County CVB staff is working to identify a supplier for a moss wall to fill the entire space. The work is expected to be completed in March, to be followed by the development of a Well Crafted installation to inspire picture-taking and Instagram moments.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the new area guide has been printed, featuring two new covers for the People & Places and Amish Country themes. There was some worry about production because the printing plant where the area guides are produced was hit by tornadoes, but the guides are safe.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said Ms. Sonya Nash of the Elkhart County CVB staff traveled to the ABA Marketplace event for bus and tour operations. There, she had 42 appointments scheduled and added seven more meetings. He said that Ms. S. Nash reported there is strong interest in the Elkhart County area, with groups looking at 2023 and even 2024.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the Vibrant Communities Next Chapter process has kicked off with meetings of a Steering Committee and Outreach Team. There have been three Steering Committee and two Outreach Team meetings working toward the planning of community engagement sessions in March. He said we're excited to hear what residents are feeling.

Mr. J. Hunsberger reported on the strategic planning process. He said Mr. Mike Huber and other team members have been compiling historical data. He said the Steering Committee for strategic planning will be meeting on Monday, and interviews of board and commission members will happen on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the amount of travel in 2021 was higher than anticipated, due to Elkhart County being seen as ideal for travelers in a pandemic, with ample rural spaces. While 2021 was better than projected, it was still less than 2019. He said the Quilt Gardens and Epic Art Adventures programs will be a positive for 2022 expectations. He said the Elkhart County CVB has collaborated and connected with residents and elected officials, which has put us in a good position.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the Elkhart County CVB staff adjusted marketing and promotion message to feature particular activities in 2020, working with the contracts that we had in place. He said the focus was on internal communications and sharing information with partners. The Elkhart County CVB staff created conversations with Zoom to bring partners together. He said in 2021 we resumed communicating outwards, focusing on safe activities with priorities on parks, pathways, trails such as the Heritage Trail. He said the pandemic also created opportunities for promotions around experiences and regional collaboration involving partners in the Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. L. King highlighted the upcoming Shishewana Ice Festival. He said he is a big believer in events, and it's hard to believe it's been 15 years.

There was general discussion on the community's COVID-19 response.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 8 a.m. Friday, March 11.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Mark
Staff Recorder