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ELKHART COUNTY CVB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Minutes of Public Meeting

Friday, September 10, 2021, at Elkhart County Visitors Center, 3421 Cassopolis Street,
Elkhart, IN

PRESENT: 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. Brian Hoffer, Board of Directors (via Zoom)
Ms. Brittany Short, Board of Directors (via Zoom)
Mr. Dan Shoup, Commission President and Board of Directors

ATTENDING: Mr. Rick Jenkins, Commission Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Scott Baker, Commission (via Zoom)
Mr. Doug Risser, Commission
Mr. Jon Hunsberger, Executive Director
Ms. Janis Logsdon, Assistant Director
Mr. Terry Mark, ECCVB Staff Recorder
Ms. Amanda Eckelbarger, ECCVB Staff
Ms. Cindy Ostrom, ECCVB Staff (Zoom)

ABSENT: Mr. Arvis Dawson, Board of Directors

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. L. King called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES

Mr. D. Bearss moved to approve the May 14, 2021, minutes. Mr. L. App seconded. There was a vote and it was approved with all in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. L. App reported that cash balances and cash flow looks good, with innkeepers tax revenue ahead of projections for the year to date, and expenses below projections. He said that the Elkhart County CVB has inquired with the Elkhart County Commissioners asked for availability of funds of \$1.7 million from the American Rescue Plan for lost revenue and received positive feedback. Mr. L. App said the Elkhart County CVB should know by mid to late September. The 2022 budget request to the Elkhart County Council was \$2.4 million, the same as the year before. Mr. L. App said realistically tax revenue should be approximately \$1.8 million. He referred everyone to the balance sheet provided in the printed report. He said assets show a negative balance for the Small Business Administration loan and it will be re-classified as a long-term liability. The Elkhart County CVB staff is watching budget and looking for new funding opportunities. Mr. L. App confirmed that the Elkhart County CVB did receive the loan forgiveness on the Payroll Protection Program funding from 2020.

Mr. D. Bearss moved to accept the financial report. Ms. B. Short seconded. There was a vote and it was approved with all in favor.

BUREAU UPDATE

Mr. J. Hunsberger said it is time for the Elkhart County CVB to update its long-range destination plan. Many things have changed since it was last updated in 2017, including the place DNA process that led to the Well Crafted destination brand and the upcoming 15th anniversary of the Quilt Gardens in 2022. A request for proposals has been sent and proposals are expected to be submitted by the Sept. 17 deadline. The process should be completed in June and will put the organization ahead of the curve. He said \$150,000 has been budgeted for this from the research line item. The Elkhart County CVB will have a five-year plan that includes action steps for years 1-3. He noted that a strong plan has to be adaptable, as the staff was able to adjust in 2020 and implement that year's business plan in a different way.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said travel remains strong in Elkhart County, as visitors are ready to go out and are going to places where they feel comfortable. From June to August, Elkhart

County experienced record numbers, putting the county in a better position than we thought. He said the biannual economic impact report from CERTEC showed a downturn of 52 percent and a loss of 2,500 jobs from the tourism and hospitality industry. The report demonstrates the impact of tourism on Elkhart County. The precise impact of the recent cancellation of RV Open House week is uncertain. There was general discussion of the challenges caused by COVID and the Delta variant.

Mr. J. Hunsberger reported that the Quilt Gardens were featured in USA Today Travel and provided copies of the publication. He said the Quilt Gardens' 15th year anniversary will be celebrated with Seward Johnson sculptures and Epic Art Adventures. There is a grant funding request of \$75,000 pending with the Community Foundation of Elkhart County for Epic Art Adventures, which will highlight local artists. He said the Elkhart County CVB commitment for Seward Johnson sculptures is \$300,000 but could be scaled back if needed. He said Elkhart County CVB staff is in conversation with cities and towns for additional investment for Seward Johnson sculptures. He said while the cost of public art does seem like a lot, but when considering the impact on community, it becomes priceless.

Mr. J. Hunsberger gave an update on Vibrant Communities entering its sixth year with the tremendous support from the Community Foundation of Elkhart County. He said we are working with Planning Next on the next chapter for the next five years. He said this is perfect timing to enter into this planning process that should be wrapped up by next August. Right now the process is in search for Steering Committee members as well as socializing Vibrant Communities with stakeholders and feedback.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said Elkhart County CVB staff is in process of creating the 2022 business plan and budget, which will be voted on in November. He said Zoom will continue to be offered as an option. He said there may be a need to implement a roll call system to record voting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. D. Shoup expressed his thanks to the Elkhart County CVB staff for its work in hosting the Midwest Bus and Motorcoach Group meeting in Elkhart. He said attendance was twice what was expected. He said board members were very impressed by the job that the Elkhart County CVB staff did.

Mr. D. Risser said Ms. Sonya Nash of the Elkhart County CVB staff has been helpful in planning the Lincoln Highway Association meeting in the future.

Mr. L. King reminded everyone of upcoming Indiana Destination Development Corp. meetings.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be 8 a.m. Friday, November 12, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Mark
Staff Recorder