



eccvb.org

3421 Cassopolis Street
Elkhart, Indiana 46514

OFFICE: 574-262-8161

TOLL-FREE: 800-262-8161

FAX: 574-262-3925

ELKHART COUNTY INNKEEPERS TAX COMMISSION

Minutes of Public Meeting

Friday, March 8, 2024, at Elkhart County Visitors Center, 3421 Cassopolis Street, Elkhart, IN

PRESENT: Mr. Dan Shoup, Commission President and Board of Directors
Ms. Gita Patel, Commission Vice President
Mr. Scott Baker, Commission
Mr. Anant Patel, Commission
Mr. Doug Risser, Commission

ATTENDING: Mr. Levi King, Board of Directors President
Mr. Dan Bearss, Board of Directors Vice President
Mr. Larry App, Board of Directors Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Arvis Dawson, Board of Directors
Mr. Brian Hoffer, Board of Directors
Ms. Brittany Short, Board of Directors
Mr. Jon Hunsberger, Executive Director
Mr. Terry Mark, Staff Recorder

ABSENT: Mr. Rick Jenkins, Commission Secretary/Treasurer
Ms. Beth Ronzone, Commission

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8 a.m.

APPROVE JANUARY MINUTES

Mr. D. Risser moved to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2024, meeting. Ms. G. Patel seconded. It was approved with all in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. L. App reported that finances were looking good, and that the ECCVB is on track to fulfill its contract. He said the balance sheet and profit-loss statement were in good shape. Mr. L. App said that at the beginning of a year, expenses tend to exceed revenue. He lauded the ECCVB staff for its management.

Mr. D. Risser moved to accept the financial report. Ms. G. Patel seconded. It was approved with all in favor.

BUREAU UPDATE

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the Elkhart County Restaurant Weeks will be March 15-30. He said there are 25 restaurants that have already sent in menus, achieving a participation goal. He said other restaurants have verbally committed but haven't sent menus. There has been good representation countywide for this kind of event, when previously other organizations promoted dining events focused on Elkhart and Goshen.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said that there will be an On the Road dinner event on March 26. This developed from Culinary Crossroads approaching us on an event to celebrate culinary arts in Elkhart County. The On the Road Dinner has also taken place in Evansville, Fort Wayne and New Albany. The event has identified three restaurants/chefs from Artisan, Ruhe152, and West on Warren to be featured. He said the five-course meal leverages Culinary Crossroads' marketing and promotion. Dinner is a five-course meal.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the annual Indiana Tourism Conference will start this coming Monday. He said multiple staff members are attending, and the Elkhart County CVB is in contention for three awards.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the ECCVB undertook a study with the city of Elkhart to understand the economic impact of downtown Elkhart assets. He said that the study was based on visitor attendance, not local attendance. He said the study's analysis showed that in 2022 there was a total net economic impact of more than \$20 million of economic impact that supports 63 jobs with earnings of \$3.1 million. He said there were 57,000 room nights generated by these attractions, with the aquatics center being the leader. There was general discussion of sports events and economic impact and the Elkhart amphitheater.

Mr. J. Hunsberger provided an update to the Elkhart and Goshen hotel study, which examined the feasibility of hotel development on Main Street at Civic Plaza in Elkhart and at the old jail site in Goshen. He said there are significant gaps in the cost of projects and value. There was general discussion on the economics of hotel development.

Mr. J. Hunsberger reported on the legislative process at socializing of Senate Bill 238, which was enabling legislation for an increase to visitor assessment. He said the original timeline was for 2025, but were advised to proceed during the 2024 short session. He said the ECCVB secured local support, with assistance from State Rep. Doug Miller, from Elkhart County Commissioner Brad Rogers. He said State Rep. Miller and State Rep. Joanna King have been very supportive. He said there is a final vote expected at 10 a.m. in the Indiana Senate. If approved, the bill would go to the governor's desk for signature. There was general discussion on advocacy and the political landscape.

Mr. J. Hunsberger said the ECCVB, working with the assistance of MACOG, is exploring on applying to the Stellar Pathways program, which is making available funding to aid non-entitled cities and towns through OCRA and other sources. The amount of funding available is at least \$4 million.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 8 a.m. Friday, May 10, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Mark
Staff Recorder

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