



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, July 10, 2020, 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 (via Zoom)
Mr. Rick Jenkins, Commission Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Scott Baker, Commission (via Zoom)
Mr. Kurt Janowsky, Commission (via Zoom)
Mr. Anant Patel, Commission

ATTENDING: Mr. Levi King, Board of Directors President
Ms. Eleanor Billey, Board of Directors Vice President
Mr. Larry App, Board of Directors Secretary/Treasurer (via Zoom)
Mr. Dan Bearss, Board of Directors (via Zoom)
Mr. Arvis Dawson, Board of Directors (via Zoom)
Mr. Brian Hoffer, Board of Directors
Ms. Diana Lawson, Chief Executive Officer
Mr. Terry Mark, ECCVB Staff Recorder
Ms. Amanda Eckelbarger, ECCVB Staff (via Zoom)
Ms. Cindy Ostrom, ECCVB Staff (via Zoom)
Mr. Jon Hunsberger, ECCVB Staff (via Zoom)
Ms. Janis Logsdon, ECCVB Staff (via Zoom)
Ms. Jessica Barnhart, ECCVB Staff (via Zoom)
Ms. Sonya Nash, ECCVB Staff (via Zoom)

ABSENT: Ms. Beth Ronzone, Commission

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. D. Shoup called the meeting to order at 8:08 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. R. Jenkins moved to approve the May 2020 minutes as presented. Mr. A. Patel seconded. There was a vote and it was approved with all in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. L. App directed everyone's attention to the June financials provided to everyone. Innkeepers tax collections are \$831,000 in collections, and looking ahead the ECCVB's projections have been pretty good, as they are on the conservative side. He projects \$1.4 million in innkeepers tax through year-end and is hoping to be \$139,000 ahead. The ECCVB received a Payroll Protection Program forgivable loan of \$140,700. The ECCVB will need to submit paperwork by end of September in order for that amount to be forgiven. The ECCVB also received \$131,000 through the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program. That loan is not forgivable, but is at a 2 percent rate from the Small Business Administration over 30 years. Payments on the Economic Injury Disaster Loan will begin next year. Mr. L. App said he expects to have a \$680,000 in cash balances through the end of year. The projected net income is \$88,000, which for the ECCVB is an increase in net assets.

Mr. L. App said he feels good about the financial situation through the end of the year. He credited Ms. Diana Lawson's leadership and the rest of the team doing such a great job. He said it hasn't been easy, but everyone should be congratulated.

Mr. D. Bearss said this is an excellent report. He agreed that it's amazing that the organization is in this place given what's been thrown at it. Mr. L. King applauded the staff for going after the PPP and EIDL funding. General discussion ensued on the terms and conditions of the federal loan program and the uncertainty and confusion expressed by officials administering the program.

Mr. R. Jenkins moved to accept the financial report. Mr. A. Patel seconded. There was a vote and it was approved with all in favor.

BUREAU UPDATE

Ms. D. Lawson introduced ECCVB staff to give project updates that are in the 2020 Business Plan. The ECCVB intends to carry out the Business Plan except for items such as advertising and trade show attendance that were eliminated because of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. She said the ECCVB is proceeding with its messaging plans but doing it in a

different way with the Well Crafted destination brand identity and Champion Placemakers programs that are ready to implement. She said it is fortunate to have this plan, but we know we will have to be more innovative in the next year.

Mr. J. Hunsberger described Project Q, an ambitious effort to support Elkhart County small businesses through digital literacy education, storytelling, and marketing and promotion. Working with the Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County, the project is seeking an Economic Development Assistance grant from the federal government, which could fund a total budget of \$325,000.

Mr. T. Mark said the Vibrant Communities movement engaged in community conversations in the spring, gathering feedback from residents on how the community responded to the pandemic. A strategic planning retreat is planned for July 31. Among the initiatives that will be discussed are Vibrant Neighborhoods and an alternate way to host the Youth Engagement Summit remotely. Mr. T. Mark also described the Coolest Thing Made in Elkhart County campaign, which identified local businesses and the innovative, unique products they like. The campaign concluded in June with the announcement of SonSet Solutions' water quality monitor as the winner. The campaign was very successful in building community pride. Mr. T. Mark said the ECCVB helped take part in the Hoosiers by Choice campaign to highlight the stories of people who chose to move to Indiana and live here because of career, family and connection to Elkhart County.

Ms. J. Logsdon described the restart of Champion Placemakers, which works with a group of partners integrate the Well Crafted brand as well as collaborate with each other. The program includes a series of workshops utilizing a slide deck developed by Destination Think. She said the plan is to start in July and present the workshops over a 10-12-week period. Ms. Logsdon said the ECCVB is creating a video series in partnership with Premier Arts to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy attractions, restaurants and amenities, emphasizing the wearing of masks and face coverings. Ms. J. Logsdon said the Heritage Trail audio driving tour has been revised with fresh content that bring the stories to life through use of voice actors. The Heritage Trail compact discs and flash drives that will be distributed to residents and visitors are in production. She said the Exit 92 campaign in partnership with the Elkhart Redevelopment Commission has resulted in an increase in walk-in traffic to the hotels and restaurants in the Cassopolis Street area.

Ms. C. Ostrom said the Elkhart County Visitor Center reopened June 15. She said there is featured signage encouraging hand washing, wearing masks, and social distancing. She said plexiglass shields have been installed at the two desks staffed by Destination Concierges, and hand sanitizer is available in the Visitor Center. She said the Elkhart County Public

Health Order was posted on June 30. She said the efforts to keep everyone safe included having the staff staying in their offices, doing staff meetings on Zoom, and taking everyone's temperature daily.

Ms. A. Eckelbarger described various aspects of the digital Love Notes campaign that started in April. The ECCVB staff also sent hand-written notes to stakeholders and followed up with emails to continue engagement, share information about Quilt Gardens, and encourage safety.

Ms. S. Nash said there are two major competitions planning to come to Elkhart Health & Aquatics Center for two-year commitments starting in February and March 2021. She said the Great Lakes Valley Conference is bringing its men's and women's swimming and diving competition is coming from Crawfordsville because they outgrew that site. The CSCAA is an invitational competition for NCAA Division I competitors who do not qualify for the NCAA Championships and will have competitors from all over the country. Ms. S. Nash said she is proud and excited that Quilt Gardens partners and volunteers generated around \$14,000 to help make this project happen. This year there are 16 Quilt Gardens and four Quilt Murals. Ms. S. Nash said she developed the enFocus Virtual Tours to message about Elkhart County to 16 enFocus summer interns, including tours of Wellfield Botanic Gardens, the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, and numerous ways to conveying the Well Crafted brand. Ms. S. Nash said she has been conducting weekly Zoom meetings with hoteliers to share information. The program is being expanded for ECCVB staff to meet with town managers, arts councils, and businesses to connect and learn how to better collaborate. Ms. S. Nash described the Staycation Safecation program, which developed experiences and deals to encourage visits as well as overnight stays at eight hotels. She said this program helped create one-on-one relationships to connect and build packages and partnerships.

Ms. J. Barnhart said the ECCVB has been working with NITDC on the Indiana's Cool North Getaway campaign to promote our small businesses. New themes have been introduced every two weeks, and we are monitoring the analytics and will be able to track the sort of bookings the campaign generated. She said the ECCVB launched a new website on January 14 with the new URL, visitelkhartcounty.com. The new website has additional functionalities to help visitors plan their visit. She said the website was built for mobile users first in mind, and it has helped to create a new experience to better connect with partners.

Ms. D. Lawson said attitude is everything when it comes to the staff. She said they are incredibly talented and such professionals. She said the ECCVB has built a culture of

collaboration and working together, and thanked the staff for all that they do. She said we appreciate the confidence of the commission and the board has in the staff to manage this.

Mr. D. Shoup said Ms. D. Lawson and Ms. C. Ostrom have done a great job with the financials and they have it figured out. Mr. R. Jenkins said any great organization has to have great leadership. There was continued expressions of praise for the ECCVB staff. Ms. D. Lawson said the staff shows great leadership and we may be working better than before COVID because we were able to figure out how to work remotely.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Friday, Sept. 11, 2020, at 8 a.m.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Mark
Staff Recorder

WE