

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, NC
FAYETTEVILLE
AREA
CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

FACVB BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Crown Coliseum Board Room
1960 Coliseum Way
January 22, 2020
Noon

PRESENT

Subodh Thakur, Chairman
Becki Kirby
Rene Lane
Sanda Budic
Adam Collier
Sharon Lee

ABSENT

Doug Hewett
Laura Leal
Jim Grafstrom
Suresh Patel
Amy Cannon

OTHERS

John Meroski
Kelly Brill

Subodh Thakur called the meeting to order at 12:10pm. Mr. Thakur explained that the FACVB is having carpet installed and the offices painted. We will return there for the next meeting. Mr. Thakur stated that the CVB lost an employee this past week to an illness. He asked to have a moment of silence for Jessica Bennett.

Mr. Thakur asked if the July 2019 minutes were reviewed and ready to be approved. Adam Collier motioned for approval of July 2019 minutes, Sharon Lee seconded the motion.

Mr. Thakur wished everyone a Happy New Year. He stated business is slow this time of year. There is a new property in the mall area in the planning stage; the owner currently has 2 properties in Fayetteville.

Jim Grafstrom is not present; Mr. Meroski reviewed the Treasurer's report. Mr. Meroski stated that the CVB has had a clean opinion for last 19 years; thanked Kelly Brill for her service. Mr. Thakur asked who was in favor of approving the Treasurer report, all Ayes, no Nays; Treasurer's report was approved.

CROWN COLISUM

Mr. Grafstrom was not in attendance.

AIRBORNE & SPECIAL OPERATIONS MUSEUM

Mr. Thakur welcomed Rene Lane to the group; she is representing ASOM as the new director. Ms. Lane stated she joined ASOM on November 4, 2019; previously working for USO of NC for 10 years. Ms. Lane stated they are celebrating 20 years of ASOMs doors first opening in August 2000. Attendance has been a little slow, although this past weekend there were large crowds in attendance. The Museum is wrapping up Operation JUST CAUSE exhibit. Ms. Lane stated there is a new speaker series starting on January 30, 2020 from 7-8pm in Yarborough-Bank

Theater. The first speaker is Kurt Mews, a Panama POW for 9 months, who will be telling his story. They are trying to lock in the speaker for April 23 and 24, Colonel Nightingale, who participated in the 1979 failed rescue in Tehran. He has written a half dozen books to include "Tehran to Osama Bin Laden". On February 25 through March 8, 2020 they will feature "Dr Seuss Wants You" exhibit, a look at the Holocaust and Red Cross in America. The Dr. Seuss cartoon was a political war-time cartoon before the children's books were published. The annual egg hunt is April 4th. Field of Honor occurs every May and there will be a Run for Legend 5k on June 6, 2020. Ms. Lane stated they are beginning to rent rooms, the gardens and the lobby for special events. Mr. Meroski stated that he partnered with Ms. Lane and USO 12-15 years ago. Mr. Thakur asked how the museum was doing financially and Ms. Lane stated they are in middle of a \$8.5 capital campaign.

I-95

Sanda Budic stated that Holiday Inn Express has opened on I-95; old Holiday Inn flag to Clarion. I-95 Fairfield by Marriott, near graveyard and Sleep Inn, lost its flag. Sharon Lee stated that renovations were not done and Mr. Ammons sold it, possibly Country Inn & suites in Wilson. Ms. Lee stated that Doubetree is still open. Adam Collier stated that Occupancy was up through end of year after the hurricane, but we are in line with the year before hurricane.

CITY OF FAYETTEVILLE

Mr. Hewett was not present.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Amy Cannon is not present.

FACVB

Mr. Meroski stated that Jessica was thought of as the office "sunshine". The staff had prayer Tuesday morning as a group and staff attended service on Thursday and Friday. It has been a tough month for Mr. Meroski and the CVB. Mr. Thakur asked for a moment of silence for Meroski's mother who passed in late December.

Mr. Meroski pass out the FACVB Dashboard which outlines results of the first quarter of fiscal year, July through December 2019. Mr. Meroski explained there was a strong web and media presence, with number of pages viewed and time on website going up. The FACVB is putting money into digital media and we are watching patterns to market better in the future. If you go to our website on the far right is a tab "About Us", where you will find CVB results including Board minutes, financials, and Program of Work. We try to be as transparent as possible. Mr. Meroski plans to work with Ms. Lane at the Airborne & Special Operations museum in the next year. The FACVB recently had a Heroes Homecoming Recap meeting showing last year's event had 30 events with 4 municipalities working together. This is one of the few projects that people of all kinds get together to work towards a common goal. Social media included Heroes Homecoming Facebook and Twitter pages, and 75 PR pieces written about the event reaching a total of 52.2 million readers. The event was a real success in thanking the Veterans and showing that Fayetteville is a great destination to show Veterans support on days like Memorial Day, Veterans Day and 4th of July.

Mr. Meroski explained a new strategy that the FACVB is taking where they work on marketing with current events to get more heads in beds. The TDA, Crown and FACVB are pulling together to make these events happen; working one on one with event promoters. Mr. Meroski stated that there is a new 20% off promotion with the NC Exit 49 properties. We have created a website, Exit49.com, and are using billboards and social media to put the information out. With Lumberton expanding I-95 we want to stay competitive.

Mr. Meroski stated that Kelly Brill was promoted to Director of Operations and we have a new hire, Teletha Rodrigues.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Thakur thanked everyone for coming and hopes to see everyone at the April 22nd meeting at the FACVB Board Room. Ms. Lane motioned to adjourn, and Becki Kirby seconded the motion.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on April 22, 2020 at noon in the FACVB boardroom.

Subodh Thakur, Chairman
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