

HAMILTON COUNTY VISITOR AND CONVENTION COMMISSION  
37 E. Main Street, Carmel, Indiana  
Minutes of the Meeting  
February 13, 2020

Attending:

Robyn Pauker, Todd Burtron, Perry Williams, Brenda Tolson, Tiffany Pascoe, Christian Renner, Lisa Hanni, Andrea Huisden, Connor Sullivan, David Lingafelter and Jamie Hopwood.

Also Attending:

Hamilton County Tourism – Brenda Myers, President/CEO; Karen Radcliff, Vice President/CSO; Betsy Ekelof, Operations Director and Kristopher Kazmierczak, Legal Counsel. Attending from the public was Paul Howard, Top Golf.

I. Welcome

P. Williams called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. He introduced the Commission's latest appointment by the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners, Connor Sullivan. An attorney, C. Sullivan was raised in Hamilton County and is actively engaged in the community as a coach and in volunteer work.

II. Review of the Minutes of the December 2019 Meeting

P. Williams asked for a review of the December 2019 minutes. L. Hanni moved that the minutes be approved as presented. R. Pauker seconded. Motion passed.

III. Key Governance Items for Review & Possible Action

- A. 2020 HCT Funding Agreement – R. Pauker updated the Commission on revisions to the 2020 funding agreement. She noted that the agreement is agreeable to both parties with one small concern by the HCT Board of how long the Commission has to withdraw the contract should there be concerns. B. Myers noted that unwinding the entity should it be given just 30 days notice would be a challenge. K. Kazmierczak noted that the agreement would likely only be pulled should something very significant occur and the HCT Board not take appropriate action to correct it. R. Pauker will continue to work with the attorneys. T. Burtron asked that the final language be circulated in time for review.
- B. Proposed 2021 Tourism Budget Committee/Destination Development & Approval Timeline – B. Myers provided a proposal that outlines the new budget committee presented at the December Tourism Commission meeting. The goal is to engage the Commission earlier in the budgetary process. The proposal suggested the Tourism Commission President and Treasurer and the HCT Board Chair and Secretary/Treasurer serve in addition to a member of the Hamilton County Council, a hotelier and the administrative team of HCT serve as committee members. Totaling 9 members. A timeline was presented. There was discussion as to how big the committee needed to be. T. Burtron suggested a smaller group might be more viable, but P. Williams asked that the commission and board try it for 2020 and review if needed. Everyone agreed.
- C. HCT Draft Proposed Policy re. Future Commitments – B. Myers provided a draft of proposed policies concerning future commitments for incentives related to business. With the recently proposed funding agreement language changes, some concerns have arisen about HCT committing to incentives to attract future sports and group businesses as is common practice in the industry. For example, if HCT commits to a 2022 sports event at Grand Park but its funding agreement is rescinded, would the Tourism Commission agree to cover the incentive on its own or with a new operator. Discussion occurred over whether HCT could memorialize such obligations and would it be assigned to the Commission. Discussion settled on the obligation being authorized as long as it was within the budgetary guidelines adopted by HCT.
- D. Community Support Updates – P. Williams reported on conversations with all of the mayors regarding requests to support community projects using a different model than is currently used. At the request of the mayors, HCT has done analysis on which communities generate the most lodging taxes based purely on hotel sales. B. Myers also provided information on the impact of Grand Park on overnight stays and lodging tax generation. P. Williams noted that conversations are ongoing and HCT will meet again after the first of the year.

- E. Officer Selection – P. Williams asked that C. Renner be nominated Treasurer and R. Pauker Vice President of the Commission for 2020. Both agreed to serve. B. Tolson will remain secretary. L. Hanni moved that the officers be elected for one-year terms. T. Pascoe seconded. Motion passed.
  - F. There was no new business to discuss. B. Myers noted that in the Commission packets were updates on the community development projects currently under way by HCT including the White River “District” Study as well as a Nickel Plate Express 2019 year-end report.
- IV. Financial Reports – B. Ekelof and B. Myers presented financial reports.
- A. The Tourism Commission budget reflects 100% of lodging taxes collected and distributed, less bond debt service.
    - 1) Year-end 2019 deposits totaled \$5,561,408 plus \$22.93 in interest income with expenses of \$5,300,000 for HCT contract distributions and \$2,827.64 for professional fees (financial and legal) and hospitality services. The balance of \$258,603.29 supported bond payments which are assigned to the Commission. Year-end balance sheet indicated \$8,903.65 in cash. Balance on the community development bond at year-end was \$2,208,277 less \$298,973.70 in bond debt service reserve.
    - 2) Not enough activity was reported to provide a February report. Income included lodging tax deposits of \$774,031.51 net after bond debt, with no expenses recorded.
    - 3) The 2019 year-end HCT financial statement showed \$235,349 net of expenses for the year as of February. A few adjusting entries may be required but as a reminder HCT had a goal of recovering a 2018 deficit of \$125,000 to replenish its reserves.
  - B. 2019 year-end occupancy ended flat at 63.7% with additional supply of 4.9%. ADR was down slightly.
  - R. Pauker moved that the financial report be accepted. C. Sullivan seconded. Motion passed.
- VI. T. Burtron moved that the meeting adjourn. J. Hopwood seconded. Motion passed.