

**HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**Ambassador House & Heritage Gardens**  
**10598 Eller Road**  
**Fishers, Indiana**  
**Minutes of the Regular Meeting**  
**June 7, 2019**

Attending the meeting were Jeffrey Brown, Jeremy Geisendorff, Jimia Smith, Scott Spillman, Bob DuBois, Norman Burns, John Hughey, Mark Truett, Angie Smitherman, Andrew Newport and Gary Miller. Not attending: Al Patterson and Judi Johnson.

Also attending were Brenda Myers, President/CEO; Karen Radcliff, Vice President/CSO; Ashley Ledford, Director of Marketing and Promotions, Carol Sergi, Director of Marketing, Economic Development; Betsy Ekelof, Director of Operations; Tina Rodgers, Assistant Director of Resources; Sarah Billman, Assistant Director of Visitor Experience; and, Sarah Buckman, Destination Development Manager. Also attending, Christine Altman, Legal Counsel and Perry Williams, President, Hamilton County Visitor and Convention Commission.

**I. Welcome**

The June meeting of the Hamilton County Tourism, Inc. Board of Directors convened at 8:30 a.m. with Chairman B. DuBois welcoming everyone to the Ambassador House located along the White River in honor of the launch of White River Vision Plan Week. No PowerPoint presentation was produced.

**II. Review of the May 2019 Minutes**

B. Dubois asked whether there were any changes to the minutes of the May 2019 meeting. No corrections were noted, and N. Burns moved the minutes be approved as presented. S. Spillman seconded. Motion passed.

**III. Financials & Metrics**

**A. 2019 YTD Budget Report**

- B. Myers presented the budget statements through April 2019. New to the budget packet was an historical trends report showing year-to-date spending versus previous year-to-date spending. Cash on hand totaled \$502,490 plus \$540 in receivables and \$235,963 in pre-paid expenses.
- Income through the May 2019 tax deposit plus other miscellaneous revenue was 36% to goal with expenses at 41% through the year, net (\$258,697).
- However, she noted the difference primarily is due to cash flow and most line items are within budget.

**B. 2019 Occupancy Report**

- The year's hotel occupancy through the April report stood at 59.6%, down .8% due to inventory growth of 4.6%. Demand rose 3.7% through April.
- Weekdays tend to be struggling more than weekends with the new inventory and average daily rate is essentially flat.

**C. 2019 Tax Collections Report**

- Lodging tax revenues through the June deposit (April activity) total \$2,236,490 or 1% under budget, with 5 hotels not reporting
- This translates to approximately \$18,514 under budget.

J. Brown moved that the financials be accepted as presented. A. Smitherman seconded. Motion passed.

**IV. Old Business**

**A. HCT Office Updates** – K. Radcliff reported that the proposed builder continues to move forward with the project as planned.

A term sheet is expected this summer outlining the project in more detail. Demolition would occur at the end of the year with work to begin in the spring. The Board approved ongoing negotiations through Attorney C. Altman.

**B. Westfield Grand Park Support** – B. Myers reported on information following the spring task force meeting with A. Newport, G. Miller, K. Radcliff, L. Kelner and herself. She noted that while HCT could absorb an increasing grant for capital improvements at Grand Park with future revenues, it might not be at a pace satisfactory to the city. Extensive discussion took place regarding room pick-up concerns via the housing bureau and Grand Park's rules about distance and room numbers. No one disagreed with supporting Grand Park via HCT funding but felt the funding need to be tied to improvements in room pick-up for Hamilton County. Concerns were expressed about the transparency of the room pick-up reports and a desire to have more open communications with Westfield was emphasized. Other funding models need to be examined that do not rely on high rebates, including capital improvement boards that support large projects. A second meeting with just hoteliers working through the housing concerns should take place before meeting with Westfield about any future funding. J. Brown, G. Miller and J. Geisendorff agreed to participate. B. Myers will schedule it.

**C. Key Special Projects Updates** – B. Myers noted that the board meeting was changed in honor of the White River Vision Plan release and asked any board member available to walk the trail to the White River for a photo opportunity. The leadership team is discussing governance moving forward. Nickel Plate Express continues to grow in audience and revenue, and a summer ad campaign kicks off soon.

**V. New Business**

**A. Budget Amendment Request** – B. Myers noted that the Board approved an additional \$100,000 grant to Nickel Plate Express to cover debt service obligations in May but the budget had not been amended to move the funds from reserve/replacement to destination development. N. Burns moved that the budget be amended to reflect the change. J. Hughey seconded. Motion passed.

**B. 2019 Marketing/Sales/Vis X Updates** – S. Billman, A. Ledford and L. Kelner each provided updates regarding their areas to the Board. Visitor Experience will support more than 140 groups in 2019, a number that grows each year. A. Ledford noted that Truly 360 has been working with the county’s partners to improve their Google presence through an intensive training and support program. The spring/summer advertising campaign is under way and the new web site will be launched in early August. L. Kelner discussed the new “rest easy” campaign that will be launched later in 2019.

**VI. Partner Highlight: Hamilton County Economic Development Corporation**

C. Sergi reported on progress with the Hamilton County Economic Development Corporation (HCEDC/Invest Hamilton County) work on talent and workforce attraction. Stories highlighting individuals in various industry sectors who have moved here will be highlighted as part of the new campaign via paid and unpaid social media efforts and some face-to-face opportunities to engage with potential employees will take place in addition to providing materials for local employers to use for attraction purposes. HCEDC wrote a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce grant and the county was named a talent region, bringing with it support for strategic planning.

**VII.** There being no further business, J. Brown moved that the meeting be adjourned and A. Newport seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10 a.m.