

HAMILTON COUNTY VISITORS AND CONVENTION COMMISSION
37 E. Main Street, Carmel, Indiana
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
May 17, 2018

Attending:

Perry Williams, Brenda Tolson, Andrea Huisden, Bill Smythe, Christian Renner, Donna Prather, Lisa Hanni, Casey Wilson.

Also Attending:

Brenda Myers, President/CEO; Karen Radcliff, Vice President/CSO

Not Attending:

Paul O'Connor, Robyn Pauker, Howard Stevenson

I. Welcome

Perry Williams opened the meeting at 5:50 p.m. by welcoming everyone.

II. Review of the Minutes of the February 2018 and March 2018 Meetings

P. Williamson asked for any changes to the February 2018 Tourism Commission meeting. There being no changes, Donna Prather moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Christian Renner seconded. Motion passed. He then asked for any changes to the March 2018 Tourism Commission Special Meeting. There being no changes, Andrea Huisden moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Lisa Hanni seconded. Motion passed.

III. Metrics

A. Tax Collections – Brenda Myers reported on the 2018 year-to-date tax collections, deposits through May 1.

- \$1,687,269.76 gross (2018 deposits)
- \$82,000 over forecast 2018 through May deposit
- \$200,000 over forecast 2017/2019 combined (not yet appropriated)
- 10% over 2017 collections, with some hotels still catching up

B. Hotel Occupancy – B. Myers reported that January-March was a bit of a struggle, with occupancy down to 52.1% with new inventory. A total of 3.1% more rooms were sold, but 8.4% more rooms were available. March saw some improvement. April through April 28 also looked more favorable and was an Easter month both in 2018 and 2017. Revenue through the month was up an astounding 26.6% through this date, with room demand up 17.9% with 15.6% more rooms available.

C. Tourism Commission Budget Review – B. Myers noted that the budget shows \$119,000 in 2017 revenue carried over but not appropriated. And, expenses, including the winter meeting costs of \$108 and professional fees of \$2,650 in legal and accounting services. The balance sheet notes that the bond remains at \$2.1M at year 8 of payments.

D. HCT Budget Review –B. Myers provided actual vs. budget statements for the commissioners to review and noted revenue reimbursements that reflect receivables to help support the White River Vision Plan (pass-through funds). Expenses show that most line items tracking at or near the 25% for Q1 except grants and community development. Also April wages appeared in the statement, making that look slightly inflated.

E. Q1 KPIs Report – B. Myers updated the board on the activity metrics including Visitor Experience, Partnership, Public Relations, Social, Digital, Sports Sales and Group Sales. Several are slightly off goal due to sales activity being more robust second and third quarters. Many are surpassing goal. Room demand is not meeting the 7.9% goal for Q1 but the staff remains optimistic this metric will be hit by the end of summer.

Renner moved that the financial metrics be accepted as presented; D. Prather seconded. Motion passed.

F. HCT Audit Review Committee – B. Myers asked for volunteers to the 2017 HCT Audit Review. Christian Renner, Donna Prather and Perry Williams all agreed to serve.

IV. Old Business

A. Office Update – K. Radcliff said the HCT Board anticipates having a new LOI before June and a proposed contract by August for review at the August Tourism Commission meeting. Move-in now anticipated Spring 2020.

B. Kincaid House Updates – B. Myers had no updates from Fishers on this project to report. She did note that vandals had broken glass on the house, and the building had been boarded up by a contractor to make it secure.

C. Nickel Plate Heritage Railroad Updates – B. Myers explained to the Tourism Commission that Hamilton County Tourism has decided to accelerate the five-year \$100,000 per year gift into a two-year gift for the railroad to help them get up and running. Part of that gift will support the mobilization of the equipment and take that burden off debt service for the project. She discussed the impact on the HCT budget, and noted that the 2018 contract amendment, always planned for by both the Tourism Commission and HCT Board, would be delayed until later in the year. A contract amendment will be presented in November.

B. White River Regional Masterplan – B. Myers presented a photo and noted that the planning has officially begun. Public input sessions would begin in the summer.

VI. New Business

A. 2019 Appropriations Request – B. Myers presented a forecast revenue report for 2019 to submit to the Hamilton County Auditor's Office for review by the Hamilton County Council in September. The appropriations request would be \$5,561,408 gross or \$5,300,000 net. It is based on the following understanding:

- Assumes absorption of all that new hotel inventory slows in 2019 as it has in 2018, but not at any further pace
- No new rooms in 2019 other than 30 HGI rooms, and if there are any rooms on line in 2019 it would be late in the year and likely impact 2020
- 3% growth over 2018 anticipated actual total
- 6% growth over 2018 appropriated total
- Will not be setting aside Nickel Plate Heritage Railroad funds; this will come from the HCT account, including the NBOI loan
- With this conservative forecast, HCT Board asks the Tourism Commission to seek \$5.3M but will work to budget for \$5.2M or more if additional appropriations allow

Discussion about the appropriations took place, mostly positive given the conservative forecast. D. Prather moved that the Commission advance the request to the county. C. Renner seconded. Motion passed.

VII. There being no other business, B. Tolson moved that the meeting be adjourned at 7 p.m. Bill Smythe seconded. Motion passed.