

AGENDA

**Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors
Board and Business Development Committee
Friday, March 10, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.
Irving Convention Center - First Floor Boardroom
500 W. Las Colinas Blvd.
Irving, Texas 75039**

NOTE: A possible quorum of the Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors and City Council may be present at this Committee meeting.

1. Citizen Comments on Items Listed on the Agenda
2. Approval of December 9, 2022, Meeting Minutes
3. 2023 Legislative Agendas - Updates
4. Strategic Plan Review and Committee Next Steps
 - a. Outreach to new Council members
5. Committee Chair Report
6. Next meeting June 9, 2023

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned authority, do hereby certify that this notice of meeting was posted on the kiosk at City Hall of the City of Irving, Texas, a place readily accessible to the general public at all times, and said notice was posted by the following date and time:

_____ at _____ and remained so posted at least 72 hours before said meeting convened.

Deputy Clerk, City Secretary's Office

This meeting can be adjourned and reconvened, if necessary, the following regular business day.

Any item on this posted agenda could be discussed in executive session as long as it is within one of the permitted categories under sections 551.071 through 551.076 and section 551.087 of the Texas Government Code.

A member of the public may address the governing body regarding an item on the agenda either before or during the body's consideration of the item, upon being recognized by the presiding officer or the consent of the body.

This facility is physically accessible and parking spaces for the disabled are available. Accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. Requests for accommodations must be made 48 hours prior to the meeting. Contact the City Secretary's Office at 972-721-2493 or Relay Texas at 7-1-1 or 1-800-735-2988.

**MINUTES – BOARD AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
IRVING CONVENTION CENTER
Friday, December 9, 2022**

Those in attendance: Committee Chair and Board Vice Chair Richard Stewart, Jr., Former Board Chair David Cole, Board Chair Robert Bourgeois, Beth Bowman, Herb Gears, Julia Kang, and Joe Philipp – Committee; Colvin Gibson – Board member; Carol Boyer, Maura Gast, Susan Rose, and Diana Pfaff – ICVB Staff.

Committee Chair Richard Stewart, Jr. called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Stewart asked for any citizen comments and there were none.

Stewart asked for a motion to approve the Board and Business Development Committee minutes from September 8, 2022. With a motion from Board member David Cole, and a second from Board member Beth Bowman, the motion unanimously was approved.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION ON BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

This item was advised by the City Secretary's Office to be included on the agenda again. The Board Ordinance and Ethics Code documents are included in the complete meeting packet for review. The complete documents will also be included on the December Board meeting agenda.

2023 LEGISLATIVE AGENDAS

Included in the packet are:

- City of Irving Legislative Program for the 88th Texas Legislature
- Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce Texas Legislative Priorities for the 88th Texas Legislature
- Texas Hotel & Lodging Association 88th Legislative Priorities
- Visit Dallas 2023 Legislative Agenda
- THLA Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Committee Report: 2023 Session Public Version
- North Texas Commission Advocacy Roadmap

Gast noted the biggest concern is a lot of infringement on local controls and taking power away from cities, such as:

- Restricting cities rights for revenue caps on local municipalities, but not on the state.
- Safety codes, aesthetic rights stripped from cities and red-light cameras.
- Economic development existing use of Hotel Occupancy Tax.

Irving has the luxury of a full-time lobbyist. The North Texas Commission agenda has an intense focus on state and national legislature promoting strong local governments, education & workforce, and safeguarding a thriving business environment.

In response to a question from Board member Joe Philipp, Gast replied Mayor Stopfer and Chamber President Beth Bowman both sit on the North Texas Commission Board of Directors and work behind the scenes to support issues.

Bowman presented the Chamber's Legislative Agenda points:

- Economic Development
- Education & Workforce
- Healthcare
- Infrastructure

A survey is sent to Chamber members asking for their response on issues impacting their business. From the survey, feedback goes to the Legislative Advocacy Committee and a fine-tuned draft agenda is taken to the Board of Directors for consideration. The Board approves the priorities. Bowman noted the North Texas Commission is a good partner, but strategically the Chamber can weigh in and take the lead on some issues.

In response to a question from Board member Herb Gears, Bowman replied there is an opportunity to lean in on a position for gaming but have not heard strong support or opposition. The item comes into play every session. Gast added if there is no movement out of the Legislature this session, there may be significant effort for a statewide petition for a voter referendum during 2024, when there is a presidential election and higher voter turnout. The ICVB and the Chamber are actively involved in those conversations.

Regarding education, Stewart added that realtors are a major part of the misinformation to new residents regarding Irving schools.

Discussion was held on the electric grid and alternative fuel, hybrid/electric vehicles. Philipp added it is a complicated item and the City should be ready to address it. Bowman stated local and state officials need to continually hear the concerns and issues for the infrastructure and the growing demand. Mayor Stopfer is well respected and aggressively supports any initiative brought forward. Philipp thanked Bowman for her efforts and repeated the need for City Council and the Mayor to take a strong stand.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing/Communications Diana Pfaff asked if there will be a meet and greet event with new U.S. Congressman Nathaniel Moran. Bowman did meet with him in November and will continue with meetings. He is willing to listen and is getting to know Irving. The Chamber is looking forward to building a relationship with his team. Stewart added Irving is a small part of several districts without major influence, but the message needs to be consistent. Bowman thanked the Committee for being actively engaged and will work with the ICVB in partnership on issues and messaging.

Gast reviewed the ICVB initiatives for the Legislative Agenda.

STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW AND COMMITTEE NEXT STEPS

- Reaching out to new Council members.

ACTION ITEM: Board member David Cole to reach out to Councilman John Bloch and extend an invitation to a Board or Committee meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Board member Colvin Gibson to reach out to Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Phil Riddle and extend an invitation to an Executive Committee meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Board member Colvin Gibson to reach out to Councilman Brad LaMorgese and extend an invitation to a Board or Committee meeting.

Any accepted invitation should be communicated to Gast or Office Manager Carol Boyer for seating and catering purposes at any Board or Committee meeting. Bowman stressed the importance of reaching out and nurturing Council members to activate the Board's direction and what is best for the City.

Review of Bookings and Business Trends

The December 19 Board meeting will feature a presentation from Chief Branding Officer of Meeting Professionals International Drew Holmgreen.

There are several articles included in the meeting packet:

- *U.S. Hotel Forecast*
- *STR Slightly Cuts 2023 ADR & Occupancy Forecast*
- *Price Waterhouse Cooper Hospitality Directions Report*
- *DFW Market Mixed Signals*

Bowman added Arlington Texas hotel growth impact on Irving will be minimal, but the challenge they will continue to encounter is public attractions in a condensed area will inhibit office space growth.

Philipp raised the question of which Committee is responsible for looking at revenue projections; it was determined that it should be the Executive Committee in its role as the de facto Audit and Finance Committee.

CHAIR REPORT

Stewart noted this was his last Committee meeting as Chair. He appreciates the participation and input of the Committee members.

Stewart adjourned the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director

History of THLA State Advocacy Program

Increased Advocacy

Over the past two decades, THLA has expanded its legislative program from being primarily defensive to being a strong and proactive agenda of legislation that our trade association initiates. THLA offers and seeks passage typically on a package of two to five positive bills impacting the lodging industry every legislative session.

With a **100 % passage rate** over the last 23 years, this proactive legislation has resulted in THLA passing the following state initiatives:

- Record Levels of **State Tourism Funding** to promote Texas for tourism and hotel activity
- Over 30 percent increase to the **State Per Diem Rates**
- A **Cap on total Hotel Tax Rates** by cities & counties
- **A Cap on Hotel Tax Audits:** A Cap on the # of Years back Cities Can Audit hotel taxes. The cap matches the existing 4-year cap that the State can go back in a state tax audit.
- 51 % Reduction in the **Mixed Beverage Tax** absorbed by Hotels, saving hotels millions of dollars annually in operating costs for serving mixed beverages
- 25 % Reductions in the **state franchise tax**.
- Authority for **Tourism Public Improvement Districts** to be created in all Texas cities
- Substantial State Funding for **Beach Restoration/Preservation** (a rebate of 1/3 of the state hotel tax to coastal cities: South Padre, Galveston, Port A., and Corpus Christi).
- New Uses for **Local Hotel Tax** with ROI requirements and protection of a percentage of HOT funds to the DMO for marketing hotel activity.
- Passed amendments to state law to prevent pandemic relief from being subject to the state franchise tax.
- Passed pandemic tort claims immunity to stop pandemic-related lawsuits.

THLA has also killed: 100 % of the bills that the lodging industry has opposed. Examples include:

- Every state hotel tax increase that was opposed by the industry
- Detrimental Surcharges and fees against hotel nights. For example, THLA single-handedly killed a proposed \$1 per night surcharge against hotel room nights. If passed, would have cost hotels \$122 million in annual surcharges. Since the time that this bill was proposed, would have cost over 2.4 billion in added surcharges against the lodging industry.
- The burdensome facility, personnel & operational requirements.
- Non-tourism uses of the local hotel tax (education, pollution, daycare, city infrastructure)
- Union and Living Wage Mandate Bills

Statewide short-term rental (STR) preemption.

In 2019, for the third consecutive session, THLA opposed broad-based short-term rental preemption. In 2019, the filed bill would have prohibited cities from imposing any location or density requirements against short-term rental properties.

If this bill had passed in the form supported by the proponents, it would have created a completely unlevel playing field for lodging operators: providing short-term rental operators with unlimited power to locate short-term rental properties in residential areas while traditional lodging operators have no such power to locate in the same areas.

During the bill's consideration process, THLA worked with the bill sponsor to come up with a compromise version of the bill that the lodging industry could have supported. Unfortunately, this version was opposed by some of the bill's proponents who were not willing to compromise on the bill's provisions.

In late 2019, a Texas Court of Appeals ruled on the City of Austin's ban on non-owner occupied STRs (known as "Type 2 STRs") in a decision titled, *Zaatari v. City of Austin*. In the *Zaatari* decision, the Court essentially found the City of Austin's ban on Type 2 STRs was unconstitutionally retroactive because the City's ordinance takes away a "fundamental and settled property right" to rent the real estate in a short-term manner. This decision has not been appealed to the Texas Supreme Court, but most legal experts agree that the City's argument would not likely be received favorably by that conservative court.

In 2021, the STR issue did not surface in that legislative session.

We anticipate STR proponents will support a bill in 2023 that would provide for a statewide preemption of local governments from regulating the location of short-term rental properties.

THLA will work with the major hotel brands and the STR industry's proponents on potential compromise language that will retain the powers of cities to provide reasonable zoning regulation as to the location, number, and density of STRs, in addition to the power to permit.



Oppose repeal of the 30-day hotel tax exemption.

Every legislative session, THLA fights proposals to eliminate the exemption for “permanent residents” also known as the 30-day exemption. This exemption makes guests who stay over 30 consecutive days completely exempt from state and local hotel tax.

Smaller cities, counties, and local chambers have partnered to seek a repeal of this exemption in order to increase local hotel tax revenues. They argue that the exemption was not intended to help big corporate entities such as oil companies, railroads, and airlines from paying the hotel tax for rooms that they keep long-term for changing guests during that 30-day period.

THLA argues that the exemption for 30 days has been in existence as long as the hotel tax and there is nothing to suggest that state law did suggest that corporate entities could not use the exemption. THLA also argues that repealing the exemption is tantamount to a tax increase, and we have joined with oil, railroad, and airline lobbyists to make this argument at the legislature.

Oppose proposals to use local hotel tax for non-tourism purposes.

Every legislative session there are proposals by individual local governments to use local hotel tax for general government purposes that have little to nothing to do with tourism promotion. These bills have included provisions that would allow local hotel tax to be used for street repairs, daycare, economic development, job training, education, etc. THLA opposes all such measures.

Where there is an agreed-to local hotel tax bill that is proposed by the local DMOs and area hoteliers for special use of hotel tax, THLA seeks to secure a legislative provision that protects the funding for marketing of the area by the destination marketing organization and includes some type of return-on-investment requirement for the proposed hotel tax use category, a limit on the percentage of funds that can be used for that purpose, and a documentation requirement related to the actual ROI.

Texas is the only state in the country that has CVB funding protections and ROI requirements on new uses of the local hotel tax.

Bills filed by other entities and supported by THLA.

THLA provides technical and lobbying support for allied and affiliate entities seeking legislation that will positively affect our industry every legislative session. Although it is still early in the planning process for the 2023 session, THLA is already aware of the following items we will be supporting.

1. Support efforts to pass a resolution to amend the Texas Constitution to allow casino gambling.
2. Support legislative authority for The Woodlands Township (a special district rather than a municipality) to establish a TPID.
3. Expand the Texas Comptroller's hotel tax tracking program to require all counties to report how they use hotel tax revenue, and also expand the reporting by both cities and counties to include every category of hotel tax use and provide a monetary incentive for such reporting.
4. Support the ASSET bill that will create uniformity in employment conditions such as benefits, scheduling, paid leave, etc.
5. Support using state revenues to buy down local school district property taxes.
6. Support the expansion of the Major Events Trust Fund (MERP) and the Events Trust Fund (ERP) for new, well-qualified events.
7. Support the expansion of the Qualified Hotel Project (QHP) state entitlement program to provide economic incentives for certain hotel development.
8. Support extension of the QHP time period for rebates for pandemic-impacted QHP participants.
9. Potentially support additional local hotel tax legislation if supported locally and if the legislation contains necessary limits to protect CVB funding and protections on use.
10. Support Texas Motion Picture Alliance's objectives to get more funding for film production in Texas.
11. Support Texans for the Arts (TFA) objectives to get more funding for Texas artists.



THE WEEKLY COMMUNITY
NEWSPAPER OF
ASSOCIATIONS, CVBs
AND HOTELS

USAE

VOLUME 41, ISSUE 5

FEBRUARY 27, 2023



The New York Society of Association Executives (NYSAE) Board of Directors gathered at the New York Marriott Marquis for NYSAE's annual Meet NY networking and trade show event on February 22. Left to right in back row: Jerry Cito, NYC & Company; Colleen Harper, Illuminating Engineering Society and Chair-Elect, NYSAE; James Brannigan, Executive Director, NYSAE; Betsy Totten, Marriott International; David Jackson, KKD Tourism Advisers. Left to right in front row: Annette Homan, RIMS; Salvatore Chiarelli, SIFMA.

Inside Download This Issue

Industry Leaders Gather in Times Square for
NYSAE's Meet NY

Phoenix Hosts Successful Super
Bowl Weekend

PCMA Foundation Debuting Fashion Show

Nashville to Bid on 2028 Republican, Democratic National Conventions

By Jonathan Trager

Seeking to heal a rift with
Republicans in the Tennessee
legislature over Nashville's failure
to bid on the 2024 Republican

**MAG
TITAN**
Beyond Words



CONTENTS



SUBSCRIBE



FACEBOOK



TWITTER



ADVERTISE



MORE



ARCHIVE



PREVIOUS
STORY



NEXT
STORY

1 OF 3



PREVIOUS
PAGE



NEXT
PAGE

National Convention in 2024, city leaders have sent letters of intent to submit bids to host that convention as well as the Democratic National Convention in 2028.

A February 16 letter addressed to Ronna McDaniel, Chairwoman of the Republican National Committee (RNC), and members of the RNC Site Selection Committee states that Nashville is “open to moving forward in the process of bidding and hosting the Republican National Convention in 2028.” It was signed by Nashville Mayor John Cooper, a Democrat, and outgoing CEO of the Nashville CVC Butch Spyridon.

“The city’s bid is submitted with the understanding that the Republican National Convention and the bipartisan Local Organizing Committee will raise all required funds, and I am confident such an effort will be successful,” states the letter obtained by *USAE*.

The document notes that any site agreement must still be approved by the Nashville Metro Council, given the logistics of hosting such a massive undertaking in the city. A similar letter has been sent to the Democratic National Committee (DNC).

Spyridon told *USAE* he expects the bid for the Republican National Convention to be

submitted to the RNC by March 7. The bid for the Democratic National Convention will not have to be submitted to the DNC until at least next year.

The decision to bid on both conventions comes after the Nashville Metro Council voted down an agreement last year to host the 2024 Republican National Convention. The Republican-controlled General Assembly has responded by introducing multiple bills targeting Nashville, which include slashing funding within a Tourism Development Zone for the Music City Center and cutting the size of the Metro Council in half.

Regarding the measure that would reduce funding for the Music City Center, Spyridon said he thinks any legislation that affects the convention center’s ability to pay off bonds is a “nonstarter.” Instead, the state will likely look at putting “guard rails” around excess revenue in reserve to make sure the city can’t tap into them, Spyridon added.

A coalition of Nashville business executives also sent a letter on February 22 to Republican state leaders registering concern about the “increasingly adversarial relationship” with the city, according to the *Nashville Business Journal*.

“Protracted tension between state and local policymakers is not healthy for the city, the region or

MAG
TITAN
Beyond Words



CONTENTS



SUBSCRIBE



FACEBOOK



TWITTER



ADVERTISE



MORE



ARCHIVE



PREVIOUS
STORY



NEXT
STORY

2 OF 3



PREVIOUS
PAGE



NEXT
PAGE



the state—and has the potential to inflict long-term economic and reputational damage,” the group states. “These efforts...not only raise serious policy considerations, but they are also simply bad business.”

Spyridon reacted coolly to that group’s letter, saying he’d encouraged the coalition not to send it yet.

“Actions have to speak louder than words,” he told *USAE*. “I don’t know if [the executives’ letter] hurts, but it doesn’t help. The state is fairly mad at our mayor and our county, and we’ve got to calm the waters first so we can figure this out.”

The Nashville CVC official said although he understood why the industry executives wanted to speak they weren’t aware of the conversations that were already taking place between local and state officials.

“It’s one of those times you’ve got to make sure the right hand knows what the left hand is doing,” Spyridon said.

Local officials have already spoken directly to Republican House Speaker Cameron Sexton about the issue, Spyridon said, and the Republican leadership has indicated a “willingness to compromise.”

“It’s still early, but we feel like the effort to create dialog and bid as they have asked and create communication between a blue city in a red state is too important, so we have to find a way to work together,” he said. “I’m optimistic that we’ve softened the blow, but I’m not going to tell you everything is going away.”

Sexton spokesperson Doug Kufner said Sexton “very much appreciates [Cooper’s] leadership in finalizing and sending the letters of interest to the RNC and DNC for the 2028 conventions.”

“The bi-partisan host committee will reassemble and continue in their goal to bring a national convention to Nashville,” Kufner said. “The speaker is hopeful Nashville will be selected as the host city. He looks forward to continuing to work with Mayor Cooper for the betterment of Nashville and Tennessee in the years ahead.”

MAG
TITAN
Beyond Words



CONTENTS



SUBSCRIBE



FACEBOOK



TWITTER



ADVERTISE



MORE



ARCHIVE



PREVIOUS
STORY



NEXT
STORY

3 OF 3



PREVIOUS
PAGE



NEXT
PAGE

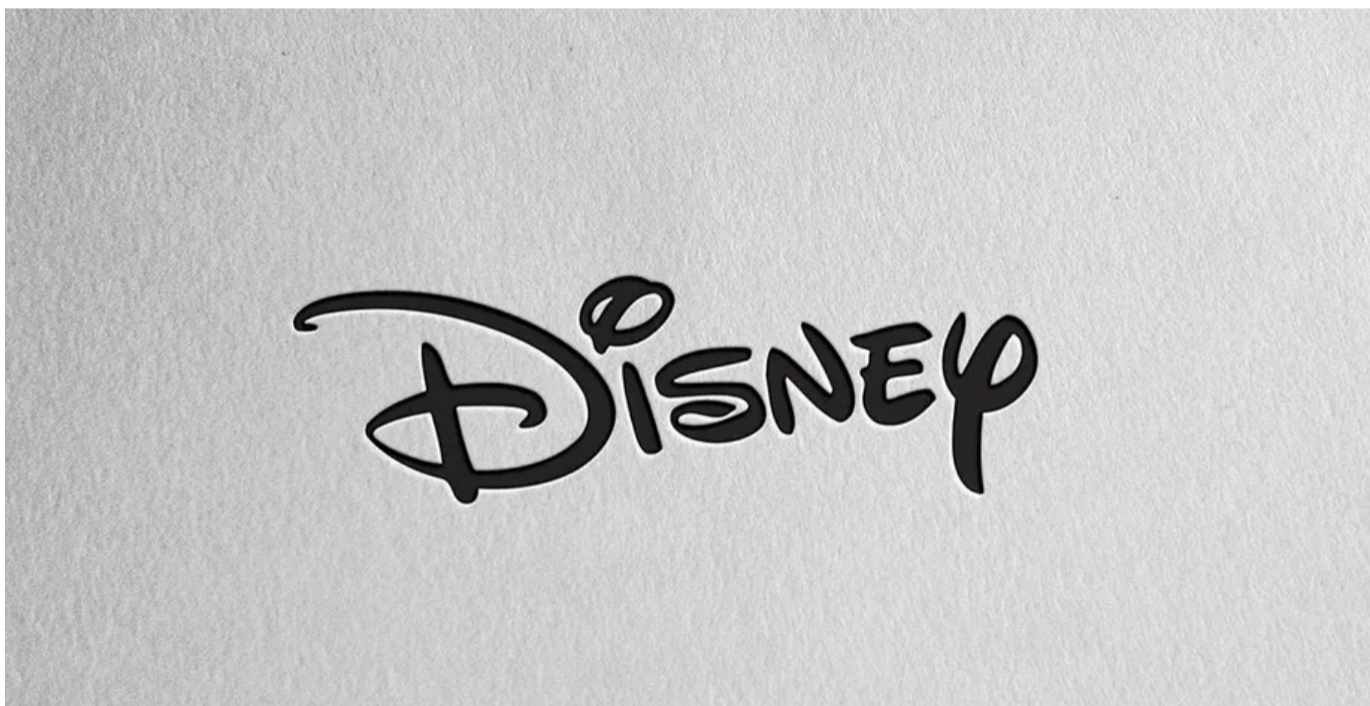
[News](#)

DeSantis Takes Over Disney District

The Florida governor now will appoint a five-member board to oversee the government services that Walt Disney World provides to its properties in the state.

by Anthony Izaguirre, Associated Press

February 28, 2023



ADVERTISEMENT

Florida Gov. [Ron DeSantis](#) on Monday signed a bill that gives him control of [Walt Disney World](#)'s self-governing district, punishing the company over its opposition to the so-called "Don't Say Gay" law.

The bill requires DeSantis, a Republican, to appoint a five-member board to oversee the government services that the Disney district provides in its sprawling theme park properties in Florida.

"Today the corporate kingdom finally comes to an end," he said at a bill signing ceremony in Lake Buena Vista. "There's a new sheriff in town, and accountability will be the order of the day."

ADVERTISEMENT

The signing came as DeSantis gears up for an expected presidential run and marks a high-profile legislative victory for a governor whose leveraging of cultural and political divides has pushed him to the fore of national Republican politics.

The takeover of the Disney district began last year when the entertainment giant, facing intense pressure, publicly opposed "Don't Say Gay," which bars instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade and lessons deemed not age-appropriate.

DeSantis moved quickly to penalize the company, directing lawmakers in the GOP-dominated Legislature to dissolve Disney's self-governing district during a special legislative session, beginning a closely watched restructuring process. DeSantis and other Republican critics of Disney slammed the company for coming out against the education law, calling it a purveyor of "woke" ideology that injects inappropriate subjects into children's entertainment.

This month, the governor called on lawmakers to return to the Capitol for another special session to finalize state control of the district, as well as approve legislation around some of his other key legislative priorities on immigration and voter fraud.

In taking on Disney, DeSantis furthered his reputation as a culture warrior willing to battle perceived political enemies and wield the power of state government to accomplish political goals, a strategy that is expected to continue ahead of his potential White House run.

The feud also reinforced the governor's brash, go-it-alone leadership style, penalizing a massive employer, tourism driver and political donor in the state over the company's stance on a piece of legislative policy.

DeSantis — whose book, "The Courage to Be Free," is coming out Tuesday — has moved in recent weeks to expand his political network through fundraisers and meetings with donors, elected officials and conservative influencers, adding to the speculation around his larger political aspirations.

The coming months will be critical to DeSantis as he builds his profile out beyond Florida. He is expected to utilize the coming regular legislative session, which begins next week, to bolster his conservative agenda before he announces his candidacy for president.

The new law changes the district's name from the Reedy Creek Improvement District to the Central Florida Tourism Oversight District and subjects it to various layers of state oversight. Board members were previously named through entities controlled by Disney.

It leaves the district and its financial abilities and debt obligations intact, addressing a chief concern of surrounding governments. It also prevents people who have worked with or contracted with a theme park in the past three years from serving on the

district's new governing board.

At his news conference, DeSantis said he would appoint Tampa attorney Martin Garcia as the chairman of the district's new governing board, along with new board members Bridget Ziegler, a conservative school board member and wife of the Florida Republican party chairman Christian Ziegler; Brian Aungst Jr., an attorney and son of a former two-term Republican mayor of Clearwater; Mike Sasso, an attorney; and Ron Peri, head of the Gathering USA ministry.

Having a separate government allows the district to issue bonds and provide zoning, fire protection, utilities and infrastructure services on its land. Republican critics of the district argued it gave Disney a commercial advantage unavailable to others.

[Disney](#) did not immediately return an emailed request for comment.

The creation of the self-governing district was instrumental in Disney's decision to build near Orlando in the 1960s. The company had told the state it planned to build a futuristic city that would include a transit system and urban planning innovations, so the company needed autonomy in building and deciding how to use the land. The futuristic city never materialized and instead morphed into a second theme park that opened in 1982.

TAGS

►

[FLORIDA](#), [WALT DISNEY PARKS AND RESORTS](#), [THEME PARKS](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

- [News](#)
[Destination Guides](#)
[Planning Tips & Trends](#)
[Incentive](#)
- [Planning Tools](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Career Development](#)
[The Stella Awards](#)
- [About Us](#)
[Terms](#)
[Privacy](#)
[Advertise With Us](#)
- [Newsletter Signup](#)
[Magazine Subscriptions](#)

Northstar Travel Media Sites

- [Meetings & Conventions](#)
[Meetings & Conventions Asia](#)
[Successful Meetings](#)
[Incentive](#)
- [Meeting News](#)
[SportsTravel](#)
- [Retail Travel](#)
[Travel Technology](#)
[Corporate Travel](#)
[Hotel Investment](#)
- [Data Products](#)
[Star Service Online](#)
[See all Northstar Brands](#)

Bagatelle

49% OFF

SHOP NOW

Shedrain

SHOP NOW

BCBGMAXAZRIA

70% OFF

SHOP NOW

50% OFF

SHOP NOW

Inc.

NEWSLETTERS SUBSCRIBE  

LEAD

Disney's Response to Florida's New Law Is a Master Class in How to Handle a Crisis

Sometimes the fight just isn't worth it. 


BY JASON ATEN, TECH COLUMNIST @JASONATEN



Don't miss your chance to get recognized! [Apply Now](#)



Inc.

NEWSLETTERS SUBSCRIBE  

When you're faced with an opponent that benefits whether they win or lose, you should probably stay out of the fight. That's almost always what happens when you're a public corporation that picks a fight with a politician with big ambitions. If they win, they get to look tough because they beat the big, evil corporation. If you win, they're the underdog fighting against the big, evil corporation. You're still the big, evil corporation.

That's basically the situation Disney is in right now. The truth is, every business owner should learn from Disney's example because the same thing could happen to you. Even if you don't find yourself in a fight, it's a great reminder of what you should be focused on.

If you remember, last year, former CEO Bob Chapek waded into the battle over Florida's education bill that sought to give parents more control over what is taught in schools. The bill, which set restrictions on how schools could talk about topics like gender ideology, was – to say the least – divisive.

Disney took a stance against the bill, which made Florida governor Ron DeSantis angry. As a result, DeSantis signed a different law on Monday that stripped Disney of its special treatment as its own quasi-governmental district.

If there was any question about whether the law signed by DeSantis was retaliation against Disney for its public stance on the education bill, DeSantis made as much clear in an op-ed in *the Wall Street Journal* on Tuesday.

The politics of the whole thing aren't that particularly interesting. Honestly, it's hard to take any of it seriously when politicians and companies use a fight to score points instead of actually getting things done to make people's lives better. What I do find interesting is Disney's response to the law removing its special district status last month:



Disney works under a number of different models and jurisdictions around the world, and regardless of the outcome, we remain committed to providing the highest quality experience for the millions of guests who visit each year.

That response is pretty banal. It doesn't seem like much more than generic corporate speak, but the truth is that it says a lot. After lawmakers passed the bill, Jeff Vahle, president of Walt Disney World, said in a statement that "we will continue to innovate, inspire and bring joy to the millions of guests who come to Florida to visit Walt Disney World each year."

Basically, the company is saying that it's not going to worry about things it can't control. Instead, it's going to focus on what it can: delivering great experiences for its customers.

Do I think Disney regrets that it poked a bear that was looking for a signature issue to launch a presidential campaign? Probably, but that bear is already out there writing op-eds and giving speeches. The only thing left for Disney to do is get back to work. Regardless of how you feel about the law, or Disney, or DeSantis, there was no good move for the company that wants to be known as the happiest place on earth.

You can make the argument that Disney had to say something. It was feeling pressure from some of its employees to take a stand against what they felt is a law that targets



vulnerable members of the LGBTQ community. It's understandable, then, that the company would think the best option was to use its massive platform and influence to say something.

The problem is, this was a fight it couldn't win. Disney and DeSantis have very different incentives. Disney is a business, and its goal is to create experiences for which people will pay very large amounts of money. DeSantis wants to score points he can use to become president of the United States and he believes that this will help. He's probably right.

DeSantis is a very savvy politician. I'm sure he's done the political math and figured out that it's to his benefit to pick this particular fight with Disney.

Disney, on the other hand, is smart to brush it off and get back to doing what it has been very good at for 50 years – knowing what matters to its customers. That doesn't mean it doesn't make mistakes. It does mean that it's at its best when it is focused on "providing the highest quality experience for the millions of guests who visit each year." That's its job, and nothing about the fight it picked with Florida was helping it do that job better.

On the other hand, its simple response is a master class for every business facing a crisis. Recognize when you're in a fight you can't win, and get back to doing what you should have been doing all along.

Inc.This Morning

The Daily Digest for Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders

[Sign up](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

MAR 2, 2023

Like this column? Sign up to [subscribe to email alerts](#) and you'll never miss a post.

The opinions expressed here by Inc.com columnists are their own, not those of Inc.com.



From: [GRA](#)
To: [IRVING](#)
Subject: [External] Frisco city council postpones vote on Universal theme park — again
Date: Thursday, February 23, 2023 10:27:45 AM

You don't often get email from gra-articles@outlook.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

USE CAUTION when clicking links & opening attachments!

Frisco city council postpones vote on Universal theme park — again

The vote on the zoning permit for the Universal Studios theme park in Frisco has been delayed for a month after a second postponement.



A rendering of the Universal Studios park that may be coming to Frisco.

KERA

By [Caroline Love](#)

Published February 22, 2023 at 5:00 AM CST

The Frisco city council and planning and zoning committee were scheduled to vote on the permit Feb. 7 but postponed it to Tuesday. They then voted to postpone the meeting a second time to March 7 — a month after when the vote was first scheduled.

Frisco residents have spoken out against the theme park at multiple public hearings, citing concerns about crime and traffic. Melinda Preston said she doesn't want Frisco to become a tourist destination.

"I do not want my city to become a destination city," Preston said. "Can you name one city that is a destination city that does not have high crime?"

Several of the residents who spoke in opposition of the amusement park live in the Cobb Hill neighborhood, which is close to the park's proposed location near the Dallas North Tollway.

Steve Cone is a member of Frisco's planning and zoning commission. He also lives in Cobb Hill. Cone said it's important to educate Frisco's citizens about the theme park and listen to their concerns.

"Universal is asking us to do something really big, to be the research and development city for where they're going to try this big, bold project," he said.

Frisco Mayor Jeff Cheney said more information about the park will be available to the public during a presentation at the following city council meeting.

Caroline Love is a [Report For America](#) corps member for KERA News.

2131 N Collins Ste 433-721
Arlington TX 76011
USA

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Change Subscriber Options](#)