

**MINUTES – DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**IRVING CONVENTION CENTER  
Tuesday, February 13, 2024**

Those in attendance were: Committee Chair Greg Malcolm, Vice Chair Nydia Hoskins, Board Chair Richard Stewart, Jr., William Mahoney, and Joe Philipp – Committee members; David Cole – Board of Directors; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Brenda Lopez, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose, Matt Tungett, and Monty White – ICVB staff; Tom Meehan – ICC staff.

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. There were no citizen comments.

Malcolm asked for a motion to approve the November 7, 2023 Committee meeting minutes. On a motion from Board Chair Richard Stewart, Jr., and a second from Board member William Mahoney, the motion was unanimously approved.

**FIFA WORLD CUP 2026 UPDATE**

Director of Sales Matt Tungett gave a meeting recap from the Dallas Sports Commission last week. Tungett and Assistant Executive Director of Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek met with DSC Executive Director Monica Paul. It has been confirmed Dallas will host nine World Cup matches, including one semi-final match. This is the most matches in any other host city. Team hotel bids and VIP hotel block bids have been distributed. There are three Irving hotels in the mix: two hotels for team blocks and one for the VIP block. The Omni Las Colinas and the Westin Irving Convention Center at Las Colinas hotels are participating. Fojtasek added the Ritz Carlton Dallas, Las Colinas is being considered for the VIP room block and the Dallas Convention Center is in play as a location for the media center. Teams will have access to University of Dallas and Dallas Baptist University fields for practices.

Fojtasek noted hotel blocks are very complicated with the formula FIFA is using and all hotels will negotiate rate during the process. Fan hotel packages will be set at a later date across the metroplex. Discussion was held on the hotel rate formula and contracts. There are 59 destinations involved in hotel room blocks across the DFW area. Fojtasek confirmed the ICVB logo will be included in the “banner” for social media and advertisements, and according to World Cup rules, AT&T Stadium will change its name to Dallas Stadium during the event. The Dallas Sports Commission is negotiating a “gap loan” and will also reach out to destinations for sponsorships and loans. A handout of the scheduled matches was distributed.

**2024 SOLAR ECLIPSE - IRVING EVENTS & ACTIVATIONS**

Senior Director of Marketing Communications Monty White gave an overview of the planned “Total Eclipse in the Park” events. Two locations will serve as official viewing areas in Irving. The free events are at Levy Plaza and Heritage Park on April 8 from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. He noted that 70% of Texas will be in the totality viewing range. ICVB is partnering with the various City departments and the Las Colinas Association to host the events. One objective is to capture visitors and drive hotel room nights, particularly on the Saturday and Sunday leading up to the event. Most Irving hotels have a two-night minimum stay

on packages for the event. The event webpage offers details for the eclipse events and promotes hotel packages.

Other objectives are to boost overnight stays at Irving hotels, increase awareness and drive engagement for Irving as a premiere destination to witness the solar eclipse, generate excitement for attendance at both event locations.

#### Levy Plaza Event:

- Free admission with online registration required.
- Largest edible Moon Pie
- Solar eclipse glasses
- Live music
- Food trucks and vendors
- Cosmic cocktails (for purchase)
- Moon (butt) sketches
- Sunflower crowns
- Fortune tellers
- Stand up paddle boards and pedal boats and gondola rides (booked through Gondola Adventures and SUP North Texas)

#### Heritage Park Event:

- Free admission
- Solar eclipse glasses
- DJ
- Food trucks
- Selfie station

White reviewed the marketing promotions, advertising and public relations, and webpage. There will be an email marketing campaign to promote the events, a media release, and moon pie promotional gift boxes.

Malcolm discussed the impact on local hotels. In reference to a similar event many years ago, hotels were overwhelmed but the event happens over a massive area and even though rates are negotiated, they will go down the nearer the date gets due to increased competition. Example: The Hilton Fairview in Allen, Texas, which is in the best path of viewing for the metroplex, dropped rate from \$399 to \$299 and they still availability. The Hilton Irving hotel lowered rate to be more competitive with packages and will have solar eclipse glasses available. Executive Director Maura Gast noted Irving's Emergency Management Team is trying to get ahead of the game in planning.

## REVIEW OF IRVING HOTEL DEVELOPMENT

An Irving Hotel Development Update spreadsheet was distributed. Gast gave an overview.

- Extended-Stay project off Greenway has been cancelled.
- The Hotel Indigo will officially open June 1; however, they have booked a buy-out over the Memorial Day weekend.
- The Wyndham on the southside of DFW Airport is open.
- Marriott AC project is moving forward.
- The Embassy Suites Las Colinas is officially open.
- Malcolm reported the Tru by Hilton is under construction and is scheduled to tentatively open fourth quarter of 2025.

Discussion was held on the opening of the Loews Arlington Hotel and Conference Center and the impact it may have on Irving hotels. The hotel offers 888 rooms and suites, 200,000 square feet of meeting space, and 66,000 square feet of outdoor function space. The Conference Center is located inside the hotel.

Gast reported the Arlington CVB has no booking rights to the property. Consensus is it will be competitive the first two years and it will be interesting to see how they are able to drive hotel rate long-term. Committee Vice Chair Nydia Hoskins noted from a hotel perspective, they will be in Irving's competitive set. The Omni Las Colinas will report separately on the Loews properties for her hotel competitive set. It is a different customer that will visit, and the area is road traffic heavy and sparse for walkable entertainment and restaurants to support a higher rate. Gast added State associations will take advantage of a low rate if offered in the first couple of years.

**ACTION ITEM:** Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose to add a flag for the Loews properties in the Source Strategies data for reporting.

## ICVB/ICC SALES PIPELINE UPDATE

Fojtasek gave an overview of the ICVB pipeline, noting fiscal year 2023-24 is half over and there are still a large number of outstanding leads. Fiscal year 2024-25 is projecting well.

### 2023-24 Room nights

- 92,680 are booked Definite.
- 2029 has seen some recent leads.
- Corporate business is still short term.

Fojtasek gave an overview of the ICC pipeline:

- 2023-24 for the year is generating good leads.
- There are some prospective leads out through 2028-29.
- Still short-term business activity.
- Three years out is the sweet spot for bookings.

Fojtasek noted the ICVB is hosting a dinner for an industry event at the end of February for *Smart Meetings* at the Ritz Carlton Dallas, Las Colinas. The attendees are high-end meeting planners. The dinner will be at the newly opened Rayleigh Underground at Toyota Music Factory.

There was no City Council report.

COMMITTEE CHAIR AND STAFF COMMENTS

The next meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2024.

ACTION ITEM: Staff to contact Rayleigh Underground for possible May 14 meeting arrangements.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME  
Executive Director