

**IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
MINUTES – DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
IRVING CONVENTION CENTER – FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2021**

Those in attendance were Greg Malcolm – Committee Chair, David Cole – Board Chair, Bob Bourgeois – Board Vice Chair, Clem Lear, and Bill Mahoney - Committee Members; Stephanie Fenley-Garcia – Board Member; Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Taylor – Council Liaison; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, and Brenda Lopez – ICVB Staff; General Manager Tom Meehan, Director of Sales Matt Tungett - ICC; Guests: Casey Tate, Special Project Manager and CIP Planning Manager Gene Moulden – City of Irving.

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

Special Project Manager Casey Tate gave an overview report of the Williams Square Plaza project that included:

- Project purpose:
 - Protecting the Legacy of the Mustangs
 - Plaza is an iconic identifier of Irving
 - Building upon “Live, Walk, Play” concept
 - Heartbeat of the new Urban Center
 - Investment in Irving as a destination and protecting an asset
 - Transforming “Heat Sink” to an inviting urban gathering space
 - An amenity for all the Urban Center
- New pumps, filters and pipes will be durable and longer lasting. The landscape areas will protect the viewing of the Mustangs from the street and add diversity of trees to the live oaks that are currently there. There will be more shrubs with year-round color.
- An elevated viewing tower and social media photo spot will be added.
- Wi-Fi will be available.
- A state-of-the-art fountain will be included and easily maintained.
- A time lapse video of the project was shown to the Committee.
- The project is expected to be completed by Spring 2022.
- The original sculptor, Robert Glen, has been a part of the project and his input has been essential.
- The City is working on reopening the Mustang Museum and the landlord is working on possible restaurants on the first floor of the buildings in the Plaza.

Executive Director Maura Gast noted programming and booking space on the Plaza will go through the City. Tate stated there is a contract with The Las Colinas Association to maintain and landscape the Plaza.

CIP Planning Manager Gene Moulden gave the Committee an update on the Heritage Park redevelopment project that included:

- Project Layout Plan
- Stage Building drawings and construction photos. The stage building is being redeveloped with a Green Room and outdoor video board.
- Library Building drawings and construction photos. The Library Building is being relocated and will include a food truck area.
- Railroad Depot and Caboose Rail Car photos. The historic rail car is being rebuilt and moved.
- Water Tower and Gazebo photos. The gazebo is being duplicated into a larger version and relocated, along with the Water Tower.
- Pioneer Walk and playground photos

The project is 90% complete and is tentatively scheduled for completion this month. The dedication tentative date is scheduled for Saturday, December 4. Discussion was held on parking around the park area and including surrounding church and other parking lots that could be used for larger events.

R-AB ORDINANCE UPDATE

Executive Director Maura Gast gave an update on the R-AB Ordinance Amendment.

- Important upcoming dates:
 - 12/9 - City Council Work Session
 - 12/13 - Planning and Zoning (P & Z) Commission Work Session
 - 1/3 - Planning and Zoning Commission Public Hearing
 - 1/13 - City Council Public Hearing & Vote
- Council and the P&Z Commission were receptive and gave positive feedback.
- Gast will send out communication to Board for support on both the 1/3 and 1/13 public hearings.
- Asking for letters and resolutions of support from the Greater Dallas Restaurant Association, Hotel Association and Chamber of Commerce.
- The development of downtown Irving has brought to light the need for change in the Ordinance.

Gast replied to a question from Malcolm that the Ordinance will be active as soon as the Council votes and approves on 1/13. All new restaurants will follow the Ordinance going forward. Current restaurants will be checked for following the new Ordinance.

RESTAURANT UPDATE

Board Chair David Cole gave a brief restaurant update report, noting the restaurant industry is struggling. Labor and supply chain issues along with inflation are key components. Delivery drivers are also not available and causing restaurants to rethink food delivery. Prices are rising, and he asked Board members to be prepared and patient.

HOTEL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Gast distributed a Hotel Development Report to the Committee and noted the Residence Inn/Courtyard combination property in the Urban Center on Highway 114 and Rochelle will be one structure with a central check-in area. It does not meet the existing standards. Also, the Hotel Indigo has asked the TIF Board for funds to improve the part of the project that will face the canal.

Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Taylor added the talk among residents is there are too many hotels and apartments in the City. Malcolm added there are a lot of items on the list that are “wish” and “want” but with supply and labor as high as it is right now, they may not come to fruition, or it will be a very long time before completion. Gast noted Tourism Economics is working on a Hotel Tax projections report.

It was discussed and agreed that the best way to protect the area is to continue to educate on the value and encourage keeping to the standards of the 2007 Ordinance that is currently on the books.

ICVB HOTEL BOOKINGS – COVID IMPACTS

- Fojtasek reviewed the ICVB Economic Impact of Lost/Cancelled Room Nights. From March 2020 to October 2021 the total is \$60,941,047.00.
- The Hotels saw cancellations from the Omicron variant prior to the Convention Center.
- It feels like things are moving forward but events are getting fewer with smaller attendance.
- The Staycations Campaign helped with keeping things in the pipeline and brought awareness that Irving can be a destination for staycations.
- Rate will be the last component to return to pre-pandemic numbers. Hotels have tried to maintain rate integrity.
- ICC Director of Sales Matt Tungett added October had no cancellations due to the Omicron variant, but November and December saw immediate cancellations. Contracts are being renegotiated due to attendance variations.
- Things are looking better for current fiscal year Quarter 3 and 4 and there are large programs and contracts in progress that will set up success down the road in the future.

Gast added November and December are typically soft due to the holidays. Board member Stephanie Fenley-Garcia added that corporate businesses are being selective about who travels and vaccination mandate restrictions. Hybrid events are expensive and technically hard to produce, but she believes business will return after the first of the year.

Malcolm added that 2022 Occupancy is coming back, but Rate is still behind. His properties are holding rate to help cover costs, supply chain issues and labor challenges. South Irving hotels have moved Rate but not back to 2019 numbers and hoping that the holiday season will be stronger than anticipated. The Dallas Cowboys football game over the Thanksgiving holiday has pushed Occupancy up.

Malcolm asked for a motion to approve the Destination Development Committee minutes for August 10, 2021, and the September 9, 2021, Special Meeting. With a motion from Board member Clem Lear and a second from Board member Bill Mahoney, the motion was unanimously approved.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled tentatively for February 8, 2022. Malcolm thanked everyone for their support and discussion. He adjourned the meeting at 12:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director