

MINUTES
Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors
Monday, May 1, 2023 at 11:45 AM
Hilton Garden Inn DFW South – Orchid and Camelia
2001 Valley View Ln.
Irving, Texas 75061

Attendance: Bob Bourgeois – Board Chair; Richard Stewart, Jr. – Board Vice Chair; Yasir Arafat, Michael Basoco, Beth Bowman, David Cole, Karen Cooperstein, Tommy DeBeaudry, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Herb Gears, Colvin Gibson, Todd Hawkins, City Manager Chris Hillman, Julia Kang, Greg Malcolm, Kelly O’Briant, Joe Philipp, Sam Reed – Board Members; Mayor Rick Stopfer, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, Chief Financial Officer Bret Starr, Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber, Councilman John Bloch, Councilman Oscar Ward and Councilman Mark Zeske – City of Irving; General Manager Tom Meehan – ICC Staff; Anabel Espinoza, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Marianne Lauda, Brenda Lopez, Brice Petty and Susan Rose – ICVB.

Board Chair Bob Bourgeois called the meeting to order at 11:48 a.m. and inquired if there were any citizen comments; there were none.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approve ICVB Board Meeting Minutes for March 27, 2023
- Accept the ICVB Financial Reports – March 2023
- Review the Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
- Accept the ICC Financial Reports – March 2023

Bourgeois called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. On a motion from Board member Karen Cooperstein, and a second from Board Vice Chair Richard Stewart, Jr., the motion was unanimously approved.

CHAIR REPORT

- Bourgeois reported the next Board meeting will be on May 22, 2023, at the Irving Convention Center.
- He thanked Irving - Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce President Beth Bowman and her team for hosting the Trade Mission from the Republic of Panama. Bourgeois and Executive Director Maura Gast accompanied Mayor Rick Stopfer, Mayor Pro Tem Al Zapanta and others from the Chamber. University of Dallas was the strategic partner in hosting this delegation.
- Bourgeois reported on the Invited Celebrity Classic and the USA Triathlon Multisport National Championships. Both events were well attended. He had the opportunity to tour the Las Colinas Association 50th anniversary mobile experience at the tournament.
- Bourgeois congratulated the successful Irving - Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce on the Wells Fargo groundbreaking and luncheon.
- Bourgeois mentioned a [Dallas Morning News](#) article in the packet referencing DFW International Airport remains the second busiest airport in the world.
- Bourgeois congratulated the Irving - Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce on choosing Brad Watson as the Chairman-Elect. An excellent choice and will do well at succeeding Janie Perelman.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Board and Business Development

Committee Chair Herb Gears reported:

- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for June 9 at the Irving Convention Center.

Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Colvin Gibson reported:

- The Community Engagement Committee met on April 11. Discussion topics were:
 - Kaylen Vessel was the recipient of the ICVB Hospitality Industry scholarship. She will be attending the University of Houston Hilton College of Hospitality. The committee is excited and delighted to use the existing criteria and get an appropriate student.
 - The Irving Convention Center staff has been working with culinary students in the Irving School system.
 - The High Spirited Citizen recognition luncheon is likely to be in September or October and the committee will continue to accept nominations. Also looking at a couple of ways to make the nomination process more organic and opportunities to deploy High Spirited Citizens in activities that will benefit the Convention Center and ICVB.
 - The Volunteer Visitor Information Program will be restarting; this was paused due to COVID.
 - The Committee will be adding up to four non-I CVB Board members to help progress towards the Strategic Plan.
- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for July 11.

Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- Malcolm noted a correction on the agenda of the date of the next meeting. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for May 9 at 11:30 a.m.

CITY REPORTS

Councilman Oscar Ward:

- Only six tickets left for the May 12 Fish Fry from 5-7 p.m., please let him know if you are interested.
- Looking forward to continuing attending the Board meetings after his term ends. This is a top-notch Board and is informative of what is going on in Irving.

Councilman Mark Zeske reported:

- Zeske's daughter teaches at Eaton High School, in Haslet, and is the student government sponsor. A group of her students attended the Texas Association of Student Councils at the Convention Center. There was glowing praise for the Irving Convention Center, hotels, and restaurants from the group.

Councilman John Bloch:

- Reported that one of the conversations at Council Work Session will be discussing amendments to entertainment uses in the zoning ordinance. Potentially will be revising how and where certain types of entertainment uses can be zoned and making distinctions between indoor and outdoor.

Mayor Rick Stopfer:

- Reported the Convention Center has been doing outstanding work in recent months. He has spoken at three or four different conferences, including the National Catholic Educational Association convention. They had 3,000 attendees and utilized the Toyota Music Factory and hotels in the area.
- The Albertson's store groundbreaking took place on Friday, April 28, 2023.
- Much has been done in the last few months in recognizing what residents would like to see in the Recreation Centers. Public input will be taken for the location near the Mustang Facility.
- It is great to see the City of Irving showcased with the USA Triathlon Multisport National Championship and Invited Celebrity Classic Golf Tournament.
- Attended the Southern Star Legacy Awards with many of the businesses in Irving. There are about 50 Japanese companies that are represented in Irving. They honored the outgoing CEO and President of Toyota, Akio Toyoda. Toyota is involved in the City of Irving as they sponsor our Music Factory with Live Nation.
- Also reported on the visit from the group from Panama. People are looking more at the City of Irving and what the City can do, and how it can become part of the global economy.
- There are three items on the City Council agenda this week and each is over a million dollars for different road construction projects across the community.
- Ten buildings have changed hands in the last six months in downtown Irving.
- There has been a great response to the Music in the Park series. One was cancelled due to the weather, but the other three events had 250-400 attendees. The park and the area are starting to see great activity, which will increase once all the road construction is complete.
- Encouraged everyone to take time and provide input if there are any projects in their neighborhood.
- Mayor Stopfer and Bowman met with Kelly-Moore Paint's Board of Directors and staff. They are excited to be in Irving. They brought 50 employees with them and are looking to hire 250 locally for their headquarters.
- *Neighborly* offices in the same building as Kelly-Moore, and they are also going through expansion and will be taking up two more floors in the building. They do a lot of work with veterans and give a 30-40% discount on their franchises for veterans.
- Excited to partner on three new homes with Habitat for Humanity. Pioneer Natural Resources has agreed to underwrite and be part of that project on these homes.
- Mayor Stopfer asked the City Manager to work with DART and find out what the City is getting for their dollars. Irving was contributing about \$72-74 million pre-pandemic. This year Irving will invest \$100 million. Some bus routes have been eliminated which causes internal problems with Dallas, and the permits cost DART \$150,000 a day. Stopfer and Hillman have been involved and trying to clean this up.

Board member Michael Basoco asked Mayor Stopfer about the ExxonMobil site. The Mayor reported he initially had thought the site could be a good opportunity as a City facility. The City saw an opportunity to buy and remodel the building and there would be another portion to sell, but they were unable to get bidding on the site. The land was bought by CCI. When Exxon decided it would sell the land, the City agreed that the parcel across the street would go to multifamily development and the bulk of the 290 acres would stay in commercial. If anything is done other than commercial, it will need to come to the Council and Planning and Zoning Commission for a change.

City Manager Chris Hillman reported:

- Congratulated Gast and team on the Invited Celebrity Classic Golf Tournament and the USA Triathlon Multisport National Championships. Two massive events with thousands of people; everything was professionally managed and well handled.
- Congratulated Mayor Stopfer, City Council, the Chamber team, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, and Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber on the Wells Fargo groundbreaking event. It has been a 4.5-year process. Phase One includes 800,000 square foot facility, and half a billion dollars. Also, two more phases each with another 400,000 square feet. Wells Fargo will have 5,000 employees and an opportunity to bring in thousands of hotel room nights.
- Budget season is here, and it will be interesting to see what happens relative to the economy. There was recently another bank failure over the weekend. This is the second largest bank failure in the country's history. The economy in Irving is still strong. There is a lower unemployment rate in Irving than in the state and the country. Wells Fargo is a fitting example of how the City is trying to ensure that businesses are highly successful.
- Proposing a budget that focuses on recruitment and retention to ensure the City has all the right people. There are approximately 200 open positions in the City. The City has been aggressive in filling those positions with hiring incentives, referral incentives, flexible schedules, work from home options. There is 11% turnover, which is about three percentage points higher than the previous years. It is the second lowest turnover rate of our comparable cities. Focusing on a competitive pay and benefits programs.
- The City's Annual Financial Report is published. There has been some confusion relative to a City "surplus," but this is not actually a surplus. It was a change in the total asset value from two fiscal years ago. That is the City's net position and not a surplus. The value of all the City's assets rose and increased in value, year-over-year. The newest numbers for this year in the net positions for the City are now about \$120 million. The City is making investments in our infrastructure, which increases the value of the City's net assets. For the General Fund, the actual operating surplus was about \$19 million.
- Election day is Saturday, May 6.
- Music on Main events have been a remarkable success, having hundreds of people attend. There will be movie events in the park later this fall.
- The City's Fusion event celebrates the diversity in Irving. It will take place at Heritage Park on May 20.

BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF REPORTS

Bourgeois welcomed, on behalf of the Board, Anabel Espinoza as the new Marketing and Communications Coordinator. Gast introduced Espinoza. She came to the ICVB from the Irving Convention Center's accounting team. She is an Irving native and lives in Irving with her husband and two children. She worked with the Irving ISD and graduated from Irving ISD.

Bureau Management

Executive Director Maura Gast reported:

- The budget process has begun and the CVB is anticipating a flat budget, as far as hotel collections go. There is still concern about softness later this year with the possibility of a recession. The budget process is being approached conservatively.

- Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber reported that the City Attorney's office will be filing for the delinquent hotel occupancy tax payments for litigation, and the item will go to City Council for authorization on June 8.
- The Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce and the ICVB will have proclamations at the City Council presented in recognition of next week's National Travel and Tourism week. Gast encouraged the Board members to attend on Thursday, May 4 at 7 p.m.
- Gast will be reporting the semi-annual ICVB update at work session on Thursday.

Gast reported for Marketing and Communications:

- The Invited Celebrity Classic, which is the PGA Legends event, was back for a second year. Staff had a presence in the media center, providing support as well as hospitality. They have confirmed that the tournament will be back for another year, with those dates set for April 15-24, 2024.
- The Marketing team created a social activation on the main plaza at the USA Triathlon Multisport National Championship Festival. The Visit Irving-branded photo opportunity was a well-executed, well-located visual rocking swing surrounded by running shoes with the hashtag Irving Rocks.
- There was concern from residents in the Urban Center regarding signage for the event. Working on better communication for road closures in future events. An attendee from La Jolla, California stated they were so impressed with how well everything thing was done and how pleasant and helpful people were.
- There were 238 marketing-generated sales leads in March, which was down slightly from the previous month but is a 25% increase over the previous year.
- In March, the Staycations campaign generated over 6,000 hotel referrals. Over the last twelve months, the Staycations Campaign has generated over 95,000 hotel referrals, representing over \$324 million in potential economic value. The programs are working and grateful for the support of City Management and City Council for the access to the funds.

Gast thanked Zeske for pointing out the National Catholic Education Association and Texas Association of Student Councils conferences. The NCEA group will be going to Pittsburgh next year, it is a big marketplace.

Sales and Services

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- Irving recently hosted several big groups. The National Catholic Education Association conference had approximately 4,000 attendees. This was a big event for Irving and encompassed much of the City. Attendance data on the Invited Celebrity Classic and USA Triathlon Multisport National Championship is being gathered and hope to be able to report the numbers at the next Board meeting.
- There are some great upcoming events. TexSom and Texas Cornhole League, which will have approximately 1,000 attendees. Frightmare is coming in May, they are expecting 8,000 attendees. Irving hosted Frightmare before the Convention Center was built at the Sheraton DFW Airport Hotel and it had to move because they outgrew the space. We are excited to see how the event will work at the Convention Center. A-KON is expecting approximately 16,000 attendees. They are utilizing the Convention Center, the Texas Lottery Plaza, the Westin Convention Center lawn, and many other locations in the Urban Center.
- Steubenville is returning and expecting 5,000 attendees and will be a presence in the area.
- *Neighborly* is a great partner to Irving. They are going through the CVB to source hotels, Sales Manager Matt Tungett has a great relationship with them. We are excited to see their growth.

- Thanked everyone who came out and volunteered for the USA Triathlon or the Invited Celebrity Classic.

Administration and Finance

Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose reported:

- The AirDNA reports for March shows:
 - There were 621 available listings, which is about a 43.4% increase in listing over last year's figure of 433.
 - The Average Daily Rate was \$221.23, which was an increase of .14% over last year.
 - Occupancy percentage of 57%, which was a decrease of 4.64% compared to last year.
 - For the hotel comparable subset, Average Daily Rate for March was \$112.19, a decrease of .23% from last year, with occupancy at 56%, a decrease of 8.72% from last year.
- The Branding survey closed on April 28. Rose thanked City Manager Hillman and his Communications team for helping promote the survey; each time the deadline was extended they were accommodating. The team that is working on this is in the preliminary stages of reviewing and analyzing the data. The goal is to complete the review in June and will be sharing the next steps with the Board.
- Over the last few weeks many of the Finance and Administration team attended conferences.
 - Office Manager Carol Boyer is attending a conference to obtain continuing education credit for her Certified Meeting Professionals Certificate. Thanked Sales and Services Coordinator Brenda Lopez for filling in while Boyer is out.
 - Accounting and Budget Director Marianne Lauda attended the Government Finance Officers Association of Texas Spring Conference held in Round Rock.
 - Technology Manager Brice Petty attended the Simpleview Conference in Houston.
- The team is working with several departments at City Hall and the ARPA Compliance Readiness Review team. They will be examining our readiness by evaluating the adequacy of the existing control design and structure and providing recommendations for improvement to ensure efficient, effective, and compliant internal processes of the City's ARPA funds.
- Continuing to work on FY 23/24 Budget.

CONVENTION CENTER MANAGEMENT

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- The ICC made their budget again in March and have made the budget for five of the first six months of the year. They have only missed one month by about \$20,000. Comparatively right at the doorstep of the 2019 numbers.
- ICC revenues are extremely high, but expenses are also up this year with the cost of labor, food, and supplies.
- For the year, there have been 19 events in March, 104 events for the year, compared to 96 last year. Attendance for the month of March was approximately 20,000 guests, and for the year were over 91,000 guests, compared to 67,000 guests last year. During the National Catholic Education Association conference, all the restaurants in the area were full, which was an amazing site to see.
- Booked 2,187 room nights in March with Convention Center events, year to date at 16,578 compared to last year 14,451 room nights.
- Currently, the customer service score for the year is at 92%.

- There are many events in the Convention Center in the months of May and June. Texas Cornhole, Trampoline and Tumbling, North Texas Business Alliance, Minority Supplier Development Council, and many other events in between.
- Building projects include:
 - Three new Combi commercial ovens, three blast chillers and two smokers have been installed. Currently testing out the smokers. The smokers will hold over 170 pounds of meat and will be able to smoke overnight, which will allow them to extend menu options.
 - The outside lighting equipment has shipped and is on its way to Irving. As the equipment arrives, plans will be made to replace the exterior lights on the building with new color changing LED lights.
 - A new parking system is being installed at the Westin Irving Convention Center garage and should be operational by the end of this week. If all goes well, it will go into the ICC parking garage next.
 - Painting and updating projects throughout the building.

Colvin asked Meehan to highlight what the ICC staff is doing with the Irving ISD culinary students. Meehan reported that the ICC is working with ISD culinary students at events the District has hosted. They are learning how to set tables, clean silverware, and serve with the ICC servers and all the prep work it takes to put on a banquet. It is a great partnership to continue to develop the student's skills and help them learn how to interact with the public.

Gast asked Meehan to comment on the SWAT training on Thursday. Meehan reported that SWAT will be training on suicide jumpers from buildings. There will be police presence, but it will all be training.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

LIVE NATION UPDATES

Live Nation General Manager Tommy DeBeaudry:

- Wrapped up five nights of events in a row this past week. Two amphitheater shows and one indoor show were sold out. Officially in the busy season which will continue through the last two weeks of November.
- There have been 15 ticketed events for the year and half of the events were close to, or were, sold out. There will be 12 ticketed events and one private event in May.
- There have been eight private events booked by Vicki Welch; she is already at 75% of her budget for 2023 in terms of booking revenue.
- The Exodus Festival is on May 20 & 21 with Kirk Franklin, who is one of the biggest names in Gospel music.

HOTEL INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member Greg Malcolm:

Welcomed everyone to South Irving and is glad to have the opportunity to host the Board meeting. Encouraged everyone to visit the brand-new dining area and living area and fitness center.

- Report for March:
 - Occupancy in Irving for hotels was 74.1%.
 - The Average Daily Rate was \$121.23.
 - Revenue per available room was \$89.89.

- In South Irving, at the south entrance of DFW the hotels in the proximity:
 - Occupancy was 79.9%.
 - The Average Daily Rate was \$147.42.
 - Revenue per available room as \$117.01.

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member David Cole:

- There are three Bills that are moving along nicely. Still have a month until Texas Legislature wraps up.
- There was a change in a Bill that would not mandate training for alcohol servers and bartenders on opioid overdose topics.
- Irving Restaurant Openings:
 - Xia Ling's Kitchen, next to Red, Hot and Blue shopping center.
 - Copper and Vine in the old Fish City Grill location.
 - Irving Restaurants coming soon:
 - Billfish Oster Bar, where The Catch was located.
 - Sickies Garage Burgers and Brews is going where Walk On's was located.
 - Sanjh, upscale Indian
 - A restaurant is also going in where The Ginger Man was located, which moved locations within Water Street.
 - Japan House, located in the Sweet Tomatoes building.
 - Tupelo Honey Southern Kitchen and Bar, a Carolina-inspired restaurant at High Point and HWY 161.
 - Dawn to Dusk, at Riverside and Royal Lane.
 - TacoMex has moved into a bigger space with dining in the same shopping center.
 - Aunt Cissy and Tio Carlos are in the same restaurant location. Aunt Cissy's serves breakfast & Tio Carlos serves lunch and dinner. The stand-alone Aunt Cissy's location has closed.

Cooperstein asked if there is anything going into the Jinbeh space. Gast reported that a Mexican restaurant, Cielito, is part of the name and believes there is a sister restaurant in Plano.

PARTNER ORGANIZATION AND STAKEHOLDER REPORTS

Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce:

Chamber President Beth Bowman reported:

- Thanked Mayor Stopfer, Council and City Manager for the leadership and always being available and for the commitment for always looking for solutions and opportunities for Irving Las Colinas.
- The Economic Development team continues to penetrate the target markets and to bring in new prospects. Currently, there are 100 prospects in the pipeline; one-fifth of those are corporate headquarters. An Economic Development Strategic Plan has been accepted by the Mayor, City Council and the Chamber Board for companies that are coming in and for engaging with prospects.
- The March unemployment rate for Irving is at 3.6%, Texas is at 4.2%, and the National average was at 3.6%. March rates were down for Irving, but slightly higher than expected. At fiscal year-end Irving was at 3.3% and at the end of Q1 in December 2022, numbers were at 2.9%. Still within the range of low unemployment.

- Thanked Meehan and the ICC for the opportunities provided to students to experience what it is like to work for a large convention center.
- Bowman expressed her appreciation for everyone for voting in the Best of Irving. Businesses who won can be found on social media channels.
- National Small Business week highlights their economic impact. The Chamber will continue with the Small Biz Blitz this year and thanked Board member Sam Reed and AlphaGraphics for partnering with the Chamber. There will be an event at Toyota Music Factory on Friday, May 12 celebrating small businesses.
- National Economic Development week brings attention to the economy in Irving.
- The Legislative Session is ending, and local control issues remain a concern for all cities.

Irving Arts and Culture

Irving Arts Center:

Arts Board Chair Kelly O'Briant reported:

- Thursday, May 18 at 7 p.m. will be the debut performance of the new Steinway Model D concert grand piano. Starring Tony- and Grammy-nominated Michael Cavanaugh.
- May 27 – August 20 at Irving Archives and Museum is the Smithsonian traveling exhibition, *Delores Huerta: Revolution in the Fields*. The exhibition is in both English and Spanish.

Las Colinas Association

Board member Julia Kang reported:

- There are two opportunities to visit the Las Colinas Association mobile exhibit.
 - May 13 at University Hills Spring Fling.
 - ICC at Board meeting on May 22.

Bourgeois adjourned the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director