

## **MINUTES**

### **Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors**

**Monday, January 22, 2024 at 11:45 AM**

**Irving Convention Center – Junior Ballroom C-D**

**500 W. Las Colinas Blvd.**

**Irving, Texas 75039**

Attendance: Richard Stewart, Jr. – Board Chair; Herb Gears – Board Vice Chair; Yasir Arafat, Michael Basoco, Stephanie Booker, Beth Bowman, Dallas Burke, Tommy DeBeaudry, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Colvin Gibson, Todd Hawkins, Chris Hillman, Nydia Hoskins, Cambria Jones, Julia Kang, Kim Limon, William Mahoney, Greg Malcolm, Kelly O'Briant, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, Sam Reed, and Dick Rogers – Board Members; City Attorney Kuruvilla Oommen, Chief Financial Officer Bret Starr – City of Irving; General Manager Tom Meehan and Assistant General Manager Jeremy Pierce – ICC Staff; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Marianne Lauda, Brice Petty, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose, Matt Tungett, and Monty White – ICVB.

Board Chair Richard Stewart, Jr. called the meeting to order at 11:45 a.m. and inquired if there were any citizen comments; there were none.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Approving the ICVB Board Meeting Minutes – December 18, 2023

Accepting the ICVB Financial Reports – September, October, and November 2023

Reviewing the Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections

Accepting the Irving Convention Center Financial Reports – November and December 2023

It was noted the Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections report is not included in this month's packet. The report will be added to the February Board meeting packet for review. Stewart asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; with a motion from Board member William Mahoney and a second from Board member Sam Reed, the motion unanimously was approved.

### **PRESENTATION**

Irving Civic Center Complex Site & Space Planning Discussion – City Manager Chris Hillman

Hillman was attending the dedication ceremony of the Whistlestop Plaza Clock Tower for former Mayor Marvin Randle. The presentation was tabled until Hillman arrived.

### **BOARD CHAIR REPORT**

- ICVB Service Award was presented to Assistant Executive Director Lori Fojtasek for her 30 years of service. Executive Director Maura Gast gave a brief history of Fojtasek's service and congratulated her on an excellent career. Gast and Stewart presented the award.
- The Board Committee assignments were presented, and Stewart asked to advise if there were any concerns with an assignment.
- Mandatory training is being scheduled for both State and City training for all Board members. An email with training and registration training will be sent to all Board members by the City Secretary's office.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Board and Business Development

Committee Chair Sam Reed reported:

- The Committee met on December 8 with a full agenda and good discussions.
- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for March 8, and everyone is invited to attend.

### Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Colvin Gibson reported:

- Recap of the January 17 Committee meeting with a review of strategies to put into place:
  - Identify and recognize High Spirited Citizens: recruitment is underway and a pocket card with key program facts will be provided to Board members and recruiters. HSC applications will be available at all Board meetings. There is a goal to receive 10-15 nominations into the pipeline by June 2024.
  - Developing an initiative to engage with citizens during the annual Heritage Society fish fry in downtown Irving. The Committee is focused on ICVB being community-friendly ambassadors to all segments of the Irving community, ethnicities as well as inclusion. Committee Vice Chair Yasir Arafat is assisting City leaders in facilitating an effective dialogue for Islamic community issues.
- The next Committee meeting is April 16.

### Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- Malcolm invited Board members to join the Committee and contribute.
- The next Committee meeting is February 13 at 11:30 a.m.

## CITY REPORTS

There were no City reports.

## BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF REPORTS

### Bureau Management

Executive Director Maura Gast reported:

- Gast gave a brief update on the two delinquent Irving hotels for Hotel Occupancy Tax. Both properties have made some payments but are still behind. There is a court hearing date set for March and both sides are going through the discovery process. Updates will continue to be presented to the Board as information is available.

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- Fojtasek announced the Sales and Services team has one open position for a Sales Manager.
- Director of Sales Matt Tungett is taking on the Sports Market, Sales Manager Donna Groves has moved from the SMERF market to Corporate market. Applications for the SMERF market are underway and final interviews scheduled.

- Fojtasek pointed out new items on the Sales and Services report in the Board packet.
  - Lead Volume for 2019 vs 2024. Corporate market is picking up but the two markets that made up the top will go down significantly. The Association market is going strong. Sports market is slow compared to 2019.
  - Peak Room Night chart shows 100-400 room night groups is significantly beating the 2019 pace and 1,000+ rooms is over 2019 levels. The over 1,000 room nights is mostly Irving Convention Center groups. The 500-900 room nights is down slightly.

Gast gave the definition of the SMERF market acronym: Sorority, Military, Education, Religious and Fraternity.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff reported:

- December was a surprisingly good month due to the increase in Irving holiday activities, the lights in Las Colinas and downtown Irving.
- The December report shows there were 158 prospects; 81 from Cvent, 49 from website and 28 were email prospects.
- Website traffic increased significantly in December with 106,416 total sessions, the second highest number of monthly sessions in 2023.
- Blog traffic reports 6,694 pageviews.
- Social media added 2,128 new followers, which brought total influencers to 162,936 followers.
- Paid search generated 57,734 sessions in December, the highest for the calendar year.
- Staycations digital campaign generated 6,561 hotel referrals and micro-campaigns generated an additional 583 hotel referrals.
- A "12 Days of Holiday Giving" promotional campaign generated 15,292 sessions and had an 81.6% engagement rate.
- In the packet is a transcript from the *Meetings Today* podcast, entitled "How Irving Texas has Transformed into a Bleisure Market." (Bleisure is a tourism term used to describe the business and leisure market without committing to one purpose solely).

#### Administration and Finance

Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose reported:

- The AirDNA reports for November:
  - There were 675 available listings, which is a 19.7% increase in listing over last year's figure of 564.
  - The Average Daily Rate was \$244.39, which was an increase of 13.40% over last year.
  - Occupancy percentage of 51.1%, which was an increase of 6.15% compared to last year.
  - Hotel comparable subset reports an Average Daily Rate for October was \$125.15, an increase of 9.62%, and Occupancy was 49.8%, an increase of 0.56%.
- The Administration and Finance team continues to update the Board portal for 2024.
- A new calendar feature is available on the Board portal to add events to any available digital calendar. Technology Manager Brice Petty will be available after the meeting to assist anyone interested in the program.
- The team is working on an expense reporting software conversion and is updating account information. The new software will be rolling out soon to staff.
- The City has closed the FY2022-23 books and now fiscal 2024-25 budget planning begins.

- ICVB and ICC staff was scheduled for training sessions and those have been rescheduled to later in the Spring due to recent weather conditions.

#### CONVENTION CENTER MANAGEMENT

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- ICC November and December financials are included in the packet.
- For the first three months of the fiscal year, there have been 37 events and 45,000 in attendance. Events are bigger and longer than previous years.
- Catering numbers are up, and Revenue is down slightly.
- The ICC has booked 6,300 room nights in the month, and 9,700 for the year.
- There were 11 returned surveys, scoring 87.3%.
- Meehan was in Austin for Southwest Showcase and visited with state associations with good conversations. Texas State and Fire Association is coming in February and in discussing with them, they are excited about being in Irving.
- January and February are both busy months. The calendar is staying full and on track to forecast another great year.
- Projects in the building:
  - Working on converting lights in the Junior Ballroom to LED / dimmable lights.
  - Other lighting projects: lobby concrete pillars, elevator outside terrace with color changing lights.
  - The monument sign on Hwy 114 will be starting soon.
  - Filling some staff positions – Sales Manager, Event Manager, and an Accounts Receivable Manager.
  - Today's lunch menu was created by the new Sous Chef, Daniel Canedo.

#### PRESENTATION

Irving Civic Center complex Site & Space Planning Discussion – City Manager Chris Hillman.

A copy of the presentation was distributed and will be uploaded to the Board portal.

Presentation notes:

- Brief History of the current building. The building is 50 years old and overcrowded. It was built with 40% room for expansion, which was met in 1986, and current accessibility standards are not met.
- The population of Irving has grown from 113,600 in 1976 to 254,715 in 2022.
- Insufficient space for staff, with multiple departments sharing space, or fragmented on various floors.
- The goal is to create a more welcoming experience.
- Four options to accommodate current and future growth demands.
  - Maintain status quo.
  - Update current facility (cosmetic and ADA requirements)
  - Renovate and expand.
  - Build new City Hall Complex – Direction from City Council was to build new and prepare for a May bond election to be called in February.
- Hillman reviewed the new complex benefits and consultant Komatsu's cost of construction numbers.
- It was noted that Bond proceeds may only be used if the new City Hall Complex is located on the existing site and land is needed for construction of the new City Hall complex.

- The City Manager's recommendations were to build at City-owned property at Delaware Creek and move forward with City Council consensus in support of a May 2024 Bond election.
- There will be a tax rate increase and examples of 3.30 cent and 2.03 cent property tax increase were reviewed.
- There are three City Hall Open House events scheduled and feedback will be taken.

Discussion was held on the possibility of other sites in Irving, and if the expansion will be enough space for the next 30 years. Hillman noted other areas of the City were considered but decided to build in a centrally located district. There may be an extension piece of City Hall in a North Irving existing building that could be used for meetings, town hall opportunities, etc. Most other city-owned facilities in Irving were 30-40 years old and would require extensive renovations.

Gibson asked if a long-range remote work possibility would impact the proposal. Hillman replied the City has taken a hybrid approach to remote work, but where it goes in the future is unknown. Board Vice Chair Herb Gears asked if the financing would affect the City's Bond debt financial capacity and jeopardize Irving's triple A rating. Hillman stated it does not affect the City's rating and, in the past, have not had to raise the tax rate with larger Bond packages. This project will raise property tax rate and ensures the dollars are approved by voters and the triple A rating is maintained. It was noted City Hall, or the Courthouse buildings can no longer be funded with certificates of obligation.

Executive Director Arts and Culture Todd Hawkins asked if the Jack Huffman building would still be connected with the City Hall building. Hillman noted it will stay where it is and be maintained. The Irving Museum is on the first floor, the Hispanic Chamber and Parks Department have 10,000-12,000 feet of space on the second floor. The third floor is the Library Administration Department and needs renovation. If not moving forward with new complex, a couple of existing City departments could move over to the second floor.

Stewart thanked Hillman for the thorough update and encouraged all Board members to attend one of the City Hall tours.

#### INDUSTRY PARTNERS

##### The Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory/Live Nation Report

- Board member Tommy DeBeaudry gave a 2023 recap report:
  - Promoted events had 360,000 fans attending.
  - Private and Rental events were budgeted for 98 events, actual was 86. This year budgeted for 7 more events than last year.
  - There were 40,000 less fan attendance than 2022 but managed to ellipse budget. Staff is getting better and more calculated on up-selling.
- Forecast for 2024:
  - Currently confirmed for 36 Promoted events through September 30, with more pending.
  - Budgeted for 95 events in 2024, currently have 19 Private events.
  - Held a successful job fair last week.
  - There was a minimum wage increase for Live Nation, but Toyota Music Factory was not originally included, but have since been updated. Staffing will be more dependable with a minimum wage increase.

## HOTEL INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member Greg Malcolm reported:

- Reporting for Irving in December:
  - Occupancy in was 54.1%, down 7.5%, last year YTD was 67.8%
  - Average Daily Rate was \$118.88, up 5.7% for the month, YTD at \$122.30, up 6.7%
  - RevPAR was down 2.2% and ended at \$82.87 up from last year.
  - Forecasting 2024 Occupancy growth of 1-2%, and ADR 4-5% growth.

Board member Kim Limon reported:

- Reporting for Hampton Inn Las Colinas:
  - STR ended December with Occupancy at 63.8%, with 19.7% growth over last year.
  - Average Daily Rate of \$105.29, up 2.7%.
  - RevPAR is \$67.20, up 23%.
  - Ended the year with Occupancy of 71.4%, up 5.7%, ADR \$118.68, up 9.9% and RevPAR \$84.73, up 16.1%.
- Pushing to raise rate in 2024 and the year has a good outlook.

Board member Nydia Hoskins reported:

- Reporting for the Omni Las Colinas recap of 2023:
  - Ended slightly under 95,000 room nights, Occupancy of 61.9%
  - Average Daily Rate \$216.09
  - RevPAR at \$130.45
  - Positive growth year-over-year
  - F&B up \$1.3 million from budget
- Travel meetings – signed large contract at the last minute with RackSpace.
- Ballroom renovation is completed and looks fantastic with positive reviews on site visits.
- This year's forecast is lower due to renovations, but still looking strong.

## INDUSTRY-AT-LARGE UPDATE

Board member Stephanie Fenley-Garcia reported for the Trade Show industry:

- 2024 for the Exhibition Industry is starting strong.
- The Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas had a 15% increase in exhibit space, 4,300 exhibitors and 1,400 were start-up companies, 60% Fortune 500 companies were represented, 135,000 attendees and 40% were international, representing 150 different countries.
- PPAI Expo had a good event despite some weather issues.
- World of Concrete trade show is in Las Vegas January 22-26.
- Face-to-face meetings and events are important in the trade show business.

## DCURD

Board member Dallas Burke reported:

- DCURD
  - Completed the Emergency Backup Generators project for the Lake Carolyn Pump Station. System is in service.
  - Dredging projects continue in the Hackberry Creek System.

- IFCD I
  - Dredging underway in the stormwater sumps of the system. Just completed a major levee repair near Spur 348.
- IFCD III
  - Several engineering projects underway including the Pump Station Discharge Pipe Rehabilitation project. This project has been selected by Texas Water for presentation at the Texas Water Conference. Project will commence in the summer of 2024.

#### RESTAURANT INDUSTRY UPDATES

No report this month.

#### PARTNER ORGANIZATION AND STAKEHOLDER REPORTS

Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce:

Chamber President Beth Bowman reported:

- Chamber Chair Brad Watson is traveling with Governor Greg Abbott and the Economic Development team to strengthen business in India.
- Unemployment in Irving is 3.1%, Texas average is 4.1% and U.S. average of 3.6%.
- Flexibility is the name of the game for return to office policies, with larger employers re-officing 1-3 days a week.
- Texas was named Business Facilities 2023 State of the Year. Texas logged more working hours than any other state.
- Bowman thanked Meehan and Gast, Mayor Stopfer and City staff for their partnership to produce an enjoyable State of the City event tomorrow.

Gibson asked what percentage of businesses considering Irving for their location ask to go to City Hall or have occasion to be in that area. Bowman replied the Chamber's Economic Development team does meet frequently at City Hall on 30-40% of projects. It is a suitable place to convene and meet with City staff. The new City Hall complex will be a great investment in the future. It is important to make a lasting first and last impression on those companies. If time is an issue from DFW Airport, may meet at the Irving Convention Center or Las Colinas Association office.

#### IRVING ARTS AND CULTURE

Executive Director Irving Arts and Culture Todd Hawkins reported:

- The Ann Hampton-Callaway event on January 5 was well attended and a beautiful event.
- Last Friday was *The Beat Goes On*, starring Lisa McClowry as Cher.
- *Swing and Sing a Jazz at Lincoln Center production* is scheduled for February 9.
- IAC Celebration Series, *Drum Tao* in Carpenter Hall on February 29.
- There is an Arts Board meeting this evening with a focus on a reorganization of the Arts Board and bylaws, which will be designed from the ICVB bylaws. Will be matching up Committees with the ICVB committees to create more alignment.

Gibson asked for an update on alcohol sales at Arts Center events. Hawkins replied it is a challenge during simultaneous events when one has free wine, and another would sell alcoholic drinks. It was noted City departments (like the Arts and Culture Department) cannot hold a liquor license and City employees cannot serve alcohol. Hopefully, everything will be settled in the next couple of months with clear direction.

#### LAS COLINAS ASSOCIATION

Las Colinas President Hammond Perot reported:

- LCA Annual Meeting is scheduled for March 26, with two open Board positions.
- LCA security contract is up this year, looking at new options for the 24/7 dispatch and call center.
- The 2023 audit should be complete for the March Annual Meeting.
- Starting some event planning for 2024 to carry over some events on Mandalay Canal and through the Urban Center.
- Looking ahead will be bringing back some familiar events, i.e., LCA Bowl-a-thon.

#### TIF

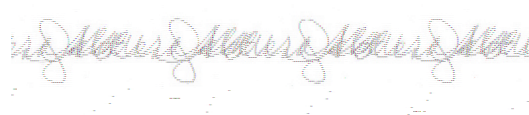
TIF Chair Dick Rogers reported:

- Thanked the Board and Gast for inviting him to attend ICVB Board meetings and give updates.
- Will work closely with City Council and City Manager on flood zone districts, starting with Wells Fargo project.
- It is an exciting time for Irving, and he is happy to be part of it.

Stewart thanked Board member Joe Philipp for representing the ICVB Board of Directors at the Marvin Randle clock tower dedication service today.

With no further discussion, Stewart adjourned the meeting at 1:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME

Executive Director