

## MINUTES

**Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors  
Monday, February 26, 2024 at 11:45 AM  
Hilton Garden Inn DFW Airport North  
2001 Valley View Lane, Orchid Camelia Salons  
Irving, Texas 75061**

Attendance: Richard Stewart, Jr. – Board Chair; Herb Gears – Board Vice Chair; Yasir Arafat, Michael Basoco, Beth Bowman, David Cole, Tommy DeBeaudry, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Colvin Gibson, Todd Hawkins, Chris Hillman, Cambria Jones, Julia Kang, William Mahoney, Greg Malcolm, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, Sam Reed, Dick Rogers, Council Liaison Kyle Taylor, and Brad Watson – Board Members; Councilman Mark Cronenwett, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber, and Councilman Al Zapanta – City of Irving; General Manager Tom Meehan – ICC Staff; Carol Boyer, Maura Gast, Wendy Foster, Marianne Lauda, Brice Petty, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose, Matt Tungett, and Monty White – ICVB. Hilton Garden Inn DFW Airport South General Manager Elray Adams; Kay Branch, Deborah Fleck, Alan Fleck – CVB Convention Services Associates; Amy Sanders – Guest.

Board Chair Richard Stewart, Jr. called the meeting to order at 11:46 a.m. and inquired if there were any citizen comments; there were none.

### CONSENT AGENDA

- Approving the ICVB Board Meeting Minutes – January 22, 2024
- Accepting the ICVB Financial Reports – December 2023 and January 2024
- Reviewing the Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
- Accepting the Irving Convention Center Financial Reports – January 2024

Stewart asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; with a motion from Board member William Mahoney and a second from Board member Colvin Gibson, the motion unanimously was approved.

### BOARD CHAIR REPORT

- ICVB Service Awards were presented to three CVB Convention Services Associates:
  - Kay Branch – 5 years
  - Alan Fleck – 5 years
  - Deborah Fleck – 5 years

Executive Director Maura Gast shared a brief background for each recipient and congratulated them on their achievements. Gast and Stewart presented the award.

Stewart reminded and encouraged all Board members to sign up for the City and State mandatory Boards and Commissions training.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Board and Business Development

Committee Chair Sam Reed reported:

- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for March 8, and everyone is invited to attend.

#### Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Colvin Gibson reported:

- High Spirited Citizen applications were distributed. There is a goal to receive 10-15 nominations by June 2024. A brochure will be created by staff for board members to use to share information about the program and encourage nominations.
- The Committee has discussed a presence at the Heritage Society Fish Fry; staff will bring forward recommendations to the next committee meeting.
- The next Committee meeting is April 16.

#### Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- Recap of February 13 Committee meeting:
  - Discussed the FIFA 2026 World Cup. Two Irving hotels are slated for team stays and one hotel will host VIPs for the event.
  - The Committee also discussed the April 8, 2024 "Total Eclipse in the Park" event with activities at Levy Plaza and Heritage Park.
- The next Committee meeting is May 14 at 11:30 a.m.

#### CITY REPORTS

Councilman Kyle Taylor reported:

- Thanked Malcolm for hosting the Board meeting.
- There is mandatory Boards and Commissions training on February 29 and another session scheduled in March. The response has been good.
- The City staff put together stats for the short-term rentals in Irving and over 70% are locally owned. A few are owned outside the state. It is valuable information as work continues to protect neighborhoods.

Councilman Mark Cronenwett reported:

- Council will be discussing housing properties and clearly identifying industrial and housing areas. There is tension when the two come close together. He believes more residential property is needed in the City and more residents are needed to support local businesses and retail that we currently do not have, such as a sporting goods store. It is a big issue on the horizon for Council discussion.

Councilman Al Zapanta deferred to the other Council members' reports.

Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders reported:

Sanders asked Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber to report on the 2024 Municipal Election.

- Weber stated that state law prohibits the use of public resources for political advertising. Early voting will be April 22-30 and Election Day is May 4, 2024. According to the Texas Election Code, a city officer or employee may not spend or authorize spending public funds for political advertising. A violation of this provision is a Class A misdemeanor. Weber is available after the meeting to answer any questions.

Sanders reported:

- The recent free winter festival “Frost Fest” was a success and a great event.
- He encouraged all to attend the April 8 Total Eclipse events.
- Council discussed the new aquatic facilities at Mustang and Senter Parks. There will be a public meeting on April 27 to review Irving Boulevard and “Let’s Play Irving” projects.
- A draft of the citywide Bike Plan is available on the City website.
- As summer approaches and students are out of school, the City has some seasonal employee openings.

## BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF REPORTS

### Bureau Management

Executive Director Maura Gast reported:

- Thanked Stewart, Board Vice Chair Herb Gears, and Board member Sam Reed for joining her and their participation at the Destination Leadership for Boards symposium in Phoenix. The event provides industry-specific learning among a network of peers around the country. Board member Cambria Jones was also in attendance with her company, Searchwide, and was a speaker at the event.

Director of Sales Matt Tungett reported for Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek:

- Fojtasek is preparing for a large client event this evening. The event is sponsored by *Smart Meetings* magazine and is centered around higher end corporate meetings and will bring 150 corporate planners to Irving. The dinner event hosted by the CVB will be at Rayleigh Underground in Toyota Music Factory. The newly flagged Ritz-Carlton here in Irving is hosting the group.
- Fojtasek and Tungett met with the Dallas Sports Commission on the FIFA World Cup event. Two team hotels have been announced in Irving, and the Ritz Carlton Dallas-Las Colinas is in conversation to be the VIP host hotel. There is still a wave of sponsorships and partnership hotels that will be announced in the next few months.
- Hired a new Sales Manager from the Marriott DFW Airport Hotel. Breanna Gallagher will start next week and has worked the SMERF market for that hotel with success.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff reported:

- In January, sessions were up 50.5% year-over-year with 82,025 total sessions.
- Staycations campaign generated 11,107 hotel referrals, up 77%.
- The team has reduced campaign spending and has introduced a new platform on Google, AI Performance Max.
- The self-guided cocktail/mocktail trail “Irving on the Rocks” will move to the Water Street area during the Toyota Music Factory renovation.
- ICVB “Total Eclipse in the Park” event at Levy Plaza on April 8 from noon to 3:00 p.m. with food trucks, vendors, selfie stations, live music and DJ, complimentary glasses. Also, the world’s largest edible Moon Pie, made by ICC Executive Chef Eduardo Alvarez. Guinness World Records has been notified. Gondola rides and paddle boards will be available from Gondola Adventures. Parking has been secured. Currently there are 1,700 registered attendees. A more family-oriented event will be at Heritage Park at the same time. The ICVB is working closely with Irving Parks and Recreation, Corporate Communications and the Las Colinas Association to make these events successful.

## Administration and Finance

Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose reported:

- The AirDNA reports for December:
  - There were 715 available listings, which is a 22.2% increase over last year's 585.
  - The Average Daily Rate was \$197.70, which was a decrease of 5.03% over last year.
  - Occupancy was 54.3%, which was a decrease of 1.09% compared to last year.
  - Hotel comparable subset reports an Average Daily Rate for December was \$96.73, a decrease of 7.24%, and Occupancy was 51.8%, an increase of 4.05% from last year.
- The Administration and Finance team continues to update the Board portal for 2024. The portal has the most up-to-date information for Board members. Stewart noted bookmarks are available with the portal URL for anyone interested.
- Working on a new expense software conversion which will roll out to staff at the end of March.
- ICVB staff onboarding materials are being updated.

## CONVENTION CENTER MANAGEMENT

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- ICC January financials are included in the packet. Financials are strong.
- In January there were 11 events and 48 events. There were 20 more events last year at this time, but attendance is up from last year's numbers. Smaller events are going away, and larger and longer events are coming in.
- The sales team is challenged with extremely limited space availability.
- February Events:
  - The Texas State Association of Emergency Services event was successful.
  - Southern Baptist Conference is in house now through February 28.
  - Independent Bankers of Texas
- March Events:
  - Texas Veterinary Association Annual Conference - February 29-March 3.
  - Graphics Pro Expo – March 4-9. This is the biggest show for electrical in the building.
  - Scrapbook Expo – March 20-23
- Projects in the building:
  - Interior and exterior LED lighting projects.
  - The monument sign construction on Hwy 114 will be starting soon.

Gast added a thank you to City staff for their assistance in correcting and connecting the bus lane entrance to the ICC northbound on Las Colinas Blvd. as part of their work installing a left-turn lane for the Wells Fargo campus under construction.

## INDUSTRY PARTNERS

The Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory/Live Nation Report

- Board member Tommy DeBeaudry reported:
  - There were several special events in February and many spanning several days.
  - There were 54 promoted shows and 91 budgeted. There are more shows pending.
  - Held the first official amphitheater event of the year on a beautiful day.
  - Spending this week prepping the building and doing repairs and maintenance to host the annual Live Nation Road Show, which is a three-day event for all senior management. The

event will focus on F&B with new culinary offerings and General Operation and Financial agendas for the year.

#### HOTEL INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member Greg Malcolm reported:

- Reporting for Irving in January 2024:
  - Occupancy in was 60.5%, down 3.1%, last year YTD was 63.4%
  - Average Daily Rate was \$124.61, up 6.9% for the month, YTD at \$116.60.
  - RevPAR was up 3.6% and ended at \$75.36, up from last year.

#### INDUSTRY-AT-LARGE UPDATE

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

- Trade Show trends are seeing more data decision making. Data is driving answers and hybrid experiences are on the rise.
- Focus is on sustainability with single-use plastics, and many exhibitors limiting paper collateral.
- Farm-to-Table local sourcing is a trend that benefits everyone.
- Immersive technologies continue to grow.
- Virtual headsets and glasses are expected to rise and increase interactive events.
- Professionals rely on immersive tech for convention center layouts. ICC does have a virtual tour on their website.
- Block Chain Encryption is big and adds privacy and security to transactions.
- Post-COVID brought new cleaning protocols and safety awareness.
- There are more Apprenticeship Building America grant opportunities that lead to good jobs with family-sustaining wages. The grants serve to strengthen the workforce and connect people in the community to good jobs.

#### RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Board member David Cole reported:

- Just returned from the Texas Restaurant Association Board meeting. It is a state association, and half the members are on the Texas Restaurant Foundation Board. There are 60 members from 25 chapters. The Texas Restaurant Association Board Conference is a three-day event.
- In March, the Texas ProStart Invitational will be in Waco, Texas. It is culinary curriculum in high schools and there are 44 culinary teams and 14 management teams in the competition. This is the first year to incorporate a Texas BBQ Club. There are 23 teams in the first-ever BBQ competition. These teams have been working since last year on their own time for their projects. The winners go to the National Competition to compete.
- Blaze Brazilian Steakhouse at Toyota Music Factory has closed.

#### PARTNER ORGANIZATION AND STAKEHOLDER REPORTS

Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce:

Chamber Chair Brad Watson reported:

- The Financial Times ranked Irving the fourth Best City to Do Business. Five of the top 10 cities are in Texas.
- Business Facilities named Texas the 2023 State of the Year. Governor Greg Abbott shared "This marks the fifth State of the Year win for Texas from Business Facilities, more than any other state."

- February 25 collaborating with Constellation Club's "Cocktails for a Cause" for a non-profit mixer to highlight Chamber member non-profits in Irving.
- Voting is open for "Best in Irving" and the last day to vote is March 29.
- Early voting for the primary election ends March 1, and Election Day is on March 5.

#### IRVING ARTS AND CULTURE

Arts Board member Deborah Fleck reported for Board Chair Kelly O'Briant:

- Irving Archives and Museum exhibition: *Reclaimed, The Art of Recology* is on view through April 28. The eclectic exhibition of work created from unwanted materials encourages viewers to perceive "trash" in a new light.
- *Books, Bark and Beeswax* featuring artwork of Dallas-based artist VET and is on display through April 28.
- Irving Arts Center:
- Reclamation: *Paintings by Diya Hedge*. Diya is a high school senior at Hockaday School in Dallas.
- *The Colors of Peru*: in collaboration with Terra Art, features the work of Peruvian artists.
- Thursday, February 29, the IAC Celebration Series, *Drum Tao* in Carpenter Hall.

Executive Director Irving Arts and Culture Todd Hawkins announced the Arts Center will be closed June, July and August 2024 for repairs and maintenance.

#### LAS COLINAS ASSOCIATION

Las Colinas President Hammond Perot reported:

- LCA Annual Meeting is scheduled for March 26, with two open Board positions.
- There are 7,595 single family homes in Las Colinas and 20,744 apartments.
- There are 30 hotels, including the Indigo and Sandman opening soon. Two properties have submitted plans and did receive a 147-room AC hotel plans. There is no status on Tempo by Hilton.
- Last year, architectural control reviewed 2,500 renovation plans, landscape plans, etc.

#### TIF

Chair Dick Rogers reported:

- Recently received the 2023 TIF Report and is in the process of reviewing.
- Continue to monitor situations in Las Colinas business district, Wells Fargo project, etc.
- Rogers had the opportunity to participate in the Zelle event at the ICC. It was a well-put together event with several hundred people over 2-3 days. The food service was done well, and ICC staff is professional.

With no further discussion, Stewart adjourned the meeting at 12:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME

Executive Director