

MINUTES
Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau
Board of Directors
Irving Arts Center
February 27, 2023

Attendance: Bob Bourgeois – Board Chair; Richard Stewart, Jr. – Board Vice Chair, Yasir Arafat, Michael Basoco, Beth Bowman, Karen Cooperstein, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Herb Gears, Colvin Gibson, Todd Hawkins, Julia Kang, Kim Limon, William Mahoney, Greg Malcolm, Kelly O’Briant, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, Sam Reed – Board members; City Manager Chris Hillman, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, Chief Financial Officer Bret Starr, Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber, Councilman Mark Zeske – City of Irving; General Manager Tom Meehan and Assistant General Manager Jeremy Pierce – ICC Staff; Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Donna Groves, Marianne Lauda, Brenda Lopez, Brice Petty, Susan Rose – ICVB.

Board Chair Bob Bourgeois called the meeting to order at 11:54 a.m. and inquired if there were any citizen comments; there were none.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approve the ICVB Board meeting minutes from January 23, 2023
- Approve the ICVB Financial Reports from January 2023
- Review the Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
- Accept the ICC Financial Reports from December 2022 and January 2023

Bourgeois called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. On a motion from Stewart and a second from Board member Herb Gears, the motion was unanimously approved.

CHAIR REPORT

- Bourgeois encouraged Board members interested in serving on a Board Committee to please let Executive Director Maura Gast and Office Manager Carol Boyer know. Getting involved will help members decide if they would be interested in a Board leadership role.
- The ICVB has a team that walks the 5K race in the Irving Marathon Series. The next event is on March 18.
- The next Board meeting is scheduled for March 27 at the Irving Convention Center – Junior Ballroom C-D

Bourgeois welcomed Donna Groves, the new Social Military, Educational, Religious and Fraternal (SMERF) market Sales Manager for the ICVB. Gast introduced Groves. She previously worked at the Sheraton, DoubleTree and is a Montana native. Groves mentioned that she has previous hotel experience in Irving and is happy to be here.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Board and Business Development

Committee Chair Herb Gears reported:

- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for March 10.

Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Colvin Gibson reported:

- Gibson thanked all the Board members who are considering joining or who have indicated their intention to join the Community Engagement Committee.
- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for April 11.

Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- The Committee met on February 14 and a recap of that meeting was reported. Discussion was had on the Business Development Incentive Program known as BizDip being funded by Hotel Occupancy Tax and if the rebate should be given to groups that are tax-exempt. The Committee consensus was that it should continue to be allowed, as there are not many groups that are tax-exempt coming through the BizDip process.
- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for May 9.

CITY REPORTS

Councilman Mark Zeske reported:

- Attended an Irving Hispanic Chamber of Commerce event at the rebranded Wyndham near Aspen Creek. It is an unbelievable improvement from what it was a few years ago and is a great addition to our city.
- Dallas Morning News reported on a revival of the Steak and Ale and Bennigan's brands and mentioned that there will be a restaurant opening off I-30 in Grand Prairie. Zeske is looking forward to seeing how that affects Irving.

City Manager Chris Hillman reported:

- The City Council amended the alcohol ordinance, changing the ratios that are allowed across the city from a 50/50 to a 40/60 ratio and 30/70 in some areas of the city, in the PUD 6 and the Heritage District area.
- The Irving Blvd. construction project is 60% complete. It has had an impact on the nearby businesses. Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders is finalizing a report showing how the City has assisted the businesses in the area in the last three to four months.
- A major construction project is beginning on MacArthur Blvd. This project will be ongoing for the next year to two years. It will start on the north side from Byron Nelson Way to Northgate Blvd. and will take six to eight months. It will continue to move south. Project will include replacing road, water, sewer, storm and many flood components.
- Summer construction will begin north of Byron Nelson Way along MacArthur Blvd. to Highway 114. Overall, it is approximately a \$31 million project.
- There have been regularly scheduled meetings with all the businesses and the residents in the area regarding traffic changes.
- The City will be holding a job fair, offering incentives and hiring bonuses, which have been doubled for full-time positions.
- Hillman encouraged everyone to provide feedback on the upcoming City website redesign.
- Irving Police Athletic League (IPAL) will be opening its new facility located on O'Connor Blvd. Across from Irving High School.
- North Texas Teen Book Festival is returning March 3-4 at the Irving Convention Center.

- Frost Fest was a great success with approximately 5,000 attendees.
- Staff priority for the upcoming budget season is to remain competitive in recruitment and retention. Classification and compensation study was done 18 months ago. There will be an update in 18 months. There are many open positions that are affecting service levels. Impacts can be seen in many departments. Solid waste collection has gone to one time per week and the Animal Shelter temporarily closes on Thursdays.
- Community Impact feedback will be requested for Lee and Lively pools and will be presented to Council at the May budget retreat. The infrastructure was deeply impacted by the winter storm two years ago. It will cost approximately \$4 million to replace each pool.

BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF REPORTS

Bureau Management

Gast reported for Marketing and Communications:

- The ICVB will be hosting the Southern Travel Explorers Conference on the weekend of March 10. The Communications team attended the conference last year and worked to bring the event to Irving this year. It is a group of social media influencers who will be seeing Irving and getting a taste of what we have to offer with the hopes of generating content and influencing their audiences to put Irving on their travel maps. There will be an opening reception at the Texican Court on Friday, March 10, to which Board and Council members have been invited.
- Part of the Communications team will be heading to Austin for South by Southwest Conference and Festival (SXSW). There will be a soft launch of the Cocktail Trail app. More details to come shortly.

Sales and Services

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- The sales team is currently working on some of the larger groups of the year. Lifestyles Unlimited group brought in guests that also visited the restaurants at Toyota Music Factory.
- USA Triathlon Multisport National Championship Festival and Invited Celebrity Classic will be returning to Irving in April on the same weekend. Both groups are looking for volunteers. Fojtasek asked if anyone is interested in volunteering to reach out to her.

Administration and Finance

Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose reported:

- The AirDNA reports for January shows:
 - There were 602 available listings, that is about a 38% increase over last year's figure of 434.
 - The Average Daily Rate was \$202.11, a decrease of 5% over last year.
 - Occupancy percentage was about 46%, with a slight decrease of 5% compared to last year.
 - For the hotel comparable subset, Average Daily Rate for January was \$102.16, slight decrease of .20% from last year, with Occupancy at 49.9% slight decrease 9%.
- The Administration and Finance team has been busy with expense reports, contracts, purchase orders and beginning the 2023-2024 budget process.

- FiredUp training took place on February 3 at the Westin Irving Convention Center Hotel. The team focus for this year will be communication as shown in the survey results. A Branding survey will be sent to meeting event professionals, visitors and potential visitors, community and visitor industry stakeholders, and site selectors/developers. The resident survey will be open on March 6 and will be open for 3 weeks. Rose has been working with City Hall Communications team to get the information out to residents.

Bourgeois expressed his appreciation for ICC General Manager Tom Meehan and the Convention Center staff that assisted with the meeting that took place during the ice storm in February. Everything was excellent and the convention center staff did a terrific job.

CONVENTION CENTER MANAGEMENT

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- Current financial standpoint is \$200,000 better than budget for the year, with the forecast looking strong.
- Booking a lot of business in the year, for the year. Over the last three to four months, there have been 40 new contracts for business that will be taking place this year.
- There have been many discussions in the past week on the impact of higher labor, supply, and food costs and how that impacts the center and changes how it does business going forward.
- For the year, there have been 68 events, compared to 63 last year. Attendance for the year was approximately 59,000 compared to 35,000 last year. This is attributed to the type of event. There are more public shows like dance and cheer.
- Over 12,000 room nights have been booked and is on pace for the year.
- Currently, the customer service score for the year is at 92.9%.
- The North Texas Teen Book Festival is back, on March 3-4. Meehan asked anyone who is attending to be patient as they are expecting 14,000 in attendance.
- This event is followed up by the Graphics Pro Expo, this is a big show with many electrical needs.
- Scrapbooking Expo on March 15-18, Sneaker show on March 19, Great American Expo on March 26, and many other events in between the big events.
- Building projects include:
 - Color-changing LED lights on the outside of the building, waiting on a couple parts to come in.
 - Currently waiting on the contract with Provident for approval on the new monument sign on Highway 114.
 - Many mechanical projects have come up. Added variable frequency drives on our equipment which extends the life of the equipment.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

LIVE NATION UPDATES

Meehan reported on behalf of Live Nation General Manager Tommy DeBeaudry:

- 2022 Recap:
 - There were 95 promoted events that welcomed over 4,000 fans in 2022.
 - Less events than 2019, but had high grossing shows and attendance, broke all records in gross revenue, as well as areas of revenue and saw increases from 25% to 30% over 2019, including food and beverage, merchandise and ticket sales.

- There were more amphitheater shows and made up 40% of all promoted events.
- There were 33 special private events.
- Slower start for 2023 on show confirmations, but they are starting to pick back up again.
 - Introducing new technology to the facility which will start to change ingress procedures and dwell times. The new metal detectors are much quicker than the former detectors. The equipment will be able to identify cell phone, keys, belts and will not trigger alarms, it will focus on density and shape.
 - Introduction of new pedestal ticket scanners. The latest in ticket scanning technology/code scanning technology will allow guests to scan tickets on pedestals with no staff assistance. They will still have staff available to help guests, but it will ultimately reduce the number of staff needed.
 - In discussion with Toyota Music Factory Management/Brookfield Properties to potentially change parking lot access protocols to improve vehicular ingress and alleviate traffic; more to come on this at a later date.
 - The Live Nation Road Show and Conference is currently taking place and includes top representatives from Legends, their concessionaire partner, as well as every General Manager from every amphitheater and large venue in their portfolio. It will also be attended by Live Nation Chief Operating Officers and Senior VP's from every region. They will be showcasing the venue, highlighting broad goals, and introducing new culinary food and beverage relationships.
- Currently in the acquisition process of new sponsorship deals, many of the original ones are expiring. Brookfield is managing the venue and new sponsorship names will be on campus and in-house concert vision screens.

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY UPDATES

No Report

- Bourgeois mentioned that he recently visited the new Copper and Vine restaurant, where the Fish City Grill was previously located. The food and service were excellent.

HOTEL INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member Greg Malcolm:

- Report for January:
 - Occupancy in Irving for hotels was 62.4% versus last year at 54.9%.
 - The average daily rate was \$116.24 versus last year at \$99.86.
 - Revenue per available room was \$72.49 versus last year at \$53.86.
 - Starting down the right path and February looks strong.
 - Hilton Garden Inn DFW South is going through minor renovations. They will be getting a new fitness center, new furniture in the lobby, restaurant and bar. The fireplace will be removed, and a bubble wall will be installed. The renovation should be completed by the end of March.

Board member Kim Limon:

- The Hampton Inn Las Colinas occupancy for January was 58.3% and up 2.1% versus their comp set.
- The ADR was \$115.85 and up 4.6%.
- Revenue per available room was \$67.55 and up 2.4%.
- Strong first of the year and February has been a very busy month.

PARTNER ORGANIZATION AND STAKEHOLDER REPORTS

Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce:

Chamber President Beth Bowman reported:

- Economic development team is hard at work continuing to generate opportunities to come to Irving Las Colinas, but also with a focus on retaining the assets in Irving.
- The Chamber is working on 100 projects in various stages, about one-fifth of those focused on corporate headquarters.
- Hosted Site Selectors that were in town, representing an audience of 27 CEOs per site selectors. They are very important key customers, and this was the first time having an audience of that magnitude in the community. They were able to see the Irving-Las Colinas story first-hand, positively influencing some of the options they are working on with their clients.
 - Selectors heard from companies who have relocated, included Chief People Officers, Chief Talent Officers and showcased the private/public partnerships with education institutions and businesses. Bowman thanked Vice President of Economic Development Diana Velazquez and the Economic development team, the City of Irving, ICVB, LCA, the business industry that was in attendance and Chamber Past Chairman Sam Reed.
 - After they left Irving, the team was immediately able to be proactive in three additional headquarter opportunities and two manufacturing opportunities and help redirect them to other projects.
- Thanked Bourgeois for joining the Chamber in representing the ICVB with a delegation to the Texas Legislative Session in Austin on Wednesday.
- As of February 23, there are 82 discriminatory bills that were filed. The filing deadline is March 10. When meeting with prospects or groups, the Chamber and ICVB are continuing to respond to quotes captured in the media about the state of Texas maybe not being welcoming for all.
- Other legislative discussions held were federal privacy policy, property tax and small business targeted relief for an increased exemption for business personal property.
- Best in Irving 2023 voting is open. Voting ends Friday, March 31.

Irving Arts and Culture

Irving Arts Center:

Arts Board Chair Kelly O'Briant reported:

- On behalf of the Irving Arts Board, O'Briant welcomed everyone to the Irving Arts Center.
- Currently on display, *Fighting the Right Fight, African American Experiences in World War II*. The show runs until April 22.
- On Saturday, March 4 at 2 p.m. there will be a screening of the documentary "Double Victory. "
- A Scholar's Talk will be featured on Saturday, March 18 at 2 p.m. with Brigadier General Leon Johnson.
- Second Saturdays will continue with free admission to the museum on the second Saturday of each month.
- *Les Ballet Trocadero De Monte Carlo* and *Kingdom Choir* were both successful events.
- Continuing with the Celebration Series:
 - *Soul of America – A Tribute to Aretha Franklin* on Friday, April 14.
- The Arts Board thanked the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, and the City staff for getting the revised RAB ordinance passed. The Irving Arts Center can now begin plans to sell alcohol during the events.

- *TGIF Comedy* series on Friday, June 23, July 28 and September 22.
- Next in the Main Gallery:
 - Annual Exhibition of Irving ISD Student Artwork on March 2 – May 1
 - *Windows: Works by Mark Goad* in the Dupree Lobby Gallery on March 4 – July 8

Executive Director Todd Hawkins reported:

Irving Archives and Museum:

- Coming off the big blockbuster with the Smithsonian for the “Green Book,” the Irving Archives and Museum was visited by over 900 people in the month of December.
- With the last two performances, there were about ten hotel rooms for the groups. Todd thanked everyone for all their support.
- They have started working with a consultant to do a business plan for the Irving Arts Center. The consultant will want to interview many of the ICVB Board as they are working to make sure the Irving Arts Center and the Department of Arts Culture is supporting the hotel industry and making the most of the hotel occupancy tax.
- Met with State Representative Terry Meza and State Senator Nathan Johnson in Austin on March 8 for the Arts Advocacy Summit. Meza’s office is lined with photos of the convention center. Hawkins will be working on sending photos of the Irving Arts Center and possibly sending student artwork from the student show.
- The Irving Arts Center has received the following awards:
 - John L. Nau III Award for Museum Excellence from the Texas Historical Commission.
 - Best Theater from the Reader’s Choice.
 - Best Art Center in Texas; and
 - The Irving Story won an award from the American Association of State and Local History.

Las Colinas Association

Board member Hammond Perot reported:

- The next LCA Board meeting is on March 14, the LCA Annual Meeting of Members is on March 28.
- Working on the 50th anniversary celebration items. A new flag has been finalized and will be displayed throughout the year. The mobile exhibit is near completion and should be ready by March 20. They are presently scheduling places to visit, and Hammond asked to let him know if anyone would like to schedule the exhibit.
- Hammond reported meeting with new ownerships.
 - Trinity Investments and Century Golf Partners have many plans for the former Four Seasons location.
 - Also having discussions with new owners of the former Exxon headquarters and Brookfield at the Toyota Music Factory. Looking at plans to adapt underutilized space. Thanked the City Manager and team for the amount of infrastructure development and work that they are doing.

Bourgeois added that the Friends of the Library are looking for volunteers to assist guests in the signing lines at the North Texas Teen Book Festival from 3 p.m. – 5 p.m. Please let Bourgeois know if you would like to volunteer. Bourgeois also mentioned one of the articles in the Board packet from the Fort Worth Report referencing the progress that they have gone through with the new convention center and how the cost has gone from \$377 million to just over \$700 million. This is a very powerful segment of the economy for every city. The work that members are doing is very important and encourages everyone to keep going.

Board member Michael Basoco mentioned an article in the Board packet on the Top 7 Resorts in the State of Texas and Irving was mentioned. He encouraged everyone to read it. Gast confirmed the article was from *Southern Living*.

Board member Yasir Arafat asked City Manager Hillman if the reconstruction of MacArthur Blvd. would affect travel direction between South and North. Hillman confirmed that there will be significant travel impacts going North and South for the next 22 to 23 months. He recommends utilizing Story Road or O'Connor Blvd. to save some time.

Arafat also asked Hillman if there is a timeframe when waste management will go back to service two days a week. Hillman reported that the solid waste collection service continues to struggle with hiring. The challenge that the city continues to run into is in order to drive the trucks you must have a commercial drivers' license. The city has increased the salaries for commercial driver license positions by 30% over the last year. The once-a-week collection is working. Hillman will be talking with Council about policy direction relative to collection and will continue to monitor the situation.

Bourgeois adjourned the meeting at 1:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,




Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director