

MINUTES
IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Jack D. Huffman Community Building - Auditorium
February 28, 2022

Attendance: David Cole – Board Chair; Bob Bourgeois – Board Vice Chair; Yasir Arafat, Michael Basoco, Beth Bowman, Karen Cooperstein, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Colvin Gibson, Todd Hawkins, City Manager Chris Hillman, Julia Kang, Kim Limon, William Mahoney, Greg Malcolm, John Nicks, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, Sam Reed, and Richard Stewart, Jr. – Board members; Council Liaison Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Taylor, Mayor Rick Stopfer and Councilman Oscar Ward – City of Irving Elected Officials; Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, Interim Chief Financial Officer Brett Star, and Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber – City of Irving; General Manager Tom Meehan and Director of Sales Matt Tungett – ICC Staff; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Brice Petty, Marianne Lauda, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose and Monty White – ICVB; Guests: Lazaro Alvarez – Irving Marathon Running Series; Lori Mansell, Lori Sirmen, Monica Soto – ICVB staff.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approve the ICVB Board of Directors meeting minutes from January 24, 2022
- Accept the ICVB Financial Reports for January 2022
- Accept the Irving Convention Center January 2022 Financial Reports

Cole called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. On a motion from Board member Richard Stewart, Jr. and a second from Board member Julia Kang, the motion was unanimously approved.

PRESENTATION

- Cole introduced Irving Marathon Race Director Lazaro Alvarez who gave a presentation on the Irving Marathon Running Series.
- The Marathon Running Series consists of eight featured events:
 - Irving Marathon – Boston Marathon Qualifier
 - St. Patrick’s Day 5K
 - Fiesta de Mayo
 - Love on the Run
 - Paws Colinas 5K-9
 - Oktoberfest
 - Turkey Trot
 - Frost Half Marathon
- The Series believes in providing healthy lifestyle opportunities and community involvement.
- The Irving Schools Foundation is the main beneficiary and donations are made directly to the Foundation by participants at each race.
- In addition, a separate scholarship is donated by the Irving Marathon Running Series and Irving Schools Foundation at each race (8 scholarships per year).

- 2021 statistics show 7,386 registrants, 363 volunteers, 5,000 spectators and \$15,699 donated funds to Irving Schools Foundation.
- Projected participation for 2022 is 16,000 registrants.
- Several levels of scholarship packages are available.
- Currently working with the local hotel industry to add hotel package as part of the registration options and the Omni Las Colinas is engaged.

Cole suggested an ICVB Board of Directors team to participate in one or more of the races either as runners/walkers or volunteers. Alvarez added a component to building relationships with the local hotels to track hotel visitors. The Texican Court, Omni Las Colinas and Westin Irving Convention Center Hotel are all packet pick-up areas. Cole noted that Alvarez is an Irving ISD graduate and has a passion for Irving and building relationships. Executive Director Maura Gast thanked Alvarez for his commitment to the event and Irving and appreciates the highly professionally produced events.

BOARD REPORTS

BOARD CHAIR

- Cole congratulated the ICVB staff members receiving their City of Irving service awards from 2020.
- Due to the pandemic with no in-person Board meetings, the service award presentations from 2020 were delayed. At next month's Board meeting, the 2021 service awards will be presented and later in the fiscal year 2022 recipients will receive their awards. Cole and Gast recognized and thanked the following awardees for their service:
 - Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff – 25 years
 - Sales Manager Lori Mansell – 5 years
 - Communications Manager Lori Sirmen – 5 years
 - Senior Accounting & Purchasing Manager Monica Soto – 5 years
- Cole noted the next ICVB Board of Directors meeting will be held on March 28 at the Irving Arts Center.
- There will be tours available today of the Irving Museum after the meeting.

BOARD COMMITTEES

Board and Business Development Committee

Committee Chair Richard Stewart, Jr. reported:

- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for March 11.
- The Committee is completed with Board members who signed up and have an interest to serve, but he noted all Board members are encouraged to attend Committee meetings.

Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Cooperstein reported:

- A luncheon to honor the High Spirited Citizen awardees will be held on March 15 at the Irving Convention Center and the full Board is invited to attend and support the program and recipients.
- There will be a temporary pause in nominations for the program.
- The next meeting will be held on April 5. The meeting time has been changed to 9:00 a.m. to accommodate those attending the Irving Salvation Army Soup, Soap, and Hope luncheon.

Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- The Committee met on February 11 at the Williams Square Mustang Plaza and received a guided “behind-the-scenes” tour of the project construction. All who attended were impressed with the project and excited to see the outcome when completed.
- The next meeting will be held on May 10 at 11:30 a.m.

CITY REPORTS

Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Taylor reported:

- Thanked Cole for participating at Planning and Zoning meetings in support of the R-AB Ordinance recommendations. The P&Z Committee has voted to table the Ordinance changes at this time. There is agreement on approximately 85% of the changes and some adjustments may be able to be made to be beneficial for the City and hotel industry, however, education is still needed for the decision-makers and community.
- Encouraged everyone to vote in the primary elections.

Mayor Rick Stopfer reported:

- Thanked the ICVB staff for their commitment in facing the challenges over the last two years.
- The City is starting to see commercial and office buildings torn down to make room for residential properties. Townhomes and single-family homes are the main focus. This will impact a decision for the City to stay in the commercial business or change. He noted 74% of the tax base currently is paid for by commercial buildings.
- Several restaurant openings have happened over the last few weeks, including Eggholic, Crumbl Cookie, Kitchen 101 in Toyota Music Factory and The Padaek, a Thai food restaurant in downtown Irving on Main Street.
- Economic development and competition continue to grow and remote work options are not consistent between companies.
- Outdoor entertainment will ramp up as the weather improves.

In response to a question from Board member Michael Basoco, Stopfer replied the two property sites next to the Four Seasons Club and Resort will be residential and free-standing offices. Board member Stephanie Fenley-Garcia asked for feedback on the downtown Irving new Starbucks location. Stopfer replied it is doing better than the other two locations in Irving and is presently considered to be the best Starbucks in the region. They have been encouraged by their reception in Irving and have enjoyed working with City staff. The location has three employees who are enrolled in the college tuition program Starbucks provides. The company is looking for other Irving locations to develop.

Councilman Oscar Ward reported:

- City Council meeting last week passed item for short-term rental registration requirements and regulations. This will go into effect October 1, and it was confirmed there will be a penalty for non-compliance.

City Manager Chris Hillman reported:

- The Toyota Music Factory mixed beverage sales tax has reported earnings equal to the highest-level pre-pandemic. This is a continued sign of recovery from COVID, and he is hopeful it will continue.
- Hillman gave a shout-out to Irving Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce President Beth Bowman and the Chamber staff for the highly successful small business blitz event. Over 1,000 small businesses were visited and thanked for their support and perseverance through this tough time.

BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF REPORTS

Gast reported:

- There is a City Council agenda item later this month regarding the Events Trust Fund for a USA Triathlon event. ICVB Sales worked hard with City staff to present all the integral parts of the event and the synergy of the teams works well. Taylor added he was honored to hear how impressed the Professional Triathletes Organization staff was with everyone they came into contact in Irving. Basoco asked if the presentation that was shared at the Henry Holmes breakfast can be shared on the Board portal.

Sales and Services

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- The 2022 Multisport National Championships Festival will be held April 28-May 1 in Irving. This is the first ever event bringing together six multiple race formats. All races will be held at Irving's Levy Event Plaza. She thanked the Las Colinas Association staff for their assistance.
- The ICVB is also hosting the Texas Society of Association Executives (TSAE) with approximately 600 meeting planners. She noted there may be some volunteer opportunities for Board members during the event.
- The Sales team is on pace and had a great January, however, the Corporate market is still the slowest to recover.
- Preparing to hire a Corporate Sales Manager in the next few months.

Marketing and Communications

Assistant Executive Director Diana Pfaff reported:

- January saw an increase in meeting sales weekly lead volume.
- Website traffic had 57,011 total sessions to both websites and holding steady.
- Blog traffic had 7,546 pageviews in January.
- Advertising engagement increased with 19,040 site visits, and most visits were from the leisure market.
- Social media added 1,780 additional Followers and Likes.
- Staycations Campaign generated 7,669 hotel referrals and 27.1 million impressions, 154,091 hotel referrals year-to-date, with a potential economic value of \$33 million.
- This fiscal year the Meetings Campaign generated 4,868 website sessions and 47 meeting inquiries.
- YTD Promoted Content Campaign generated a combined 7,885 visits through social media and the ICVB blog.
- The Marketing and Communications team has received five Adrian Awards from Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association Industry (HSMIAI), two Bronze and one Silver for Public Relations

efforts, which includes multiple social media and blog postings; one Gold for Visit Irving Safe Meetings and Staycations Campaigns.

- Marketing Director Monty White was named by HSMAI a Top 25 Extraordinary Mind for his outstanding work on the Staycation and Safe Meetings Campaigns. Those programs for September 2020-21 generated 151,000 hotel referrals and added \$25 million in economic value. It is the most successful campaign ever run and has the highest ever web traffic.
- Pfaff congratulated Alvarez on the Irving Marathon Series and added he is the most hard working and creative person to work with and the Series is professionally done. Visitors are attending and staying in hotels. He also worked on the Irving Olympic Day event. She thanked Alvarez for all he is doing in Irving.

Administration and Finance

Assistant Executive Director Administration and Finance Susan Rose reported:

- November AirDNA Report shows:
 - There were 434 available listings in Irving, which was a 9.2% decrease over last year.
 - The Average Daily Rate was \$212.65, an increase of 39.78% over last year.
 - Occupancy increased 6.04% compared to last year.
 - The hotel comparable subset Average Daily Rate for January was \$102.37, an increase of 25.58%, Occupancy of 55.2%, an increase of 19.60% from last year.
- Administration/Finance Department:
 - The team will attend several days of meetings to rebuild, refocus, and leverage our strengths. All ICVB staff will participate and review results from the Birkman Study assessment.

Basoco expressed his support of the Birkman Study assessment and asked if it could be expanded to other City departments. Gast noted that the Birkman study ICVB staff participated in was included in a Fired Up! Tourism Industry program but will share with Hillman and Director of Human Resources Jill McAdams.

Rose reported:

- During the recent ice storm and staff working remotely, the Department of Homeland Security contacted ICVB regarding a cyber-security incident.
- It was discovered there was possible exposure to two hosts for ransom groups actively targeting the network through a malicious phishing email received by an end-user.
- IT Manager Brice Petty notified the City Information Technology team of the incident and worked with them for additional resources.
- The system was isolated within several hours after the email receipt on January 19 and has remained isolated since. Homeland Security notified the ICVB on February 4.
- Data backup had recently taken place.
- ARPA funding was recently used to upgrade the security network, which better positioned us for this incident.
- The majority of ICVB documents are housed in the Cloud so there has been little disruption in daily processes for staff.
- Rose expressed her appreciation for Petty, City Hall IT Department's responsiveness and specifically mentioned Chief Technology Officer Chad Powell, Assistant Information Technology Director Bennie Boysen, and Information Security Officer Jose Mendez for their invaluable assistance.

IRVING CONVENTION CENTER

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- There were 18 events in January, which is an improvement.
- This is the fourth month in a row the ICC has made budget and is showing \$200,000 ahead of budget.
- Recovery is slow and steady.
- This fiscal year is very different with Rental income up and Catering remaining down. The dynamics of events are different, with Corporate business not back into full swing, but Public shows that pay Rental fees have increased. Will continue to work to balance and end the year on target.
- Concessions and room-set labor is being fulfilled by staff to cut costs.
- Projects in the building include changing out the lighting in the Exhibit Hall and Grand Ballroom, \$100,000 in new landscaping, Grand Ballroom chair replacement and installation of monument signs in the front of the building.

Director of Sales Matt Tungett reported:

- There were five cancellations in January, and zero in February.
- Starting to build back staff travel into the schedules. ARPA funds are being used for travel to an Association Market event in Austin and a national tradeshow later in the year.
- March is the first month in two years comparable to 2019 for the number for events.
- Southern Baptist, North Texas Teen Book Festival, Quinceañera Expo, and First Robotics are all back again.
- Closing out the month with a four-day corporate program, which is the first one in two years.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Hotel Partners

- Malcolm reported the January report for the City shows 54.3% Occupancy.
- Average Daily Rate is \$99.48.
- RevPAR is \$53.98 for the month.
- Hilton Garden Inn DFW South for January 2022 is showing 78% Occupancy, \$126.97 Average Daily Rate.
- Should beat budget in March and all indications are trending in the right way.

Board member Kim Limon reported:

- Hampton Inn Irving/Las Colinas ended December with Occupancy of 53.3%, Average Daily Rate of \$94.96, growth index 120% over the competitive set.
- Numbers continue to grow, and February looks good and should end with a 63% increase over January.
- The Hilton Garden Inn Las Colinas and Hampton Inn Irving/Las Colinas hired a dual Sales Manager.

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Board Chair David Cole reported:

- Texas Restaurant Association Board of Directors met for their bi-annual meeting at the Dallas Marriott Uptown. The Board spent three days looking hard at the restaurant industry. Their leadership has brought Texas to the forefront and people all over the country and world are looking to see what Texas is doing in the industry.
- Six of the eight legislative bills brought by the TRA were passed.
- The new normal for fine dining restaurants shows 60% are doing take-out business and 40% are doing delivery now, and many have smaller menus.
- There is growth in the restaurant business in Irving and some are opening into restaurant locations that closed during the pandemic. Foodistaan has opened in the Rodizio location. Sapp Sapp is now The Padaek who is owned by a seasoned restaurateur. Champps restaurant location is under construction for a new Brazilian steakhouse, Crumbl Cookie and Fajita Pete's moved into previously closed spaces.
- Irving Boulevard construction is a needed development but need to educate the community on traffic flow and to visit restaurant locations along the construction area and be patient.
- Friday Fish Fry benefitting the Irving Heritage Society begins March 4 through April 8 from 4:00-8:00 p.m. at Big State.
- Greg Den Herder with Amber Green Corporation and a member of the Houston Texas Restaurant Association is looking to open a business at DFW Airport area. Cole to contact the Irving Chamber to seek potential properties.

Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce

Board member John Nicks reported:

- Economic Development Team continues to fill the pipeline, representing \$28 million in capital investment and 28,000 jobs.
- U.S. Department of Labor reports Unemployment rate declined in Irving to 3.7%, compared to the peak in January 2021 of 6.8%.
- The Chamber team, alongside a group of volunteers did an Irving small business blitz on February 14. The relationships built are valuable and he thanked the team and volunteers for their commitment to the community.
- Deadline to file for local elections is this week – there are three open seats on the May ballot. The Chamber is working with candidates to highlight their priorities and post on the Chamber website and serve as a local resource.
- Ribbon cutting on March 2 for On the Road Garage at 1:00 p.m.
- Women's Leadership Forum: Creating a Gender-Equal World on March 8 at the Irving Arts Center.

Arts and Culture

Executive Director Arts and Culture Todd Hawkins reported:

- A tour of the Irving Archives Museum will be available after the meeting.
- Archives and Museum:
 - *I Am A Man: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1960-70*
 - *She*: Phase 2 of an exhibition about the Bear Creek Community, curated by Phyllis Caraway Franklin.

- *Citizens at Last: The Women's Suffrage Moment in Texas* another curated exhibition with the League of Women Voters of Irving.
 - *Her Story* curated by the City of Irving's Diversity and Inclusion Committee, highlighting five Irving women who have had a significant impact on Irving.
 - There is virtual and in-person programming for these exhibitions to meet the challenges of the pandemic, as well as reach out with digital content.
 - Next month the first bilingual exhibition *Pleibol!* In the Barrios and the Big Leagues opens, partnering with Irving Hispanic Chamber and the Dallas Mexican American Historical League.
- A communication and marketing campaign is ongoing to increase awareness of the Museum.
 - There is an electronically distributed newsletter that highlights exhibits, collections, and upcoming events. Currently there are 1,098 individual emails.
 - Ads were placed in Tour Texas publications (Texas Highways Events, Texas State Travel Guide, Texas Highways, and TourTexas.com), The Burb, Hackberry Creek newsletter, Heritage Herald, Texas Rangers Yearbook and DFW Child.
 - New website continues to drive traffic with 1,419 visitors in January and 2,354-page impressions.
 - The IAM Facebook page reached 21,771 people last month.
 - Restoration work continues at the Jackie Townsell Bear Creek Heritage Center.
 - The Masonic Lodge siding and balcony repairs are complete, as well as exterior painting. Currently waiting for delivery of new exterior doors. The first-floor interior has been painted and drywall work is complete.
 - The Davis House structural repairs are underway with siding, paint, and concrete work for a new ADA ramp.
 - Green House repairs are progressing on schedule.
 - The Mustang Museum lease has been signed and work will begin to reinstall the Mustang Museum at Williams Square. The goal is to be ready to open at the same time as the newly remodeled Williams Square Plaza.
 - Excited to host the ICVB Board of Directors meeting in March at the Irving Arts Center.

The Las Colinas Association

Board member Hammond Perot reported:

- The Las Colinas Association Annual Meeting is scheduled for March 22. Board member elections will be held.
- The Urban Center wayfinding project is 80% complete – redesign of monument sign has been delayed but hoping to have the project complete by the end of March.
- Upcoming projects: infrastructure enhancement, history exhibit, book project, LCA 50th Anniversary event.

Cole adjourned the meeting at 1:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director