

**MINUTES**  
**IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**Irving Convention Center – Junior Ballroom C-D**  
**August 22, 2022**

Attendance: David Cole – Board Chair; Bob Bourgeois – Board Vice Chair; Yasir Arafat, Beth Bowman, Karen Cooperstein, Herbert Gears, Colvin Gibson, Todd Hawkins, Nydia Hoskins, Julia Kang, Kim Limon, William Mahoney, Greg Malcolm, John Nicks, Kelly O’Briant, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, Sam Reed, Richard Stewart, Jr., and Council Liaison Kyle Taylor – Board members; Mayor Rick Stopfer, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, Chief Financial Officer Bret Starr, Councilman Oscar Ward, Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber, Councilman Al Zapanta, and Councilman Mark Zeske – City of Irving; General Manager Tom Meehan – ICC Staff; Carol Boyer, Maura Gast, Marianne Lauda, Brice Petty, Diana Pfaff, and Susan Rose – ICVB.

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

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Approve the ICVB Board of Directors meeting minutes from July 25, 2022
- Accept the ICVB Financial Reports for July 2022
- Review of Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections – June 2022
- Accept the ICC Financial Reports for July 2022

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 Karen Cooperstein, the motion was unanimously approved.

**CHAIR REPORT**

- A Board Leadership Interest Form was distributed as a handout and Cole asked all Board members to complete the form and return to him by August 31. The form allows Board members to express interest in serving on the Board as Chair, Vice Chair and Board Committee leadership.
- Cole reported the Nominating Task Force has met and will be sending their nomination recommendations to the Board and Business Development Committee for discussion and action.
- The Las Colinas Association Bowl-a-thon will be held on September 14 and the ICVB has registered for two teams. A sign-up sheet was distributed as a handout for those interested in bowling on a team or being a spectator at the event. Tickets have been purchased and bowlers are needed to fill the teams. Spectators must also have a ticket.
- The next Board meeting will be held on Monday, September 26 at the Irving Convention Center.

COVID-19 / American Rescue Plan Act Update  
No further update.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

##### Board and Business Development

Committee Chair Richard Stewart, Jr. reported:

- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 9 at 9:00 a.m. The Committee will discuss the Nominating Task Force report. He encouraged all Board members to attend and participate.

##### Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Karen Cooperstein reported:

- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for October 11 at 9:00 a.m.

##### Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- The Committee met on August 9 and heard presentations regarding the Heritage District project and update on the R-AB Ordinance. He encouraged Board members to attend Committee meetings to be better informed. The meetings are very informative and detailed.
- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for November 8 at 11:30 a.m.

#### CITY REPORTS

Council Liaison Kyle Taylor reported:

- The Council previously spent time in discussion on Future in Focus from each City department at meetings prior to the actual retreat, which streamlined the Budget Retreat process. It was one of the best Budget Retreats he has ever attended. Discussions were held on property tax rate reduction, concerns about the economy and needs at the City for labor and equipment.
- Council is very supportive of the second tranche of ARPA funds for the ICVB.

Councilman Oscar Ward

- Echoed comments on the excellent Budget Retreat.
- Council voted not to exceed the current tax rate, but still can lower the rate at the time the budget is approved.
- Expressed his pride in the Convention Center at the Irving Transportation Summit. Comments from Congress and State Representatives were outstanding for the facility and staff.

Councilman Mark Zeske reported:

- The City is doing a fantastic job and he appreciates the support.
- Appreciates how the ICVB has handled the issues and the challenges of the last few years.

Mayor Rick Stopfer reported:

- Agreed it was a great Budget Retreat, the City is looking at taking a global perspective.
- With over 1,500 employees, discussion was held on retaining and keeping employees happy. Topics included paid holidays, facility improvements and discussion on the hiring challenges the City is facing.
- The City is doing well, and economic development is good.
- The Irving Transportation Summit was successful.
- Using Bond dollars to move forward with library facility projects, senior facility improvements, and park expansion.

- The 66-mile-long biking and walking trail that will connect Dallas, Arlington, Irving, and Grand Prairie has been named Dallas Discovery Trail. Irving is planning on having bike racks, drinking fountains and plaques along its portion of the trail that will tell the Irving story.
- Continue to see sales tax dollars growth and resale of home developments.
- Commercial and business markets are good and have added two Fortune 500 companies.
- Stopfer expressed his pride in how Irving hoteliers have survived the pandemic and have had some continued expansion.

#### Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders

- There is over \$10 million in ARPA funding for the coming year which will be recommended to allow ICVB what it will need to re-fill its drained reserves and to cover operating costs for the ICVB; Irving Arts and Culture has had its ARPA requests recommended as well.
- Completed budget workshop and more discussions to come.

#### BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF REPORTS

##### Bureau Management

##### Executive Director Maura Gast reported:

- Thanked Accounting and Budget Director Marianne Lauda for her continued work and assistance at the recent Budget Retreat. She also expressed her gratitude to the City Management Team for their support and understanding of the importance of re-establishing ICVB reserves. She is hopeful that at the end of the next fiscal year all funds will be protected going forward.
- The Texas Society of Association Executives will be hosted at the Convention Center beginning September 11 and will be reaching out to Board members to participate in managing the Visitor Information Kiosk, and other opportunities during the opening reception. Will update the Board once details are finalized.
- New Element Hotel has opened on Highway 114. The Sales staff toured the property and were very impressed with the meeting space on the top floor that has beautiful views of the area.
- Gast asked that the Board keep Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek and her family in their thoughts while her father is in the hospital.
- The Sales team has identified a candidate to replace Sales Manager Katherine DiPietro in the SMERF (Social, Military, Education, Religious and Fraternal) Market. The new hire will start in time to train with DiPietro and get up to speed on the market.

##### Marketing and Communications

##### Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff reported:

- July website traffic was the second highest to date, with 105,435 sessions to both websites. July was the second time traffic exceeded 100,000 in a single month.
- Blog traffic had over 13,000 pageviews.
- Social media added 883 additional followers and brings the total influence to over 134,000.
- There were 171 total prospects in July, which includes 38 RFPs from submissions.
- The aggregated weekly lead volume of over 200 U.S. DMOs shows the weekly lead volume in 2022 higher than the same period in 2020 and 2021 but remains below pre-pandemic levels.
- TripAdvisor was again the top performer for website visits in July, followed by MPI and Priceline. Paid search increased with 15,821 sites.
- Digital Campaigns, funded through the CARES Act and ARPA:

- Staycations generated 12,978 hotel referrals and a conversion rate near 50%. In the last year, the campaign has generated 109,561 hotel referrals, representing over \$32 million in Potential Economic Value.
- Meetings Campaign generated 15,599 website sessions and 273 meeting-sales inquiries in the last fiscal year.
- Promoted Content Campaign has generated 37,032 post engagements and 6,270 blog visits.
- Micro-Campaigns to date have generated 8,373 hotel referrals.
- This year the OTA Campaign has generated 12,395 hotel bookings, 15,901 room nights and over \$2 million in direct hotel revenue.
- At the end of August, Marketing and Communications Coordinator Carol Stoddard is retiring. There will be a small retirement celebration on August 30 from 4:00-6:00 p.m., and all Board members are invited to attend and wish her well. The MarCom team has it narrowed down to two candidates for her replacement.

#### Administration and Finance

Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose reported:

- The AirDNA report shows:
  - For the month of June there were 553 available listings in Irving, which was a 46.7% increase over last year of 377.
  - Average Daily Rate for June was \$210.66, a decrease of 6.55% over last year.
  - Occupancy percentage was 62.2%, a decrease of 3.95% compared to last year.
  - For the hotel comparable subset, Average Daily Rate for June was \$116.12, and increase of 10.60% from last year, with Occupancy at 64.7%, an increase of 6.28%.
  - For the month of July, there were 536 available listings in Irving, which was a 47.3% increase in listing over last year's figure of 364.
- The Administration and Finance team:
  - Rose echoed comments of support from Lauda for the budget process in another especially difficult year.
  - Office Manager Carol Boyer is assisting in the training for the new Convention Center Receptionist and attended the Volunteer Fair on August 6 at the Irving Arts Center to recruit volunteers for the Visitor Information Kiosk pilot program.
  - IT Manager Brice Petty is deep into the process of implementing an authentication request program when joining Wi-Fi in the building and office space.

Boyer gave an update on the Visitor Information pilot program and noted there are several events in the Convention Center before the end of the calendar year with opportunities to use the Visitor Information Kiosk. Board and former Board members will be contacted on joining the volunteer team to represent Irving at these events.

#### CONVENTION CENTER MANAGEMENT

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- July was a successful month and reported that the Convention Center achieved budget nine of the ten months in the year.
- There were 166 events to date and looking to be over 200 by end of the year.
- To date, 5,604 visitors and 157,455 visitors recorded this year.

- Future guest rooms booked this month shows 5,498 and 26,424 for the year, compared to 15,250 in the prior year.
- Five surveys were returned with 100% score, and 94.6% for the year.
- This is a very successful year in a much different way and might be the most successful to date. It is a different model and mix of events but producing more revenue than any other year.
- August calendar is busy, and September is loaded with events.
- Building projects include:
  - Working on new guest experiences. Attended the Savor Conference, which is a catering tradeshow, saw new catering equipment, and is looking forward to changing the look and experience of catering for our guests. Catering is the foundation of what the ICC bases everything from and is an integral part of our reputation.
  - Staffing is still a challenge: hired a Sales Manager, Front Desk Receptionist, close to hiring an Event Manager and working with the ICVB to fill positions and exchanging prospective candidate information.
  - The challenge for next year will be to work on the budget and look at compensation benefits to be in line with the competition, hire and retain good employees.

#### INDUSTRY PARTNERS

##### Hotel Industry Updates

Board member Greg Malcolm reported:

- The July STR report for Irving shows Occupancy at 66.3%, a slight increase. RevPAR was \$74.73. Weekends are slowing down and report 67.9% Occupancy.
- Hilton Garden Inn DFW South is still struggling with staffing issues. The Front Desk and Guest Services positions are a challenge to fill and keep filled.

Board member Nydia Hoskins:

- The Omni Las Colinas reports July had a slight dip and missed Occupancy by under 2%, Revenue and Forecast are on target. Average Daily Rate of \$190.00, RevPAR shows a positive change at \$115.90.
- Social catering and short-term business continue to be consistent.
- August is slow.
- On a positive note, the Omni Las Colinas is the leading the company in business travel.

Board member Kim Limon:

- The Hampton Inn Irving/Las Colinas for July was at 67.7% Occupancy.
- Average Daily Rate of \$107.23, taking more discounts due to missing group business, and RevPAR is \$72.57.
- The property is number one of seven in the competitive set.
- Pool renovation is complete, and the pool is open.

##### Restaurant Industry Updates

Cole reported:

- The Texas Restaurant Show second meeting of the year is in September. It is a two-and-a-half day meeting and Cole will update the Board.

## PARTNER ORGANIZATION AND STAKEHOLDER REPORTS

### Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce

#### Chamber Chair John Nicks reported:

- Economic Development team continues to maintain a strong pipeline, more than 100 projects are in various stages, and some are corporate headquarters.
- Unemployment in Irving is at 3.7%, up slightly from June, less than Texas 4% and but higher than the U.S. at 3.5%.
- *Business Facilities* magazine named Irving the third best city for job growth in Fin-Tech leaders.
- Five Star Mixer at Hugo's Invitados, sponsored by Wells Fargo on August 25 at 4:30 p.m.
- State of Dallas County on August 30 at the Renaissance Dallas Hotel, featuring The Honorable Clay Jenkins and WFAA News Anchor Cynthia Izaguirre.
- State of Education breakfast on September 8 at DFW Airport Marriott, with two panel discussions featuring local and higher education speakers.
- The Chamber website lists all Chamber and Community events.

### Irving Arts and Culture

#### Executive Director Arts and Culture Todd Hawkins reported:

- Disney's "Winnie the Pooh: The New Musical Stage Adaption" will be at Carpenter Hall on September 16-18. This is the actual Disney theatrical off-Broadway cast and will begin their national tour with the first stop in Irving. He encouraged everyone to attend, bring guests and celebrate this event.
- Coming soon: Smithsonian traveling exhibit "The Green Book" at the Irving Archives and Museum.
- All upcoming events and exhibits are on the Irving Arts Center and Irving Archives and Museum websites.

### Las Colinas Association

#### Board member Hammond Perot:

- Perot gave a presentation on the upcoming Las Colinas 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events.
  - A 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary book is going to print this fall and will be available in 2023.
  - New landing page on the LCA website with a calendar of events.
  - Some proposed events presented from March to October 2023: Mandalay Mile Walk mobile app, golf tournament, possible residential architectural home tour, and commercial architectural tours.
  - Canal Fest Glow – a 90-minute program with music on the canal, followed by fireworks, water taxis in October 2023.
  - LCA will be out in the community looking for partners and support.

Cole reminded the Board to complete and return the Board Leadership Interest Form and LCA Bowl-a-thon form if interested in attending.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME  
Executive Director