

MINUTES

**Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors
Monday, September 25, 2023 at 11:45 AM
Irving Convention Center – Junior Ballroom C-D
500 W. Las Colinas Blvd.
Irving, Texas 75039**

Attendance: Bob Bourgeois – Board Chair; Richard Stewart, Jr. – Board Vice Chair; Yasir Arafat, Michael Basoco, Beth Bowman, David Cole, 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, and Sam Reed – Board Members; Mayor Rick Stopfer, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber, Chief Financial Officer Bret Starr, and Councilman Mark Cronenwett – 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, and Monty White – ICVB.

Board Chair Bob Bourgeois called the meeting to order at 11:47 a.m. and inquired if there were any citizen comments; there were none.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approving ICVB Board Meeting Minutes for August 28, 2023
- Accepting the ICVB Financial Reports – August 2023
- Reviewing the Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
- Accepting the ICC Financial Reports – July and August 2023

Bourgeois called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. On a motion from Board member Karen Cooperstein, and a second from Board Vice Chair Richard Stewart, Jr., the motion was unanimously approved.

CHAIR REPORT

- Bourgeois noted the memorandum in the packet from the Board Nominating Taskforce. The taskforce met on August 28 and considered all individuals eligible to serve as Chair and Vice Chair of the Board. The unanimous recommendation for the 2023-24 term is Richard Stewart, Jr. for Chair and Herb Gears as Vice Chair. The full Board will vote and accept any further nominations at the November Board meeting.
- The next Board meeting will be a Special Meeting on Friday, October 20 at the Irving Convention Center in the first-floor conference room at 9:00 a.m. for the Executive Director Annual Performance Evaluation.
- Mayor Rick Stopfer was awarded "Elected Official of the Year" at the 52nd Annual Members meeting of the North Texas Commission. It is an outstanding accomplishment, especially considering there were 13 counties and 150 cities represented amongst the NTC's members.
- The Irving Cares annual gala was a fabulous event at the Irving Convention Center. Bourgeois congratulated Councilman Kyle Taylor on the success of the event.
- The Irving Marathon Series Oktoberfest 5k run/walk is scheduled for Saturday, September 30 and all are invited to walk with the ICVB team.
- Bourgeois referenced the *National Office Market* article in the packet from "Commercial Edge" and spoke about how it sets the Dallas area apart from the nation. In conjunction with that article,

the Las Colinas Association Architectural Tour also sent the message of growth in the corporate market in the Urban Center. It was a well-prepared, excellent tour.

- There is also a letter from the Texas Restaurant Association - Greater Dallas Chapter requesting the reappointment of Board member David Cole.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Board and Business Development

Committee Chair Herb Gears reported:

- Recap of September 8 Committee meeting:
 - Discussion was held on the Board self-evaluation form. The self-evaluation process is needed for accreditation purposes and Gears asked for Board members to participate. It does not need to be submitted to anyone.
 - Committee Strategic Plan items were discussed, including establishing relationships with City Council and City staff. Ways to facilitate effective communication were discussed.
 - Discussed Board appointments and reappointments.
 - Plans are in place for an event in November to bring former Board members together, to update them on the organization and to re-connect.
- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for December 8 at the Convention Center in the office boardroom.

Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Colvin Gibson reported:

- A video of the High Spirited Citizens Luncheon from ICTN was played.
- Gibson commended the ICVB staff, Mayor Stopfer, and ICC staff for an excellent execution of the event. He shared one note from an honoree that he received in appreciation of the event and recognition.
- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for October 17.

Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for November 7 and will be a tour of EpicCentral in Grand Prairie. Details will be announced closer to the meeting date.

Bourgeois suggested a tour of The Rayleigh Underground space at Toyota Music Factory.

CITY REPORTS

Councilman Mark Cronenwett:

- The City has completed their budget season, approved the proposed budget, and maintained the tax rate.
- Also approved buying land near DFW Airport and Rochelle for sports fields that can be used for tournaments to bring visitors to Irving. Local teams would use the fields during the week. An adjoining parcel of land may be available in the future to purchase and could be used for more tournaments.

Mayor Rick Stopfer reported:

- In follow up to Cronenwett's report, Stopfer added the City has entered negotiations with DFW Airport and the FAA. It will be a 24–36-month process for land acquisition.

- The Hispanic Chamber celebrated their 25th anniversary and their celebration event was a tremendous success.
- Glory House Bistro hosted the Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce monthly event and showed off their successes and future plans. Several other small business owners were there sharing thoughts and expressed their appreciation for the improvements in the area.
- Dragon Boat Race is scheduled for this weekend.
- The City will continue to have events that bring the community together, i.e., Canine Companions, Frost Bank Opening and Mahatma Gandhi Birthday Celebration.
- City Council is in the process of Board appointment interviews.
- The City is expanding services, rebuilding and refurbishing pools, recreation centers, etc.
- Funded equipment and manpower in this year's budget for the downtown Fire Station and closed on a portion of the DART property for re-locating Fire Station #8.
- The LCA architectural tour was an opportunity to see corporate citizens and the challenges they face with the trend of workers coming back to the office with amenities. The Chamber team is working hard to make it all happen. It is a particularly challenging time for businesses and there are more corporate businesses in the Urban Center than in Dallas. We need to make sure our businesses and buildings are attracting clients. Remodeling old buildings, making amenities more available and updating the area will be a focus.
- Continuing to work with Brookfield and Live Nation to expand and grow the Toyota Music Factory area in partnership with Williams Square and Levy Plaza. It is important to invest in open spaces in the area.
- The warehouse district is developing with 8,500 small businesses with less than 25 employees. Retention of these businesses is not easy and again the Chamber team is vital in establishing those relationships.
- The DART budget is not approved to date. A partnership with cities to see growth and development around the rail stations for safety, cleanliness and timely services needs to be a focus. Hopefully, changes are coming.

Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders reported:

- Sanders gave a presentation on Brookfield's proposed changes for the Toyota Music Factory. The presentation was given to City Council about property enhancements by Brookfield Management.
- Next steps include refining the concepts presented into an exhibit included in the amended lease and site plan adoption. There is an aggressive timeline for completion.

Gears asked if a covered retractable shade option would be considered for the plaza area. Sanders stated it was mentioned but did not feel the option was an appropriate solution to what they are trying to achieve. The plan is to have more open space and provide several shade structures in the plaza.

Board member Yasir Arafat asked if a history of the City could be incorporated in wall murals. Sanders noted management is wanting to engage local artists and a theme of an urban gathering with an entertainment/musical aspect.

Senior City Attorney Christina Weber reported:

- Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
 - Outside counsel has met with a Judge and a final trial date for delinquent HOT collection hotel properties is set for December but may be moved.
 - Some delinquent payments have been received.

Chief Financial Officer Bret Starr reported:

- The delinquent amount is now \$804,806 and was \$1.2 million in June. The properties have been paying down their delinquent balances, which is a good start.

Stewart asked if the City is requesting a Restraining Order. Weber replied, in lieu of full payment of the balance, the City may request a Cease of Operation. The two properties have the same management company. Board member Bill Mahoney asked if a Cease of Operations were applied, would other Irving properties be able to absorb the load? Gast stated if it gets to that point, it is likely that the properties will figure out how to pay their delinquent fees. It was noted that the delinquent amounts, plus penalties, interest, and attorney fees all would be due.

BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF REPORTS

Bureau Management

Executive Director Maura Gast reported:

- The Dallas area hosted the International Economic Development Conference. Irving-Las Colinas Chamber President Beth Bowman co-hosted a Committee and did a phenomenal job. It was one of the highest attended conferences in their history. Cooperstein helped to bring together major sports minds for a panel discussion. Gast was part of a session on placemaking and talked about the Irving story. Congratulations to everyone who assisted on a great conference.
- A luncheon will be held on November 14 at the Irving Convention Center for current and former Board members. The event will gather members to catch up on what is happening in Irving and the CVB and hopefully will recruit more volunteers for the Visitor Information program.
- The Meet the Bureau luncheon was a success and a presentation to local hoteliers on Tourism Economics data was given.
- Gast met with the Irving 360 Academy attendees at the Irving Convention Center for a presentation and tour as part of their Economic Development session.
- Continuing to have discussions with Parks and Recreation Director Joe Moses on possible uses for new fields and a potential business model that would allow resident use of fields Monday through Thursday, with non-local tournaments Friday through Sunday to drive hotel activity. Talking with several consulting firms who work in this space to identify any gaps in the DFW marketplace and any underserved market to generate revenue and sustain itself while providing additional benefit to residents.
- A recent hotel report shows 90,000 hotels are in some form of development across the Metroplex. Most are small and may not come to fruition. It is important to understand the future impact of hotel development. Gast has been meeting with her peers around the metroplex to discuss a possible hotel development study for the region that might help encourage "smart growth" across the area as it comes to hotel development.

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- The Meet the Bureau luncheon had 97 attendees; Tourism Economics shared a State of the Industry both nationally and locally, which was well received. The data is particularly important to the hotel Directors of Sales at this time of year as they are planning their 2024 budgets and forecasts.
- The Sales team is finishing the fiscal year with 143,000 room nights.
- The team traveled to Minneapolis for Connect Marketplace, which is three shows in one, and traveled to Texas Association of CVBs event in College Station.
- Upcoming events: Latin Food Show, VidSummit for video influencers, and Texas Federation of Republican Women.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff reported:

- Website traffic increased over 92,434 sessions for the Irvingtexas.com website; more than half of those users stayed on the site longer than 10 seconds, had a conversion event, or viewed multiple pages on the site.
- Blog traffic increased in August with 7,065 pageviews.
- Added 1,949 additional followers on social media in August.
- Staycations Campaign generated 6,285 hotel referrals.
- Micro-Campaigns generated 1,363 hotel referrals.
- Promoted Convention Campaign generated 8,388 post engagements and 1,041 blog visits.
- Pfaff and Marketing Director Monty White traveled to ESTO– U.S. Travel Association and learned most people are spending on experiences and travel and learned more about Artificial Intelligence.
- Assisting the Brookfield Management team with a Moo and Brew event in October. The event has been a success in their North Carolina Music Factory property.

Administration and Finance

Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose reported:

- The AirDNA reports for August show:
 - There were 622 available listings, which is an 11.5% increase in listing over last year's figure of 558.
 - The Average Daily Rate was \$219.54, which was an increase of 0.63% over last year.
 - Occupancy percentage of 52.3%, which was a decrease of 6.53% compared to last year.
 - Hotel comparable subset reports an Average Daily Rate for August of \$117.83, a decrease of 0.03% from last year, occupancy at 53.2% with a decrease of 8.47 from last year.
- Finalizing Year-End procedures and getting ready for the new fiscal year. Rose expressed her appreciation to the Accounting team for their efforts over the last few weeks.
- The Volunteer Visitor Information kiosk was open during FiberFest and the Heart of Texas Body Building shows. Thank you to all Board members who volunteered. There will be more opportunities to volunteer in the coming months.
- Office Manager Carol Boyer will attend the Volunteer Fair at the Arts Center on September 30 to recruit more volunteers for the Visitor Information program. Bourgeois encouraged Board members to sign up to volunteer for possible upcoming events: Fan Days, USA Judo, Preserve Halloween, and another body building event.

CONVENTION CENTER MANAGEMENT

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- A video of the new LED lights on the outside of the Convention Center was shown.
- Meehan shared it is important to keep on top of building repairs, maintenance, and trends to provide for customers. We want to be different than the building's first decade with looks and the amenities provided.
- The pre-function area will be changed to LED lights on the third floor. The first and fourth floor lighting projects are completed.
- New office carpet has been installed and most of the painting project, from orange to navy walls, is complete.
- Want to create an experience for customers to include new artwork and use local artists.
- The new monument sign on Hwy 114 has been approved by City Council and will start construction soon.
- Closing out the fiscal year and starting the audit process.
- Events are booked fast, and this can present a challenge for staff. There were 196 events through August with 219,000 attendees. Last year at this time, there were 184 events and 171,000 attendees.
- The ICC Sales team is on the verge of making its room night goal. There are 35,000 room nights booked.
- The YTD Customer Survey is 91.4%, with comments on outstanding building and quality of customer service.
- Upcoming large events:
 - Ultimate Women's Expo
 - Fan Days

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

LIVE NATION UPDATES

Gast reported for Live Nation General Manager Tommy DeBeaudry:

- Currently 88 confirmed promoted shows for 2023, compared to 96 total from 2022. Have a few more pending that may confirm for this year.
- Just confirmed *Queens of the Stone Age* on December 10.
- *Hozier* on October 10 is sold out.
- *Wizkid* in November has been canceled.
- Back-to-back Matt Rife comedy shows are both sold out.
- Ancillary budgets (upsell revenue) have eclipsed 2022 with one quarter to go and close to surpassing budget for 2023.
- Special event revenue has surpassed the 2023 budget. Lots of private events in December, as usual.
- The last Amphitheater (Outdoor show) for the season is currently scheduled for November 4.

HOTEL INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member Greg Malcolm:

- The STR report for August shows strong Occupancy for the City at 63.9%, down 2.8% compared to last year.
- The Average Daily Rate of \$113.41, down 6%, RevPAR is \$72.42, down 3.4% from last year.
- Hotels on the south side continue to dominate the City in Occupancy levels. Occupancy is 67.9%, Average Daily Rate of \$134.72 and RevPAR of \$91.49.

Board member Kim Limon:

- Hampton Inn Las Colinas Occupancy is 63.9%, down 5.2%.
- The Average Daily Rate of \$112.67, up 4.9% from last year at this time.
- Getting ready for budget season
- The new Asset Manager is visiting the property this week.

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member David Cole:

- Randy DeWitt from *Front Burner Society* hosted a Town Hall meeting with the Texas Restaurant Association at The Ranch in Irving. Executive Director and CEO Emily Knight attended, with the theme of 70 wins in 70 days. The TRA worked in a collaborative way to deliver a historic 25+ offensive wins and 45+ defensive wins during the 2023 Texas Legislative session.
- Working closely on a national Credit Card Fee Bill. Credit card fees are the third largest expense in restaurants. It should be voted on by the end of the year.
- Locally:
 - Visited Japan House, which is a locally owned restaurant with all-you-can-eat menu or order off the menu. It is a small plates menu with a good concept. He encouraged everyone to visit and support them.
 - The DFW 2023 Italian Festival is on October 7-8. There are several things planned and it will be an exciting event. The event will be on the Mandalay Canal and is an inaugural event.

PARTNER ORGANIZATION AND STAKEHOLDER REPORTS

Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce:

Chamber President Beth Bowman reported:

- The team is wrapping up the fiscal year. She congratulated the Chamber team, CVB and LCA teams, City Manager and staff, and City Council for their assistance in amplifying the story of Irving and our competitive edge.
- Exciting to hear about the investments and improvements coming to the Toyota Music Factory and the Irving Convention Center. The fight and flight to quality is real in business.
- The economic team since October 2022 has 32 wins, representing \$163.8 million in capital investments, and 7,000 new jobs to Irving with 1.5 million square feet of commercial space.
- The team has over 120 retention visits and is hoping they all expand and stay in Irving. There were 23 projects and 2,300 jobs retained. Those represent \$62.3 million in capital investment into Irving.
- The International Economic Development Conference had 1,500 attendees with feedback that it was the best conference attended with on-point content. The location of the hotel in Dallas was

very removed from the conference and substantiated that everyone wants things at their fingertips.

- Commended Las Colinas Association on the architectural tour. The return-to-office statistics show only 52% of companies have returned. This is a concern for our restaurants, grocers, and small businesses during the week.
- Congressman Jake Ellzey will be featured in Coffee with Your Congressman event on September 25th. It is important to have a relationship with Congressional Representatives to reassure that the government remains open. More lines have been drawn in Austin, Texas politics and navigating within parties makes things nearly impossible. Mayor Stopfer is a champion in supporting resources and economic development in Austin.
- Pipeline: Since October 1, 2022, there have been 372 projects, representing 200,000 jobs and \$7.2 billion in capital investment and 1.8 of potential square feet of commercial space coming to Irving. It is vital to keep remembering to reinvest in what we have today, prepare for what could happen tomorrow and Bowman is looking forward to being part of those conversations.

Irving Arts and Culture

Irving Arts Center:

Arts Board Chair Kelly O'Briant reported:

- Congratulated Gibson, the Irving Black Arts Council and Irving Archives and Museum for receiving an award of excellence from the American Association of State and Local History for their collaboration on The Local Green Book project.
- Gibson gave a brief history of the project, and a video was shown.
- Currently on display at the Irving Arts Center:
 - *Vaquero: Genesis of the Texas Cowboy* – photographs by Bill Wittliff in the Dupree Lobby.
 - *Over, Beyond, Between: Landscape and the Transcendent* – paintings by Down Waters Baker in the Focus Gallery.
 - Works by Benjamin Muñoz in the Carpenter Lobby Gallery through October 28.
 - *Making Space / Holding Time*: an exhibition featuring women artists currently working in Texas and/or have deep Texas roots - Main Gallery.
- *Barricade Boys*: Stars from the West End cast of *Les Misérables* will be presented on Friday, October 6 at 7:30 p.m.
- Kick-off of *Storyteller Sessions Series* on Thursday, October 19th with singer-songwriter Royal Wood.
- Irving Archives and Museums:
 - *Popolo Vuh* Illustrations by Jamie Arredondo.
 - *Ballet Folklorico/Fashion of Ballet Folklorico*: Expressing Mexican Culture through Dance. On opening weekend, an artist talk was attended by representatives from the Mexican and Guatemalan Consulates of Dallas.

Las Colinas Association

Las Colinas President Hammond Perot reported:

- Perot thanked everyone in support of the recent architectural tour; it was a sold-out event with superb speakers and supporters.
- Mandalay Mile walking tour launched with ten locations on Lake Carolyn and the Canal. There are QR codes along the way with the history of the area.

- The Glow Canal Celebration event will be October 20-21 with waterside performances, art installations, experiential dining, live music and theatrics, gondola rides, and fireworks. VIP invitations will be sent out to Board members and City officials.
- In coordination with the U.S. Mexico Chamber of Commerce, the Day of the Dead event is scheduled once again for November 1 from 5-9 p.m. on Mandalay Canal.

With no further discussion, Bourgeois adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME

Executive Director