

AMENDED

MINUTES

IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ZOOM VIDEO MEETING

February 22, 2021

Attendance: Karen Cooperstein – Board Chair; Kim Andres, Beth Bowman, Bob Bourgeois, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Herbert Gears, Todd Hawkins, Nydia Hoskins, City Manager Chris Hillman, Julia Kang, Clem Lear, Rick Lindsey, William Mahoney, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, Michael Randall, Mike Rilley, Sam Reed, Richard Stewart, and Clare Venegas – Board members; Mayor Rick Stopfer, Councilman Mark Zeske, and Councilman Oscar Ward – City of Irving Elected Officials; General Manager Tom Meehan – Irving Convention Center; Chief Financial Officer Jeff Litchfield, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, and Senior City Attorney Christina Weber – City of Irving; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Marianne Lauda, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose and Monty White – ICVB. Guests – City of Irving Economic Development Project Administrator Jennifer Ramirez and Connor Udasco, Resident.

Board Chair Karen Cooperstein called the meeting to order at 11:46 a.m. and noted this meeting is taking place as a video conference due to the COVID-19 restrictions. She inquired if there were any citizen comments; there were none.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approve the ICVB Board of Directors meeting minutes from January 25, 2021
- Accept the ICC Financials for November and December 2020, January 2021
- Accept the ICVB Financials for January 2021
- Review of Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
- Review of ICVB Cash Flow Report

It was noted that the Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections are not available at the time of this meeting. Cooperstein asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. On a motion from Board member Bob Bourgeois and a second from Board member Herb Gears, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved.

INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

- Approval of High Spirited Citizen Recommendations:
 - Fatema Biviji
 - Mark McKee
 - Elouise McMillian
 - Wanda Zamorano

Community Engagement Committee Chair Clem Lear noted the High Spirited Citizen nomination forms for each candidate are included in the packet. With no further questions or discussion, Lear made a motion to approve the High Spirited Citizen nominations; with a second from Gears, the nominations were unanimously approved.

***BYLAW AMENDMENTS**

A redline copy of the ICVB ByLaws are included in the packet. It was noted a creation of a second non-voting Board position for a representative from the Hospitality Industry be approved in place of current the Salesmanship Club position. City Council has approved Stephanie Fenley-Garcia to this position in November. With no further discussion, Cooperstein asked for a motion to approve the amended ICVB Bylaws. On a motion from Bob Bourgeois, and a second from Board member Herb Gears, the motion was approved unanimously.

BOARD REPORTS**COVID-19 Update:**

Marketing Director Monty White presented an overview of the Irving CARES Act Marketing Recovery Campaigns.

- The campaign ran from September 1 through December 31 with a goal of stimulating recovery of the tourism industry.
- Safe Meetings Campaign Objectives:
 - Convey the safety protocols Irving has adopted to make meetings and conventions safe.
 - Generate awareness of Irving as a meetings destination.
 - Highlight Irving's meeting and destination attributes.
 - Increase sales leads for future meetings and conventions.
- Results:
 - 2,071,531 Ad Impressions, 19,741 Website Sessions, 77 Meeting-Sales Leads.
- Staycations Campaign Objectives:
 - Market Irving hotels as safe way to getaway for short vacation.
 - Advertise in Drive Markets across Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana.
 - Highlight Irving hotel deals and specials.
 - Primarily target families and couples.
 - Frequently update creative to reflect the changing seasons.
- Results:
 - 4,042,130 Impressions, 61,619 Sessions, 23,294 Hotel Referrals, \$4,219,829 Potential Economic Value.
- Website is performing well – more visitors in this past year than any other previously.
- Industry, as a whole, saw a decline of 26% in website traffic, and Irving increased by 2%.
- Advertisement Engagement increased dramatically in both Meetings and Leisure.

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reviewed the Sales pipeline and COVID impacts.

- Year-to-date there was a small uptick in Cancellations and 22% in Room Nights Lost.
- Executive Director Maura Gast added for reporting purposes, data is only for bookings the ICVB was involved with. Direct hotel bookings are not calculated in these numbers.
- The Corporate market is still struggling and looking out to 2022 for bookings.
- There has been an uptick in leads for the Sports and Religious markets.
- There are 46,000 bookings in Lead status and 45,000 still in Definite status and hope to retain those.
- Irving is a very short-term booking market.

ICC General Manager Tom Meehan added the ICC in the past two to three weeks has events that are postponing and cancelling. Some are moving into 2022 and some large groups are undecided.

Gast reviewed the proposed national recovery initiatives.

Chair Report:

- Cooperstein thanked City Manager Chris Hillman, City Council, and staff for the CARES Act funding to build traffic to the website and ultimately visitors to the community.
- Board Orientation was a well-attended hybrid event and thanked everyone for their attendance.
- Reminder to Board members to complete the Conflict of Interest form and return to Gast or Office Manager Carol Boyer.
- Next Board meeting date is March 22, 2021.

BOARD REPORTS

Board and Business Development Committee

Committee Chair Bourgeois reported:

- The Board Orientation meeting presentation was recorded and will be available on the Board portal for viewing. He thanked Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Taylor and Councilman Mark Zeske for making time to attend.
- The Board portal reorganization is a work in progress and thanked Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose, Boyer and White for their efforts in making the improvements for ease of use to Board members.
- Next Committee meeting is scheduled for March 12.

Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Clem Lear gave a recap of the February 3 Committee meeting:

- High Spirited Citizen recommendations were discussed, as well as the nomination process.
- There is a backlog of HSC presentations at City Council meetings due to the pandemic and the committee discussed the possibility of a group presentation when it is safe to meet in person.
- There are other nominations in the pipeline and the list will continue to grow.
- Discussion was held on the Irving Hospitality Industry Annual Meeting that is typically held in January or February, which was the subject of budget cuts. Options for delivering a digital event have been researched but still remain expensive considering the budget environment. Staff will continue to evaluate other opportunities to accomplish the same priorities affordably.
- Spirit of Irving awards typically are presented at the Annual Meeting; discussion was held on the possibility of moving forward with the awards in another setting and staff will continue to evaluate those options.
- May 2-8, 2021 is Travel and Tourism Week and the Mayor will present a proclamation at the City Council meeting on May 5.
- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for April 6.

Destination and Development Committee

Cooperstein reported for Committee Chair Greg Malcolm and gave a recap of the February 9 meeting:

- Discussion was held on the Sales pipeline and impact from COVID-19.
- Board Chair David Cole gave an Irving restaurant update that included recently closed restaurants.
- The Alcohol Ordinance was discussed.

- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for May 4.

CITY REPORTS

Mayor Rick Stopfer reported:

- The pandemic took a back seat to the Texas weather, but had the highest deaths in the past week. He encouraged everyone to practice social distancing, wear masks and get vaccinated.
- The vaccination sites were experiencing challenges due to the weather.
- Weather challenges include communication and getting information out to citizens in need of water, broken pipe maintenance, and food bank demand.
- Shout-out to the first responders and City management staff for working during the freeze and assisting in warming centers 24/7 and providing the necessities for citizens and their pets.
- City staff is looking into better interaction with multi-family unit real estate owners for help with supplies to their tenants.
- The power outages across the state will be addressed in the Texas legislature to work through prevention to ensure it will never happen again.
- Staff continues to work on the budget and working closely with the ICVB to provide assistance during this time.
- Black Arts Council at the Irving Arts Center will hold a roundtable discussion in celebrating Black History Month.
- Two town hall meetings are scheduled with business and citizen input. Elected officials will be invited to participate.
- The Christus Healthcare building in the Urban Center will be a new multi-story office building in the Urban Center and a major undertaking.

Councilman Oscar Ward reported:

- The Council approved the loan to the ICVB, and he noted it is the right thing to do.
- Williams Square Plaza \$7.7 million redevelopment is an agenda item at the next Council meeting.
- Shout-out to City Manager Chris Hillman and City staff for working around the clock over the past week during the weather challenges.

Councilman Zeske noted there is hope in the right direction for visitors and events coming to Irving.

City Manager Chris Hillman reported:

- He expressed his thanks and appreciation to City staff, first responders and local hotels for their support during the freeze. The City Facilities, Fleet and Emergency Operation crews worked diligently with little or no sleep to be sure all facilities were safe and operational.
- Oncor showed weaknesses in the system and it is an opportunity to improve and present to City Council a plan to be better prepared.
- Irving non-profit organizations stepped up and it was amazing to see the community come together. Irving has a "Can Do and Get It Done" attitude.
- The Grand Prairie vaccination site experienced electricity outages and frozen pipes. ServPro is engaged and fixing the issues, but the site is not open this week.
- Kudos to the Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce team for landing the Christus Healthcare project. It is a win in the heart of the Urban Center and 400,000 square feet of commercial office space, seven years in the making and a lot of great work was done. He expressed his appreciation to the TIF Board for providing the funding for nice infrastructure around the building.

- Irving Police Department celebrated Black History Month with “Shop Talk.” The event honored Mitchell’s Barber Shop for more than three decades of business in the City.

Gast echoed her thanks to the City staff team for their hard work. She acknowledged the Emergency Operations crew that has been in emergency mode for almost a year. They are great partners and resources. STAFF REPORTS

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- Hotels mostly are able to open again; many of those that could open had high occupancies during the storms, but across the city, occupancies came in at about 50%.
- Sales activity did pick up and there were 83 leads generated in January for the ICVB, which is almost double from December. There were 20 ICC leads in January and 13 in December.
- Sales held a strategy meeting on March 4 to discuss trends in the Hospitality Market. Discussion was held on targeting the second part of the CARES Act meeting campaign to those trends, what services should be offered and what is the anticipated result at the end of the pandemic.
- Hybrid meetings and precautions when congregating in large groups will be important.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff reported:

- Pfaff expressed her appreciation to White for his leadership in the Marketing Campaigns and recent Simpleview webinar. No other CVB has accomplished what White has done with these campaigns and their tremendous results.
- The campaigns give real-time data and there is a strong pivot to the Leisure Market.
- The Drive Market has changed from smaller markets to the larger areas.
- Seeing good results in the Trip Advisor ads.
- Several public relations projects have been well received with good results and television/news coverage.
- USA Today ran a Top 10 Romantic Things to do in Dallas and Gondola Adventures came in #1 on the list.
- Irving Blog is doing well – movie reviews have been added.
- Thanked Cooperstein for her involvement in the Catholic Charities Food Drive and noted volunteers handed out 900 food boxes last week.

Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose reported:

December STR report:

- Occupancy is 37.6%, down 42% from last year.
- Average Daily Rate is \$70.00, down 40%.
- RevPAR is \$26.29, down 65%.
- AirDNA reports 465 available listings in December, a 5% increase from last year.
- Average Daily Rate is \$178.41, down 5.87%.
- Occupancy is 49.6%, an almost 22% decrease from last year.

Hotel Comparable Subset:

- Average Daily Rate is \$84.88, a decrease of 18%.
- Occupancy is 45.8%, a 25% decrease.

The Finance/Administration Team:

- Three volunteers at the Grand Prairie vaccination site.
- Working on Cloud migration project.

- Working through the Munis HR and payroll components.
- Visitor Services Coordinator April Stallings is working daily in the ICC front lobby; this has been implemented as a cost-savings measure to reduce the need for security in this location during primary office hours.
- Board portal project will continue with updates and any input from Board members is appreciated.

Gast applauded the great effort by Accounting Director Marianne Lauda for working through the monthly financials with no electricity.

IRVING CONVENTION CENTER

Gast will work with Hillman once the post-freeze issues have settled to allow the ICC to be a more centralized warming center and partner with City staff to see what is needed.

General Manager Tom Meehan

- Both power feeds to the building went down during the storm at different times, but the switching process continued to work until the power was cut by Oncor.
- Decisions were made quickly. Worked with contractors and the ICC engineers to drain the cooling towers to prevent pipes from cracking.
- Overall, building survived with no flooding or cracked/broken pipes, but damage was done from shifting of the power and big jolt with cut-off of power. There is one small crack in one cell of the cooling tower.
- ICC engineers worked 24/7 and slept at the building taking turns sleeping in 2–3-hour shifts. There were lessons learned, but the contractors and ICC team did an incredible job working together.
- Budget was formed on shifted events to the second half of the year and not cancelling or postponing. When that happens, it leaves a big gap in the budget.
- Forecast was created with only what was 100% Definite but shows behind budget.
- Expenses are stretched and more staff cuts are coming. These are hard decisions and requiring a lot of work.
- Generating more revenue is at the top of the list for the team.
- Two events in February, five in March, five in April and ten still on the books for May.
- As events get closer, cancellations are happening.
- The Sales team is in constant contact with the events to assure them events can happen safely.

Discussion was held on video testimonials from events for safe events in the building. Pfaff added most events are not willing to share they held an event. Also, scheduling a video and finding a client willing to share publicly has been a challenge.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Live Nation and Toyota Music Factory

Mike Rilley reported:

- Trying to book events but a huge challenge last week with weather, power outage and The Pavilion suffered a broken pipe. Damage is being assessed but does not anticipate major damage.
- Vaccinations are the key to getting back to normal.
- Following the changing COVID rules is a challenge as well.

Omni Las Colinas

General Manager Nydia Hoskins reported:

Rolling electricity black outs were happening for the better part of three days.

- Experienced a power outage and shut down hotel with evacuation on Monday.
- Discounted residential rate was offered and was well received with residents.
- The electrical start/stops put a lot of strain on the building and there was some water damage.
- January was strong and then three groups cancelled. Ended the month at 10% Occupancy, in comparison to last year's 75%.
- Average Daily Rate held consistent.
- Banquets and Catering doing well, and room leads doubled over the last couple of months.
- Weddings are rescheduling for the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023.
- February is beyond the conservative forecast and some regulars are returning, and some corporate groups have returned.
- Weekday activity is starting to increase.
- Finalizing the budget for 2022 and will continue to be conservative.

Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Board Chair Sam Reed Reported:

- Busy with inclement weather issues – helping to secure water for many manufacturers, residents, and nearby cities, and secured fresh food for some homes.
- Fiscal year 2021 to date: Seven wins, five recruitment projects, two retention/expansion projects. Over \$276 million in Capital Investment, which equates to 600 jobs and 860,000 square feet of commercial office space.
- The team continues to work remotely, with 83 projects in the pipeline, 17 of which are corporate headquarters.
- Irving unemployment rate is 6.3% and continues to be below Texas at 7.2% and National rate of 6.7%.
- Neither the Texas House of Representatives nor Senate were in action last week due to the weather.
- Governor Greg Abbott has declared ERCOT Reform an emergency item for this legislative session.
- Representative Julie Johnson was named to the Sub-Committee for Health and Human Services.
- Chamber Coffee Break on social media marketing is scheduled for March 3 at 8:00 a.m.
- Business Industry Call with Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins will be on March 3.
- Virtual 5-Star Chamber Mixer event on March 23 from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Irving Arts and Culture

Executive Director Todd Hawkins reported:

- Echoed thanks as a resident and business partner to the City staff for their hard work during the storm.
- There was no damage from weather to any of the Arts and Culture facilities.
- Irving Arts museum is hosting a temporary gallery "*Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Stories*" through March 17.
- Arts Center booked a group for Saturday through the Staycations Marketing Campaign.
- Private group invite to view the Irving Arts Museum will be extended to City staff and Boards. Reservations are required and due to popularity, it has been extended for a week.

- Williams Square Plaza Mustang Museum reinstallation project is moving forward.
- Continue to celebrate Black History Month with “*City of Hope: resurrection City & the 1968 Poor People’s Campaign*” through April 30 in the Courtyard Gallery and other celebrations over the weekend with the Black Arts Council.

Las Colinas Association

LCA President Hammond Perot reported:

- Lost power to the dispatch/call center that are monitoring accounts in the Las Colinas Association for fire and alarms. Backup generators were also lost after 36 hours but able to keep all alarms monitored.
- Biggest concern was fire and emergency medical needs. Staff did a great job over the week.
- LCA patrol was shut down for a few days.
- Partnered with the City for apprehension of vandals at the Las Colinas Pharmacy.
- Thanked the City for all their efforts and partnership.
- LCA Annual Meeting is scheduled for March 23.

TIF

Michael Randall reported:

Commended the City staff and developer for the Christus Healthcare project. The original estimate for reimbursement of TIF funds for \$5.9 million before the meeting on February 2. The numbers were reviewed and came in at \$4.9 million, which saved \$1 million in TIF funds.

University of Dallas

Assistant Vice President of Marketing and Communication Clare Venegas reported:

- There were some electrical outages on campus during the storm.
- Zoom lecture community event scheduled for Wednesday, February 24 at 6:15 p.m. It is a free event with University of Dallas School of Business legends and leaders.
- Thanked the Irving Arts Center for hosting the UD Art Department exhibition “*Natalie Lambert: I Love You Very Much But ...*”

With no further discussion, Cooperstein adjourned the meeting at 1:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director