

MINUTES
IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ZOOM VIDEO MEETING
March 22, 2021

Attendance: Karen Cooperstein – Board Chair; David Cole – Board Vice Chair; Kim Andres, Beth Bowman, Bob Bourgeois, Dallas Burke, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Todd Hawkins, Nydia Hoskins, City Manager Chris Hillman, Julia Kang, Clem Lear, Kim Limon, Rick Lindsey, William Mahoney, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, Mike Rilley, Sam Reed, Roy Santoscoy and Richard Stewart – Board members; Mayor Rick Stopfer, Council Liaison Deputy Pro Tem Kyle Taylor, Councilman Mark Zeske, and Councilman Oscar Ward – City of Irving Elected Officials; General Manager Tom Meehan and Director of Sales Matt Tungett – Irving Convention Center; Chief Financial Officer Jeff Litchfield, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, and Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber – City of Irving; Carol Boyer, Maura Gast, Marianne Lauda, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose and Monty White – ICVB. Guests – City of Irving Economic Development Project Administrator Jennifer Ramirez and Sharon Thompson - 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 February 22, 2021.
- Accept the ICC Financials for February 2021
- Accept the ICVB Financials for February 2021
- Review of Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
- Review of ICVB Cash Flow Report

Cooperstein asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. On a motion from Board member Rick Lindsey and a second from Board member William Mahoney, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved.

BOARD REPORTS

Executive Director Maura Gast

COVID-19 Update:

- Updated Occupancy assumptions from April 2020 – September 2021 were reviewed.
- February and March will have additional factors due to the winter storms.
- The remainder of the calendar for the year is in flux.
- Congress approved the American Rescue Act.
 - The Restaurant Revitalization Fund has \$28.6 billion in grants to cover expenses incurred between February 15, 2020 and December 31, 2021.
 - State and Local Coronavirus fiscal recovery funds:
 - Provide \$350 billion to State and Local Government.
 - Payments are split into two tranches.
 - There is specific language for eligible uses and discretion in how funds are spent.

- Once funds are distributed, state and local governments will have discretion in how they spend the funds.
- The Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced grants totaling \$3 billion economic adjustment assistance.
- Next Steps:
 - US Treasury will issue regulations implementing the provisions.
 - PPP Extension Act to extend the PPP application to May 31.
 - Next recovery package expected between May and September.
 - Industry is engaged with Administration to reopen international travel.
 - Press the Administration, Governors, local officials, and business executives to restore professional meetings and events.

City Manager Chris Hillman added there is a lot of clarifying language coming. The City is focused on lost revenues and Hotel Occupancy Tax impact. Gast noted the City authorized a loan to the ICVB over the course of a year for \$1 million and transferred \$500,000 in March to help with cash flow.

Chair Report:

- Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce State Advocacy Day will be on Zoom and registration is available on the Chamber website.
- Texas Hotel and Lodging Association Converge on the Capitol event is scheduled for March 24 and is a free event.
- The ICVB Board meetings will be moving toward a hybrid meeting format, beginning in April.
- Board Conflict of Interest forms should be turned into Gast or Office Manager Carol Boyer.
- Next Board meeting is scheduled for April 26.

BOARD REPORTS

Board and Business Development Committee

Committee Chair Bob Bourgeois reported:

- The Committee met on March 12 and discussed the Board Officer nomination process, legislative update, and the CARES Act.
- Amendments to the ICVB Board Bylaws were passed.
- Next Committee meeting is scheduled for June 11.

Community Engagement Committee

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

- Next Committee meeting is scheduled for April 6 and agenda items include: Volunteer Week opportunities as a Board, continued discussion on community leader recognition and National Travel and Tourism Week in May.

Destination and Development Committee

- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for May 4.

CITY REPORTS

Council Liaison Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Taylor reported:

- Legislative items of interest – Two proposed bills that would make it illegal to use taxpayer money for lobbying, which previously passed in the Senate and failed in the House. There is a lot of push-back from County and State parties on the bill.
- Legislative item of interest is the Election Integrity HB 2092 regarding party affiliation to run for a city office.
- City Council approved a new hotel on Esters, which fits into the new proposed revisions for hotel standards.

Mayor Rick Stopfer reported:

- Rental Assistance funds from HUD and FEMA is a long reimbursement time and a tremendous amount of paperwork.
- Sales and property tax are being received better than anticipated.
- ICVB loan from the City will help with cash flow this year, but additional dollars may be needed for the next fiscal year.
- Continuing to move forward with the downtown Heritage Park and Georgia Farrow Recreation Center projects.
- Texas Department of Transportation is on schedule with the Irving Diamond Interchange project.
- DART is continuing its search for retired DART President Gary Thomas' successor.
- The City is fortunate to have Wreaths Across America in the community and welcome veterans from the Vietnam war.
- Continue to see growth in warehouse construction and retail expansions across the City.
- Council and staff will continue to monitor legislative session items.

Councilman Oscar Ward reported:

- Other legislative proposals at the State include moving May elections to November only and must declare political party affiliation.
- Grand Opening for Fire Station #4 is expected this spring.
- Ward attended the ICVB Executive Committee meeting and appreciated the education and data presented to understand the severe revenue impact and how the City can support Irving as a destination. He commented he is proud to vote for the ICVB loan this year for Irving, Texas to be the destination of destinations.

Councilman Mark Zeske reported:

- He attended a dance competition for his granddaughter at the ICC and was proud of everyone involved and ICC staff. It should be a good sign of bouncing back from this year's adversity.

City Manager Chris Hillman reported:

- The "Defunding the Police" legislative item is coming through the Senate with 24-hour notice and would include capital costs in a formula that would create a significant issue. The item would have to go to a vote of the people and the City cannot advocate or inform.
- Sales tax is good for this year, but still down from last year.
- Appreciate Stopfer's work on the DART Board. The DART station at Hidden Ridge will open next month.
- Irving Golf Course has been successful since its re-opening and revenues will cover the operational costs.

- The Irving/Grand Prairie joint vaccination drive-thru site is successful and has given 9,000 shots in first and second doses.
- Brand new Starbucks coming to the Heritage District at O'Connor and Irving Blvd.
- There is a new Sprouts Farmers Market coming to in Irving.
- Planning and Development Committee is working on housing items and town hall meetings are scheduled on March 23 and 24, to collect citizen input to develop housing policies and strategy.
- New state-of-the-art inclusive playground at West Park is now open.
- WalletHub survey ranked Irving the "Fifth Hardest Working City in the U.S."

It was noted legislative updates are provided online and is the most effective way to communicate and connect is legislative leaders and stay informed.

Cooperstein asked for an update on the Toyota Music Factory operations. Hillman responded the Alamo Draft House movie theatre will be re-opening soon. He encouraged everyone to support the facility and their businesses.

MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Gast noted Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek is out on vacation, but the Sales and Services Report is included in the packet. Business does continue to move, and the team had a positive sales booking week, which is encouraging. There is movement in the year, for the year and interest in future years seems solid.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff reported:

- Phase 1 of the Safe Meetings and Staycation campaign results are in the Marketing and Communications report in the packet.
- Phase 2 of the campaign kicked off January 1 and continues to include a newsletter (Staycation and Leisure).
- The Leisure Market continues to grow.
- The largest number of RFPs since 2020 were in February with 66 total leads.
- Advertising engagements were 20,000 for site visits and 17,000 of that were for the Leisure market.
- Blog views had a 99% increase over February of last year.

Marketing Director Monty White reported:

- At a high level, the Safe Meetings Campaign had over 19,000 website sessions and 85 sales leads, with a potential economic value of \$7.2 million.
- The Staycations Campaign had over 61,000 website sessions and over 23,000 hotel referrals.
- Round 2 of CARES Act Funding –
 - Added Instagram advertising in addition to Facebook and paid search ads on Google and Bing for Staycations. The campaign has produced 47,000 sessions and nearly 21,000 hotel referrals, with a potential economic value of \$3.3 million.
 - The Safe Meetings campaign has produced 4,700 website sessions and 60 sales leads from January and February.
 - Added a new Online Travel Agency (OTA) campaign through Expedia and Priceline.

- Added a small business exposure campaign that launched in late February, profiling stories to promote restaurants, attractions, and other tourism-related entities.
- Launching in the future is a music-centered campaign that will leverage upcoming concerts to drive hotel nights.

Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose reported:

January STR report:

- Occupancy is 37.6%, down 42% from last year.
- Average Daily Rate is \$69.98, down 39.7%.
- AirDNA reports 467 available listings in December, a 50.2% increase from last year's figure of 311.
- Average Daily Rate is \$152.13, down 10.62%.
- Occupancy is 46.4%, an almost 22% decrease from last year.

Air DNA Hotel Comparable Subset:

- Average Daily Rate is \$81.51, a decrease of 17.12%.
- Occupancy is 46.2%, a 22.77% decrease.

The Finance/Administration Team:

- Gearing up for the budget process in April.
- Working on Cloud migration project, moving digital files and consolidating space.
- Working through the Munis HR and payroll components.
- Working on Destinations International various reports.
- Progressing with the ICVB Accreditation process, which is required for full re-application every 8 years.
- Return-to-Office plan, with a staggered work approach is being rolled out in April.
- Three members of the Administration team volunteered at the Irving/Grand Prairie vaccination site.
- Recognition to Accounting Director Marianne Lauda for her work and contribution on the massive Munis and HR project. Kudos to Lauda and the entire City team, who were recognized as Exceptional Employees.
- Board portal project will continue with updates and any input from Board members is appreciated.

IRVING CONVENTION CENTER

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- First five months of the fiscal year have been severely impacted by the pandemic.
- Last year's total event income was \$2.9 million and this year the total is \$362,000.
- Last month \$1.78 million short of budget, and this month \$1.56 million short with more revisions and cuts to come.
- A few events are coming close to signing contracts, but some are postponing or canceling all together.
- May through September events are looking solid but have been accounted for in the budget.
- Being creative in ways to generate more revenue. Example: renting out a freezer on the loading dock to a vendor for \$10,000 a month for six months.
- Will continue to make cuts in contracts and working with vendors to negotiate contracts.
- ICC has a small staff remaining, who are all working set-up and tear down, concessions and food service.

- Looking at the last six months of the fiscal year and brainstorming ideas to produce public events for revenue.

Director of Sales Matt Tungett reported:

- Sales team is having some success with automobile research shows, testing events and dance/cheer competitions and bringing hotel weekend business.
- Smaller public shows are having some success, most are locally based.
- Working on self-produced shows for revenue.
- Held a joint ICVB/ICC Sales team strategy meeting and discussed creative ways to reach out to clients.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Live Nation and Toyota Music Factory

Mike Rilley reported:

- Lots of things happening at The Pavilion – working on how to get back to life and continue through the Governor’s recent release of mask-wearing order.
- Three private events in the next two months.
- Christ Church is partnering with other Irving churches for an Easter service.
- Parker University and University of Dallas commencement ceremonies scheduled.
- At the same time, working aggressively to be the first Live Nation venue to reopen at capacity.
- There are 11 offers out for shows new and not on the current calendar to start in May/June.
- Also working with agents and touring representatives for prospects for June/July.
- Need other states to open before artists will tour across the country.
- First week in April will announce new show ticket sales for nine events for the summer and beyond. Some are big national acts, and some are international, a few Texas bands, as well as a well-known international comedian.
- Working with limited staff and hopefully back to full staff and 100% capacity in June.

Hampton Inn Irving/Las Colinas

General Manager Kim Limon reported:

- Occupancy for February was 41.2%, index of 81.9%, down 26.8%.
- Average Daily Rate is \$67.39, down 15.7% versus competitive set.
- In February, lost a boiler, elevator, and a valve to sprinkler. All are back in operation.
- March statistics are sitting at 57.6% Occupancy and Average Daily Rate of \$65.21, most from staycations and sporting events.

Omni Las Colinas

General Manager Nydia Hoskins reported:

- February at 20% Occupancy and \$146.00 Average Daily Rate, which is double from January business.
- March is picking up significantly during weekdays and weekends are staying strong.
- Omni Park West in Farmers Branch is sold and has changed ownership but remains closed. Omni Las Colinas did gain some of their regular business.
- Past weekend picked up 310 rooms and very busy.

- Hired back three managers and two sales team members; the Director of Housekeeping is re-starting next week.
- Catering is starting to come back.
- Next weekend is pacing nicely and optimistic about April/May as well.

Restaurant Update

Vice Chair David Cole reported:

- Texas Restaurant Association CEO Emily Knight is accepting a new role with National Restaurant Association. Her leadership has produced more accomplishments in Texas than any other state organization. A search for her replacement will begin soon.
- Legislative Session items:
 - Making permanent the temporary waivers received on alcohol to-go and grocery sales.
 - Protecting restaurants that relied on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) from surprise tax bills.
 - Requiring greater pricing and contracting transparency for third-party delivery companies.
 - Reducing restaurants' mixed beverage tax burden to help them recover from the economic devastation created by COVID-19.
 - Preventing local governments from creating a patchwork of private-sector employment regulations.
 - Protecting businesses that make good-faith efforts to comply with COVID-19 safety protocols from unfair litigation.

DCURD

Dallas Burke reported:

- Continuing the busiest year in waterworks projects.
- Channel repairs in Beaver Creek downstream of Walnut Hill.
- Lake Carolyn wall repairs.
- Dredging project and wall repair in Cottonwood Creek downstream of Story Road to continue.
- Lake Remle at Riverside wall repair and slope failure repair continues.
- Streeter Pump Station emergency generator project going well and should be completed by May 25.
- Completed transfer of ownership for Williams Square Plaza to the City of Irving.
- IFCD III Update:
 - Waterway trash collection drone is operating, pump station upgrades underway and wall repair in Canoe Canal continues.
- IFCD I Update:
 - Pump station electrical upgrade project completed and installation of piezometers to monitor river seepage under the levee.

Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Board Chair Sam Reed Reported:

- Fiscal year 2021 to date: 10 wins, three retention/expansion projects. Over \$298 million in Capital Investment, which equates to 638 jobs and 1.2 million square feet of commercial office space; four are new construction.
- The team continues to work remotely, with 105 projects in the pipeline, which equates to 46,000 jobs, 22% of which are corporate headquarters.

- Irving unemployment rate is 6.8% up from 6.3% in December and is consistent with the state of Texas and national numbers.
- Legislative items the Chamber is supporting:
 - HB 3 in Education and Workforce to protect and fully fund the comprehensive school finance bill.
 - Healthcare, Economic Development, Higher Education, Transportation and Water (including the implementation of water management strategies in the Texas State Water Plan).
- Voting for the annual “Best in Irving” awards has been extended to March 31.
- Reed clarified Irving Day in Austin has been moved to a virtual series – dates and times are available on the Chamber website.
- Virtual Chamber Mixer is scheduled for Tuesday, March 23.
- Next discussion session with Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins is scheduled for March 31 at 10:30 a.m.

Irving Arts and Culture

Executive Director Todd Hawkins reported:

- The Irving Museum has a new website at irvingarchivesandmuseum.com.
- To celebrate Women’s History month, a free virtual event March 24-31 is available on the website with speeches from Smithsonian Institute partner scholars.
- Irving Archives & Museum “*Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Stories*” is now closed. New exhibit of “*World War I America*” is scheduled from April 9 through May 25. The exhibit is made possible by funding from the National Endowment for Humanities. The ICVB Board will be invited to view the exhibition at a premiere event.
- Ruth Paine house is open by appointment only.
- Mustang Museum in the East Tower of Williams Square and the African American Exhibition in the Masonic Lodge at the Jackie Townsell Bear Creek Heritage Center are both closed for renovations and opening next year.
- Work continues at Bear Creek to restore and sustain the historic structures on site.
- Irving Arts Center galleries has the *Lonesome Dove* photography exhibit and *Sol Hill: Signal from Noise*.
- Mask mandate remains in place, but staff is working hard to increase capacity for events.
- Mainstage Irving Las Colinas is currently streaming “*Lives of the Saints*.”
- Selected Brightcove to provide live streaming services for our events as well as those for clients.
- Irving Symphony Orchestra has “*Asleep at the Wheel*” on Saturday, March 27 at 7:30 p.m.
- New Philharmonic of Irving features “*Connections: It’s Spring*” on Sunday on March 28 at 3:30 p.m.
- Arts Board is working on a two-year work plan that includes prioritization of facility maintenance and replacement (HVAC, roof, elevator, etc.); preparation of loss of \$1.6 million to ICVB in 2026; working closely with ICVB to determine ways that Arts and Culture department can support the hospitality industry; and increasing amenities at the Arts Center to increase rental potential.
- Continue to monitor the American Rescue Act and look for identification of possible funds to cover revenue losses.

Las Colinas Association

LCA President Hammond Perot reported:

- Annual meeting on March 23 – board elections and staff service recognitions.
- Real estate activity shows 712 property trades in 2020, compared to 493 in 2019.
- Reduction of 6% in control submissions.
- Decrease in alarms process for the Central Station.
- Director of Security Services Penny Hayter announced her retirement after 36 years and will be missed. Interviewing for her replacement. She has agreed to stay on for a few months to train.
- Wayfinding initiative approved bid and contract for manufacturing and placement for signage. Project should start in May.
- Dog Park is close to completion, placing trees and landscape planting, fence installment, irrigation, and parking lot. There is a 6-8 week growth period for grass to grow before opening.

Board member Rick Lindsey thanked City Chief Financial Officer Jeff Litchfield and ICVB team on their hard work on the impact studies and collections of the Hotel Occupancy Tax.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director