

MINUTES
IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
IRVING CONVENTION CENTER – JUNIOR BALLROOM
AND ZOOM VIDEO MEETING
April 26, 2021

Attendance: Karen Cooperstein – Board Chair; David Cole – Board Vice Chair; Kim Andres, Beth Bowman, Bob Bourgeois, Rose Cannaday, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Todd Hawkins, Herb Gears, Nydia Hoskins, Julia Kang, Clem Lear, Rick Lindsey, William Mahoney, Greg Malcolm, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, Michael Randall, Mike Rilley, Sam Reed, and Richard Stewart – Board members; Mayor Rick Stopfer, Council Liaison Deputy Pro Tem Kyle Taylor, Councilman Oscar Ward, Councilman Al Zapanta, and Councilman Mark Zeske – City of Irving Elected Officials; Director of Sales Matt Tungett – Irving Convention Center; City Secretary Shanae Jennings, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, and Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber – City of Irving; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Marianne Lauda, Brice Petty, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose and Monty White – ICVB. Guests – 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 hybrid meeting 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 March 22, 2021.
- Accept the ICC Financials for March 2021
- Accept the ICVB Financials for March 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 Bob Bourgeois, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved.

BOARD REPORTS

Executive Director Maura Gast

COVID-19 Update:

- Data from Dallas CVB study from Tourism Economics was used to compare with Irving data to provide projections for FY 2022.
- Gast will work with Chief Financial Officer Jeff Litchfield for Hotel Occupancy Tax projections.
- Study indicates a slight recovery, but nowhere that it needs to be for long-term.

American Rescue Plan Act:

- Staff put together tiers of requests to City Management for funding, but the language detail will determine how funds are specifically spent.
- Language will hopefully include the Irving Convention Center, as it is a City-owned facility.
- Year-to-date Hotel Occupancy Tax losses equal \$6.5 million and ICC revenue losses are in the same range.

- Funds will be distributed in two tranches: one in May and again at 12 months.
- Staff is prepared for any opportunities allowed.
- Focus will have to include replenishing reserves and repaying the City loan.

Shuttered Venue Operators Grant:

- Gast will continue to monitor.
- Language still does not include municipally-owned convention centers.

Chair Report:

- Cooperstein noted the next Board meeting will be held on May 24 and will be a hybrid meeting.
- Former Board Chair Don Oberlin and Irving community leader Bill Hooten have passed away. Condolences will be sent from the ICVB Board and staff.
- Former Board member Bob Galecke's wife passed away in October and a hybrid service will be held at the Church of the Incarnation on the University of Dallas campus on May 19.
- Next week is National Travel and Tourism Week. The Mayor will present a proclamation at the City Council Meeting on May 6. In-person attendees are allowed, or you may attend virtually as well.
- Will update the Board on dates at the end of July for a 1-1/2 day session for a potential Board strategic planning session.
- Dates for the Community Engagement Committee initiatives for volunteer opportunities are listed in the packet. There are several upcoming events to volunteer.
- Congratulations to Director of Accounting and Budget Marianne Lauda for 35 years of service at the ICVB.
- Congratulations to Director of Marketing Monty White for his 12 years of service.
- The Board and staff recognize Gast for her 30-year anniversary with a video from industry colleagues and former staff. Floral presentation to Gast and individual cupcakes signifying 30 years were distributed.

BOARD REPORTS

Board and Business Development Committee

- Committee Chair Bob Bourgeois gave a legislative update on some of the items the Committee is following for the 87th Texas legislative session: HB 1195 Franchise Tax Treatment of certain loans and grants made under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act; HB 1615 continuation and functions of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; as well as several other Bills relating to budget.
- Staff of ICVB, ICC and many industry associations continue to monitor and advocate federal legislature to procure grants and other available funds.
- The revised Board bylaws will be presented to City Council for approval on May 6.
- Next Committee meeting is scheduled for June 11.

Community Engagement Committee

- Committee Chair Clem Lear thanked everyone who volunteered at the Catholic Charities drive-through food drive. The other volunteer opportunities suggested by the Committee are listed in the packet. She encouraged all Board members to review the list and volunteer as an ICVB Board member.
- Next Committee meeting is scheduled for July 13. The Committee will discuss recognizing industry leaders.

Destination Development Committee

- Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported the next meeting will be held on May 4 at the Irving Convention Center and will be a hybrid meeting. He encouraged all to attend.

CITY REPORTS

Council Liaison Kyle Taylor reported:

- In following up with a question from the Board, Taylor reported the City of Irving would be notified as a creditor for Hotel Occupancy Taxes for any delinquent hotel property that has filed bankruptcy.
- Discussion was held at City Council Work Session regarding the Main Street/Heritage Park renovations. Conversation was held on ways to increase tourism and visitors, including closing off street to traffic and create a walking environment, and how to revise R-A-B Ordinances to be equal across the City.
- Discussion was held at the Parks and Rec Board meeting regarding sponsorships for City and public events to generate attendance and awareness. City staff is working on sponsorship package ideas.

Councilman Al Zapanta

- Thanked Gast and staff for their efforts in promoting the Irving-Las Colinas Olympic Day on June 25 and 26. The Las Colinas Association and DCURD will be hosts. The event is a way to showcase Irving and the City was selected by the Olympic Committee.
- Zapanta extended an invitation for the Cinco de Mayo event at the Canal in Las Colinas.

Councilman Oscar Ward

- Congratulated Gast on her years of service and thanked her for the labor of love for the City.
- Reminded everyone to vote early.

Councilman Mark Zeske

- Congratulated Gast on her tremendous career and years of impeccable service.

Mayor Rick Stopfer reported:

- Echoed his sentiments to Gast for her service and she has done for the community beyond the ICVB; Rotary, Arts, Parks and Rec, and the list goes on.
- Last day for early voting is tomorrow, April 27.
- City Council off-site Budget Planning Retreat on May 19-20. Discussions on funding opportunities, funding utilization, bond proposal and the future of the City will be top of mind.
- There is a challenge to hire employees city-wide after the pandemic.
- Downtown park and new Starbucks are under construction.
- Continue to work with apartment development and businesses in the downtown area.
- There is continual interest in the former Texas Stadium site.
- There is growth and activity in the Urban Center, as well as residential, commercial, and retail across the City.
- Plymouth Park is being cleaned up and in the process of resurfacing buildings in the area.
- Will continue to monitor the legislative challenges.

DART:

- Continue to search for new CEO but should be completed in the next 30 days.
- The Hidden Ridge DART station is now open.
- Public input is needed on the bus rerouting and schedules.

Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders reported:

- City facilities are reopening – City Hall will open June 1 with social distancing guidelines in place.
- Discussing plans for in-person events this summer.
- Aquatic centers are now open and facing challenge to hire lifeguards.
- Recreation facilities are open (exception: Lively Center)
- Libraries are open with in-person and curbside service.
- The City received federal funding for residential assistance programs.
- Rental Assistance programs are listed on City website.
- Anticipating directions and clarification for the American Recovery Act on specific rules for expenditure of funds.
- Dallas County vaccination site at Fair Park has same day services available.
- Grand Prairie/Irving joint vaccination site is operating as second vaccine drive-through facility only and will wrap up on April 28.
- New businesses and expansions are coming into the City, which is a product of what a great city Irving has become, and the word is spreading.
- Legislative session is wrapping up the end of May and the city will continue monitoring items.
- Subscribe to the *Legislative Insider* newsletter on the City's website for legislative session updates.
- Fire Station #4 is close to completion.

BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Gast reported:

- ICVB Staff will begin phasing back into the office in staggered shifts.
- June 7 staff will all be in the office on a regular schedule with scheduled appointments only.
- July 6 will be full operation and no appointments necessary.
- The Hotel Development Ordinance proposed by the Board was postponed. Electronic survey will go out by mid-May to hoteliers and owners/management groups for input.

Sales and Services

Assistant Executive Director Lori Fojtasek reported:

- Sales are going well, currently 118% year-to-date to meet goal.
- Seeing more Corporate group leads for next year and beyond.
- U.S. Arm Wrestling Championship is coming and will bring 750 room nights for this year.
- Happy to see professional baseball teams back at the Four Seasons Resort and Club.

Marketing and Communications:

Marketing Director Monty White reported:

- Launched two new campaigns:
 - OTA (Online Travel Agency) Campaign with Expedia and Priceline. From mid-February through march, the campaign has generated 7,400 hotel room nights and over \$922,000 in revenue at Irving hotels.

- The Promoted Content Campaign highlights local businesses through social media and the ICVB blog posts, with 2,200 new visitors to the blog and nearly 5,000 post engagements on social media.
- The Staycations and Meeting Campaigns both continue to perform well.

Assistant Executive Director Diana Pfaff reported:

- March had 81 total meetings leads, the highest number of leads in the past twelve months.
- Industrywide shows similar trends.
- Website traffic is making progress toward 2019 levels. Irving had a record month for web traffic with over 64,000 total sessions to both websites.
- The blog broke a record with 11,800 pageviews and the top post was the popular Bluebonnets guide.
- Advertising engagement increased substantially in March and was the second highest month to date.
- Paid search on Facebook and TripAdvisor drove engagement on the leisure side, and MPI paid search on the meetings side.
- Social media saw the largest increase since August 2019 with 2,211 new followers, mostly from Facebook.
- Industrywide metrics indicate signs of recovery.
- Adrian Awards:
 - Irving CVB and Irving Convention Center won a Gold Best Practice award in Corporate Social Responsibility for Staff Meals Dallas. Recognized as a top entry in its category and will be included in an upcoming publication as a best practice case study. A video from HSMAI noting these award recipients was shown.
 - Three additional awards were also received: Bronze for Corporate Social Responsibility for the Westin Hotel at Las Colinas headbands given to Baylor Irving frontline workers; Bronze for Crisis Communications and Management, and a Silver in Recovery Strategies for Dine Around BINGO.

Finance and Administration:

Assistant Executive Director Susan Rose reported:

- AirDNA February reports
 - 466 available listings in February, which is a 51.3% increase over last year.
 - Average Daily Rate was \$178.14, down 1.52% over last year.
 - Occupancy is 52.8%, down 26.36% compared to last year.
 - Hotel subset reports Average Daily Rate was \$97.10, down 9.26%.
 - Occupancy was 54.9%, down 25.94% from last year.
- The Finance and Administration team is focused on the budget process, monitoring spending, and cutting expenses.
- Preparing to return to the office on June 7 with a full staff.
- Technology Manager Brice Petty is working on IT-related requests for returning to the office from staff, and successful hybrid meetings.

IRVING CONVENTION CENTER

Director of Sales Matt Tungett reported:

- ICC staff is in expense control mode. Remaining full-time staff is working event set up, tear down, concessions and food & beverage preparation.
- Sports market has shown some success with cheer/dance programs.
- The budget is reflecting only contracted rental and food & beverage projections.
- Staff is being creative with new ways to generate revenue.
- USA Wrestling will be in the building in June with 1,200 people anticipated and parking revenue. The event had previously been in Arlington. There is a possibility for a second event in August.
- Possible Texas Cornhole League event in June with 700 players and a purse of \$25,000.
- Exploring ideas to partner with current events to produce revenue, or self-producing events.
- Previously averaging five groups per month during COVID; May has 11 on the books already with return of some school district events, dance and wrestling.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Live Nation - The Pavilion and Toyota Music Factory

Board member Mike Rilley reported:

- The Pavilion is still in expense-saving mode but is targeting bringing some employees back full-time.
- Looking at last 30 days – booked 17 new shows for this year.
- June 26 – Robert Earl Keene Texas at Star Jam presented by Whataburger. Event is 75% capacity seating with normal set-up.
- Hopefully by October will be at full scale in capacity and shows booked.
- Several big tours need more than just Texas to be open post-COVID to go out on the road and may postpone their tours.
- Glass Animals, Alicia Keys, Doobie Brothers are all scheduled.
- Alejandro Fernandez coming in October and will be the most significant and biggest audience show for the year.

HOTEL REPORTS

STR Report

Board member Greg Malcolm reported:

- STR Report for March shows Irving hotels Occupancy at 58.1%.
- Weekends are strong at 71%, Weekdays are 53% Occupancy.
- Average Daily Rate is \$80.29, and RevPAR is \$46.62.
- For the Comp Set – Occupancy is 82.6%, Average Daily Rate is \$105.12, and RevPAR is \$86.78.
- His hotel ownership company has seven hotels in the area and 3 are currenting beating 2019 Occupancy, the other four are close. Average rate is still lower than 2019.

Board Member Nydia Hoskins – General Manager, Omni Las Colinas reported:

- The Omni had a great March; behind in Occupancy during the week, but business travel is up.
- Weekends are strong for March.
- Hotel hit every milestone in achieving budget for ADR, RevPAR and Occupancy and beat past year numbers since pre-COVID.
- April is coming together nicely and beat budget projections last week.

- Groups during the week have picked up and are growing.
- Smaller groups and weddings are returning.
- Staffing is the biggest challenge right now. Some have come back, but F&B staff is the biggest hiring challenge.
- The Omni pool is busy, and weather has been nice.
- Omni PGA Frisco property will break ground on May 4.
- Kickoff party for Omni Lakehouse will be on May 21 and invitations will be sent to Board members.

RESTAURANT REPORT

Board Vice Chair David Cole reported:

- He congratulated Gast and stated he is lucky to be an Irving company and involved with the ICVB for a long time working with Gast.
- Restaurant legislative update – Alcohol-To-Go bill is ready for floor vote; PPP tax deductibility has been approved and on Governor Abbott’s desk for signature. Unemployment Tax Relief is placed on the calendar for second chamber vote.
- Irving lunch sales for iFratelli averages \$250-\$280 Monday through Friday. The past weekend Irving-Las Colinas location had \$1,280 and Valley View location had over \$800. So far Irving-Las Colinas location has come back the strongest in sales for all metro area locations.

LAS COLINAS ASSOCIATION:

Board member Hammond Perot reported:

- Starting to plan the Las Colinas Association 50th anniversary celebration for 2023.
- Grass is being installed in the dog park which should be opening mid-June.
- Wayfinding signage for the Urban Center is in fabrication but having some issues with major monument sign placement. Should be installing signs beginning of summer.
- Partnering with DCURD for plans to put in a park on Customer Way.

TIF

Board member Michael Randall reported the TIF Board has not met since the last ICVB Board meeting.

IRVING-LAS COLINAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber Board Chair Sam Reed reported:

- Fiscal year 2021 to date: 11 wins, four retention/expansion projects. Over \$299 million in capital investment, which equates to 630 jobs and 1.2 million square feet of commercial office space; four are headquarter-driven projects.
- The team continues to work remotely, with 106 projects in the pipeline, which equates to 46,000 jobs, and potential capital investment of \$9 million.
- Irving unemployment rate is 6.6% down from 6.9%, Texas reports 6.9% and nationally showing 6.0%.
- Five Star Virtual Business Mixer on April 27.
- Coffee Break on May 5 presents Business Transformation Series: III – Website Due Diligence and Traffic Data Analytics.
- Business Connections is scheduled for May 12 at 11:30 a.m.

IRVING ARTS AND CULTURE

Executive Director Todd Hawkins reported:

- *WWI America* is extended through Memorial Day, regular admission tickets with time ticketed entry beginning June 1.
- Irving Arts Center will resume in-person docent tours beginning June 5.
- *City of Hope: Resurrection City & the 1968 Poor People's Campaign* in the Courtyard Gallery through April 30.
- *Lonesome Dove: Photographs by Bill Wittliff* in the Dupree Lobby through July 10.
- *Sol Hill: Signal from Noise* in the Carpenter Lobby through July 24.
- Events are mask-mandated but increasing capacity numbers.
- Irving Entertainment Series presents *The Quebe Sisters* on May 1.
- Main Stage presents an on -demand live stream of *Bell, Book, and Candle* on May 7
- Lone Star Youth Orchestra presents the *Three B's* on May 12.

Arts Board Chair Kim Andres reported:

- The Arts Board is holding hybrid meetings.
- Expanded audience capacity is exciting and still maintaining COVID protections.

Cooperstein thanked the ICVB and ICC staff for their efforts in pulling together as a team over the past year.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director