

MINUTES
IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
IRVING CONVENTION CENTER – JUNIOR BALLROOM
AND
ZOOM VIDEO MEETING
May 24, 2021

Attendance: Karen Cooperstein – Board Chair; David Cole – Board Vice Chair; Kim Andres, Beth Bowman, Bob Bourgeois, Rose Cannaday, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Herb Gears, Todd Hawkins, City Manager Chris Hillman, Nydia Hoskins, Julia Kang, Rick Lindsey, Kim Limon, William Mahoney, Greg Malcolm, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, Sam Reed, Richard Stewart, and Clare Venegas – Board members; Mayor Rick Stopfer, Council Liaison Deputy Pro Tem Kyle Taylor, Councilman Oscar Ward, and Councilman Al Zapanta – City of Irving Elected Officials; 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, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Marianne Lauda, Brice Petty, Susan Rose, Carol Stoddard, and Monty White – ICVB. Guests – Chamber Manager of Irving International Affairs and Sister Cities Joe Lopez - City of Irving Economic Development Project Administrator Jennifer Ramirez.

Board Chair Karen Cooperstein called the meeting to order at 11:47 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 April 26, 2021.
- Accept the ICC Financials for April 2021
- Accept the ICVB Financials for April 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.

INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

Cooperstein asked for a motion to approve the Budget Adjustment of Revenues and Expenditures from ASM Global for CIP Projects. On a motion from Board member William Mahoney and a second from Board member Greg Malcolm, the item was unanimously approved.

BOARD REPORTS

Executive Director Maura Gast

- Staff will continue to work with City staff through the process to submit requests for items that can be included in the American Rescue Plan Act.
- The City has received one tranche payment and will receive another 12 months from now.

- The funds can help rebuild the industry by giving ICVB the ability to implement and provide programming that responds to the negative impacts of the pandemic.
- Data indicates hotels are recovering.
- Beginning in July, ICVB and ICC staff will return to in-office work full time and the office doors will be open for walk-ins once again.

Chair Report:

- Cooperstein reported Gast gave a presentation to City Council at the Budget Retreat with great information, which was well received.
- ICVB Board Strategic Planning meeting is tentatively planned for late July, and she encouraged all Board members to review the 2018-21 Strategic Plan that is posted in the Board portal beforehand. Location and dates will be communicated soon.
- Next Board meeting is scheduled for June 28 and will communicate if hybrid or in-person only.

BOARD REPORTS

Board and Business Development Committee

Committee Chair Bob Bourgeois reported:

- City Council passed the recommended ICVB Bylaw amendments at the May 6 Council meeting.
- Next Committee meeting is scheduled for June 11.

Community Engagement Committee

Committee Vice Chair Julia Kang reported:

- National Travel and Tourism week was recognized at the City Council meeting and a proclamation was issued.
- There are several upcoming volunteer opportunities available, including Irving Olympic Day on June 26. The official Olympic Day app is available for download and volunteers may register there. Keep Irving Beautiful Trinity River Bash is on September 25.
- Next Committee meeting is scheduled for July 13.

Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- Brief recap of May 4 Committee meeting:
 - Presentation on bus network re-design from DART.
 - Review of the Irving 2019 Hotel Visitor Research and Economic Impact Studies.
 - Update on ICVB Group sales pipeline and COVID impact.
 - Update on Irving restaurants.
- Next Committee meeting is scheduled for August 10.

CITY REPORTS

Council Liaison Kyle Taylor reported:

- City Budget and Strategic Planning Retreat has concluded. Gast gave an excellent presentation to Council that gave a good understanding on how the American Rescue Plan Act fits with the tourism industry and the importance for continuation of funding for ICVB programs. Discussion was also held on the funding opportunities to get ICVB programming back for the importance of the tourism industry to the City.

Mayor Rick Stopfer

- The City Budget and Strategic Planning Retreat gave the Council an opportunity to discuss the challenges for the City and the importance of managing the dollars available for maximum benefit.
- Council is looking at every way to utilize existing internal funds and funding coming from the Federal government.
- Looking at options for potentially issuing pension bonds, which really don't function any differently than any "normal" bond program; there are the costs of the bonds plus the interest costs that ultimately determine the schedule of payments.
- Compensation study was done for employees and entry level police and fire to be competitive. Several other positions need to be raised as well.
- Will be hearing from Moody's on ratings for bonds being sold this year. Working diligently with Finance to hopefully stay where we are in terms of our bond rating.
- Bottom line is to maximize and utilize the potential dollars available to accomplish the challenges the City is facing.
- Will be looking at Georgia Farrow Open House soon, with a \$3 million expansion at that facility.
- Looking forward to the July 4th celebrations with the parade on July 3 and fireworks event on the 4th.
- Upcoming groundbreaking for the park along the TRE and finishing the first section of the trail system from downtown to Champion Trail.

Councilman Al Zapanta

- Thanked Gast and Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff and her staff for their efforts in promoting the Irving-Las Colinas Olympic Days June 25-26. The event is a way to showcase Irving and the City was selected by the Olympic Committee.
- The creative and content for the Irving Olympic Day app was developed by ICVB Marketing; Board members can download the app, as well as register to volunteer and support the cause. "Irving Day" is name of the app.
- Irving Police and Fire will participate, as well as University of Dallas.
- Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce will host a business roundtable with Japanese and United States companies. Zapanta thanked Chamber President Beth Bowman and Chamber Chair Sam Reed for their support.
- Zapanta thanked and recognized Chamber Manager of Irving International Affairs and Sister Cities Joe Lopez for his continued assistance and support.

Councilman Oscar Ward

- Ward attended last week's City Budget Retreat and thought it was very informative and robust, while identifying challenges.
- Thanked Zapanta for bringing the Olympic Day event to Irving and getting the City into the spotlight.
- State legislature is still in session, and he voiced his concern about last minute funding issues.
- Ward happily reported a University of Dallas student called regarding the UD "Big Event" next fall and looking for ways UD students can get involved in the community. He is looking forward to that event.

City Manager Chris Hillman reported on upcoming special events:

- Memorial Day virtual event will be available with a Zoom link on May 28 at 10:30 a.m.
- Annual Memorial Day event at Memorial Park on May 30.
- Independence Day parade will be held on July 3rd with fireworks on July 4th.

BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Gast reported:

- Extending the message of Travel and Tourism Week all month long at Rotary. Each week has featured ICVB & ICC speakers; Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek, Marketing Director Monty White, Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff and Irving Convention Center General Manager Tom Meehan were presenters. It is a good opportunity to talk about the work that is being done during this strange year.
- Gast added her acknowledgement to Pfaff and team for their work on Irving Olympic Day. It is a first-class event with their first-class talent.
- Live Nation Update: New General Manager Tommy DeBeaudry was formerly the Operations Manager and will succeed Mike Riley in the position. He will be invited to attend a future Board meeting.

Sales and Services

- Assistant Executive Director Lori Fojtasek reported:
- Sales are going well, currently 115% ahead of pace tracking against 2019.
- April reports 97,000 cancelled room nights and lost room nights were 48,749. Lost room nights due to COVID were at 80,200 but have leveled off.
- Senior Convention Services Manager Wendy Foster and Meehan are working together to potentially host a job fair for the hospitality industry.
- Staff is working hard to increase sales numbers and attending a few trade shows. Everyone is looking forward to touching base with their customers face-to-face.

Marketing and Communications:

Marketing Director Monty White reported:

- **Staycations**
- From January first through the end of April, the Staycations campaign has generated:
 - Over 37,800 hotel referrals, \$5.2 million in potential economic value – through yesterday, that number is now over \$6.5 million with 46,000 hotel referrals.
- When combined with the campaign results from September through April, the campaign has generated:
 - Over 58,500 hotel referrals and over \$9 million in potential economic value – when adding in the last 24 days, that number is over \$10.3 million.
- So far, an investment of \$123,000 of CARES Act funding on this campaign means that for every dollar spent, it generated about \$74.
- **Online Travel Agencies (OTA) Campaign**
- This campaign is running through the Expedia and Priceline networks, two of the biggest OTA players.
- From mid-February through the end of April, the campaign has generated:
 - Over 10,000 room nights from over 1,400 hotel reservations

- The total direct hotel revenue generated through April was \$941,000. Through today, that number tops \$1 million.
 - This was generated from a \$60,000 campaign.
- **Safe-Meetings Campaign**
- The campaign continues to do well and as of yesterday has generated:
 - Over 32,000 website sessions and 176 meeting leads for Sales.
- **Promoted Content Campaign**
- This campaign promotes content on our social media and blog, which profiles local stories of local restaurants, attractions, hotels, and other tourism-related entities.
- This is a very inexpensive campaign; less than \$5,000 has been spent and it has generated over 32,000 interactions which are defined as likes, shares, and comments and has been creating a buzz for local businesses and partners.
- **Meetings Sales Leads**
 - 90 leads, the highest amount since February 2020
 - Industry-wide is seeing a similar pattern of increasing lead volume, which is now the highest since March 2020.
- **Website Traffic**
 - Over 69,000 sessions from over 60,000 users to both websites, the highest amount of combined traffic in any month to date and the second record breaking month in a row
 - Industry-wide is showing that U.S. DMO's are now at roughly the same level of website traffic as 2019.
- **Blog Traffic**
 - Second record-breaking month in a row with over 14,000 blog pageviews, a 143% increase over April 2020
 - Top Blogs:
 - Best Places to Dine with a View in Irving.
 - Irving Bluebonnets Guide
 - The Top Five Picnic Spots in Irving and Las Colinas
- **Advertising**
 - Advertising engagement increased again in April with over 3 million advertising impression and over 35,000 site visits.
 - This was the highest month for site visits and impressions to date.
- **Social Media**
 - Social media also performed well with over 2,000 new followers, bringing our total influence to 112,000.
- **Communications**
 - Included in the packet for review:
 - Visit Irving's Gold Best Practice award for Corporate Social Responsibility
 - Two articles from the Dallas Morning News: one is about where to find Bluebonnets in Irving; the other is where to see live music in Irving.

Finance and Administration:

Assistant Executive Director Susan Rose reported:

- AirDNA April reports
 - 469 available listings in April, which is a 30% increase over last year.
 - Average Daily Rate is \$214.80, increase of 17%.

- Occupancy is 64.3%, up slightly compared to last year.
- Hotel subset reports Average Daily Rate was \$95.58, a 10% increase and Occupancy was 61.2%.
- She added from a weekly report of May 9, citywide hotel Occupancy was at 64%, compared to last year's 27%.
- The Finance and Administration team is focused on the budget process and continues to monitor spending and cutting expenses.
- Preparing to return to the office early July with a full staff.
- Continuing to work with the new Munis HR system.
- Reducing some software expenses and working on computer projects with Technology Manager Brice Petty.
- Working with the ICVB Executive team to review ways to be more efficient.

IRVING CONVENTION CENTER

Director of Sales Matt Tungett reported:

- Seeing some good signs of business returning, but still a long way to go.
- In May the Convention Center hosted 12 events, which is double any months since the pandemic began.
- Weekends are starting to bounce back for events.
- MBM Graphics Pro Expo event has historically been the largest trade show at the ICC, and last year had to shut down during their event due to the pandemic. The event has chosen the ICC to kick off again this year with half their normal size event, but it is a good steppingstone. They have requested to come back next year in a larger capacity.
- In June, Zest Fest is back. This event may move to June in the future from their normal January dates.
- A Texas Cornhole Tournament has booked for the second week in June with 700-800 players, and guest rooms at the Texican and Irving Convention Center Westin Hotel. The event should generate significant concessions and parking revenues.
- Upcoming events include:
 - A wrestling event with 1,000 people expected.
 - Steubenville youth program, with 2000 attendees
 - Working with City on July 4th celebration concessions.
 - In July, Lucky Leaf Expo, a Quinceañera, Wellness Expo.
- Waiting for Corporate events to bounce back for weekday revenues.

Cooperstein added the Cornhole tournament in Shreveport, Louisiana two months ago had 700 players, \$60,000 in beer sales, and \$40,000-50,000 in food sales, along with parking revenues. There is a \$25,000 championship purse. If things go well, staff is hoping to book their return in the fall and early next spring.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Board member Greg Malcolm reported:

- April STR reports – Weekday Occupancy is 52.4% and Weekend Occupancy is 70.0%.
- Driving Rate – Weekday at \$85.35 and Weekend at \$88.60.
- Hilton Garden Inn South reports for April – Occupancy at 65.2% and Average Rate is \$106.30.
- Things are moving in the right direction.

Board member Kim Limon reported:

- Hampton Inn Irving/Las Colinas reported Occupancy index for April is 102.3%
- Average Daily Rate Index is at 113.70; pushing rate when possible.
- RevPAR Index is 116.30.
- Finished April over new budget for the second quarter.
- New Dual Sales Manager has been hired and currently in training.

Board member Nydia Hoskins reported:

- Omni Las Colinas Hotel reports similar story and continuing to exceed expectations.
- April finished at 26% Occupancy, up 4% from March.
- Average Daily Rate is up but mid-week Occupancy is still struggling.
- Group business is coming back with less cancellations.
- Excited to welcome back their Group Sales Manager.
- Sales team closed on a large Liberty Tax event and a big piece of business in August.
- Five weddings booked in June; six in July and contracts are out in the year/for the year.
- New invitation to the Lakeside Pool Party on June 18 will be sent out soon to all Board members.

RESTAURANT UPDATE

Board Vice Chair David Cole reported:

- Texas Restaurant Association Convention Marketplace event will be held in San Antonio, July 10-12. TRA Marketplace is the largest in the country, just below the National Restaurant Association. The event will be in-person this year and the event comes back to Dallas in 2022.
- Legislative Affairs items:
 - Three big Bills were signed – Alcohol-to-go, Grocery Waiver Bill, and PPP Money Tax Deductible.
 - The House postponed Bill 114 that requires food and general retail establishments to notify hourly employees of their scheduled shifts at least 14 days in advance – formerly 10-day advance and adding payment of overtime for an employee called into to cover a shift.
 - iFratelli Valley Ranch and Las Colinas locations have had the highest increase in business from all 23 iFratelli locations.

IRVING-LAS COLINAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber Board Chair Sam Reed reported:

- Fiscal year 2021 to date: 13 wins, five recruitments, eight retention/expansion projects. Over \$290 million in capital investment, which equates to 2,100 jobs and four are new construction projects.
- The team continues to work remotely, with 106 projects in the pipeline, potential capital investment of \$9 million, and 23 are corporate headquarters.
- Irving unemployment rate for April decreased to 5.7%, Texas reports 6.7%.
- 87th Texas Legislative session included government pandemic compensation program including \$300 per week unemployment and prohibiting government entities requiring mask wearing.
- School campuses will not require masks.
- Five Star Virtual Mixer tomorrow at 4:00 p.m.
- Thursday, May 27 at 9:00 a.m. the Chamber will host the Changemaker Conversation.

IRVING ARTS AND CULTURE

Executive Director Todd Hawkins reported:

- Hawkins acknowledged Arts Board Chair Kim Andres and her invaluable contribution.
- Irving Arts Center to host events which highlight culture of Olympic Host Nation Japan on June 19. Activities range from tea ceremonies to martial arts demonstrations. Events will continue through June 25-26 for Irving Olympic Day and available on the app.
- The Irving Museum is free admission through Memorial Day weekend.
- Museum will be open starting June 2 on Wednesday through Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Irving Arts Center is open Tuesday through Saturdays from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. Reservations and mask wearing are suggested. Staff is excited to be back in business.

LAS COLINAS ASSOCIATION

Board member Hammond Perot reported:

- Las Colinas Newsletter for May-June is included in the packet and copies were distributed at the meeting.
- Paws Colinas Dog Park will hold its grand opening on June 19 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- Las Colinas Association office will officially re-open fully staffed on July 6 and in the process of filling some positions.
- LCA rolled out new Human Resources system and had a total redo of the CRM system and updating the technology of the website.
- Working on the final monument signs plan.
- A new Customer Way Park design is underway on DCURD property and hoping to break ground soon.
- There has been a major uptick in activity for new construction in residential and office space.
- Carefully watching the multitude of Bills for property owner associations being introduced during the Texas Legislative session.

UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

Board member Clare Venegas reported:

- Happy to complete the 62nd annual commencement last weekend at the Toyota Music Factory with 1,400 attendees.

Cooperstein reminded Board members to promote within their circles the events at the Irving Convention Center and the message of the ICVB and the tourism impact to the City. She thanked Gast, Meehan and Tungett for the ability to cut costs and monitor expenses. She encouraged all to keep shopping, eating, and playing in Irving.

IRVING CONVETNION AND VISITORS BUREAU

MAY 24, 2021

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With no further discussion, Cooperstein adjourned the meeting at 12:50 p.m

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maura Allen Gast". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director