

MINUTES
IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Irving Convention Center – Junior Ballroom C-D
September 27, 2021

Attendance: Karen Cooperstein – Board Chair; David Cole – Board Vice Chair, Bob Bourgeois, Dallas Burke, Herb Gears, Julia Kang, Clem Lear, Kim Limon, Rick Lindsey, Greg Malcolm, Joe Philipp, and Richard Stewart, Jr. – Board members; Mayor Pro Tem and Council Liaison Kyle Taylor and Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Al Zapanta – City of Irving Elected Officials; Assistant Director Planning Department Jocelyn Murphy, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, Financial Services Director Bret Starr, and Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber – City of Irving; General Manager Tom Meehan and Director of Sales Matt Tungett – ICC Staff; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Marianne Lauda, Brice Petty, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose, and Monty White – ICVB; Assistant Executive Director/Operations & External Programs Kass Prince - representing Executive Director Todd Hawkins - Irving Arts and Culture.

Board Chair Karen Cooperstein called the meeting to order at 11:46 a.m. and inquired if there were any citizen comments; there were none.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approve the ICVB Board of Directors meeting minutes from August 23, 2021
- Accept the ICVB August 2021 Financial Reports
- Review of Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
- Review of ICVB Cash Flow Report
- Accept the Irving Convention Center August 2021 Financial Reports

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 Clem Lear, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved.

INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

Approving Resolution for Changes to the City's R-AB Ordinance as recommended by the Destination Development Committee.

Cooperstein noted a special Destination Development Committee meeting was held to draft the Resolution in support of R-AB Ordinance changes to assist local restaurants and developers by making the process to open and operate a restaurant much simpler and more efficient. With no further discussion, Cooperstein asked for a motion to approve the Resolution for changes to the City's R-AB Ordinance as recommended. On a motion from Lear, and a second from Board member Julia Kang, the motion was unanimously approved.

BOARD REPORTS

CHAIR REPORT

- Cooperstein thanked all that were in attendance for the ICVB 2021-22 Strategic Planning sessions last week.
- The next Board meeting will be held on Friday, October 22 at the ICC in the first floor conference room. It is a Special meeting to conduct the Executive Director's annual Performance Evaluation.

Board Development Committee

Committee Chair Bob Bourgeois reported:

- Recap of the September 10 Committee meeting - Discussion was held on the upcoming 2021-26 Strategic Planning meeting with critical plans for five years, developing a message card with hospitality industry talking points for Board members, new legislation coming into effect and the cancellation of the Las Colinas charity bowl-a-thon and options for still giving to the cause even though the event itself was cancelled.
- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for December 3.

Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Clem Lear reported:

- Next Committee meeting is scheduled for October 12 and discussion will be centered around the High Spirited Citizen program, scheduling with City Council meetings, and community engagement.

Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- Thanked all for their support of the R-AB Ordinance change recommendations.
- The next Committee meeting is scheduled for November 9.

CITY REPORTS

Mayor Pro Tem and Council Liaison Kyle Taylor reported:

- Thanked the Board for their support of the R-AB Ordinance change recommendations. The next steps will be updates to the Council and Planning & Zoning commissions, and then any necessary hearings on proposed revisions. City-wide.
- Last City Council meeting included robust discussion on short-term rentals in Irving neighborhoods.
- Taylor attended the North Texas Commission Leadership North Texas and discussion was held on fundraising for Arts, Convention Centers and CVBs general budgets and the large impact of Arts and the hospitality/tourism industry on the local economy.

Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders reported:

- Thanked the ICVB staff in assisting with placing Hurricane Ida storm evacuees in Irving hotels and acquiring discounted rates for temporary shelter.
- City did adopt the 2021-22 budget with Council approval. Tax rate is holding, while still funding important priorities, approved American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support Arts and Hospitality industry. He thanked the City staff for methodically going over the budget until final approval.

- Several buildings in Irving have been purchased, leased, and approved for expansion for business. The Royal Ridge office building was sold to a private investment firm. Irving continues to be attractive for business and economic news.
- Unemployment dropped to 4.8%, previous month was 5.8%. Irving unemployment rates are trending better in general than Dallas and Texas.
- ICTN is celebrating its 40th anniversary on October 12. There are a several events and activities scheduled to celebrate throughout the month.
- Construction in Irving continues to move forward in roadway projects and a commitment to infrastructure and drainage projects.
- Williams Square project continues to develop and is on schedule for opening in March 2022.
- “Eerie Irving Halloween” is a walk-thru event at Trinity Park on Saturday, October 30, staffed by City employees.

BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- August was a good month for the sales team with inquiries and leads.
- Cancellations have continued to occur due to the COVID Delta variant.
- As of today, the Sales team reached their goal for FY 2021 and is reporting at 115%.
- Hosted the Professional Fraternity Association at the Omni Las Colinas. The event showcased Irving-Las Colinas and the new developments in the area.
- A large new hire American Airlines training event was booked for next quarter.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communication Diana Pfaff reported:

- Website traffic declined slightly with 81,402 total sessions and 68,642 total users to both websites. Despite the dip in traffic, August was the third-highest in combined traffic to date.
- Staycations Campaign in August generated 14,533 hotel referrals, and year-to-date referrals are 103,379, representing \$14.2 million in potential economic value. Pfaff thanked the City for the CARES Act funding that was used for this program to continue. The Leisure market is doing great, but the Meetings market is slow. Response to the Staycations campaign now shows Irving can be a leisure destination.
- The Meetings Campaign continues at a reduced pace. Year-to-date the Campaign has generated 4.2 million impressions and 196 meeting/sales inquiries.
- The Promoted Content Campaign reports generating a combined 27,164 blog visits and 136,889 post engagements on social media.
- Social media followers increased to over 2,000 and a total influence of 120,402. The Visit Irving Facebook page performed the best with 1,784 new Likes.
- Advertising engagement declined slightly but remained high with 35,361 site visits.
- The High Spirited Citizen awardee list is with the Mayor’s office for scheduling and staff will move forward with those recognitions.
- Articles in the packet include Fodor’s Travel – “10 Better-than-Europe Experiences You Can Have in the US,” that showcases Gondola Adventures.
- Pfaff gave a shout-out to ICTN on their 40th Anniversary and noted they are a huge asset to the ICVB.
- The Four Seasons Occupancy for September closed at 70%. Highest gross profit in the North American region. They also employed 20 Four Seasons employees from New Orleans while they were displaced after the storm.

Assistant Executive Assistant Administration and Finance Susan Rose reported:

- August 2021 AirDNA Report
 - There were 420 available listings in Irving, which was a 2.4% increase over last year's figure of 410. Average Daily Rate was \$222.33, Occupancy was flat at 58.1%.
 - Hotel comparable subset reports for August \$103.72 Average Daily Rate, Occupancy of 62.9%, an increase of 8.74% from last year.
- Administration and Finance Team
 - Accounting Director Marianne Lauda is busy prepping financials for year-end, which includes the \$3 million in ARPA funds that were received in September.
 - Implementing several security upgrades, including Microsoft Teams, OneDrive and Sharepoint, and moving files to the Cloud.
 - Also installing anti-spoofing and malware-blocking technologies using artificial intelligence.
 - Progressing with the Destinations International accreditation submittal.
 - Working on operating procedures and emergency operations plan.
 - Rose is serving on the City's ADA Audit Committee and looking at opportunities for improvements, including websites, etc.

IRVING CONVENTION CENTER

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- Closing out the most challenging year since the building has been open.
- Next year's forecast is not up to 2019 numbers but will start to rebuild and transition.
- Currently conducting the year-end audit with Crowe LLC; Crowe will report to the Board the outcome.
- Beginning to finalize the budget for next fiscal year and starting to feel more comfortable going forward.
- Meehan thanked the City and CVB for ARPA funding, which will allow projects to be completed that were on the list for this fiscal year but have sat for a long time without funding.
- Landscaping issues will be addressed in the next few months.
- Performing catch-up on mechanical issues to keep things running smoothly.
- The next challenge will be staffing. September is very busy and current staff is stretched to the limit working long hours and weekends. Will start to rehire key positions in event management and kitchen staff.

Director of Sales Matt Tungett reported:

- There have been a wave of cancellations starting in early August. The last few weeks have seen 10-12 cancellations. Renegotiating contracts has helped reduce cancellations.
- Texas Podiatric Medical Association renegotiated their contracted and picked up 725 guest room nights at the Westin Irving Convention Center Hotel and had overflow rooms at Texican Court.
- Texas Society of Association Executives announced Irving as their host for next year. It's been 10 years since Irving last hosted, and while the convention center was open, none of the surrounding projects had even started yet. It will be an excellent opportunity to show what has developed in the area.
- Reviewing and revising rates due to the increased costs to operate since COVID disrupted and changed many things.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Hotel Partners

Board member Greg Malcolm reported:

- The STR report for August shows Occupancy of 59.4% for the City, with weekends dominating at 65.2% and weekdays at 57.4%. Average Daily rate is \$99.09 and RevPAR of \$58.88.
- South Irving through September 18 reports Occupancy of 65.2% and Average Daily Rate of \$117.85.
- Football season is back and the Hilton Garden Inn DFW South sold out for Saturday and Monday.

Board member Kim Limon reported:

- The Hampton Inn Las Colinas reports 60.8% Occupancy in August and RevPAR of \$57.64, growth of 102%.
- Staffing continues to be a challenge. Hotel is looking for a full-time maintenance person and one additional desk clerk.

Restaurant Industry

Board Vice Chair David Cole reported:

- More and more restaurants in Irving are closing due to staffing issues.
- Boston Market has moved to staggering their hours of operation.
- The restaurant supply chain is in dire need of paper, plastic, and food. The slow delivery of supplies is causing an effect on the restaurant industry.
- The Texas Restaurant Association (TRA) held its state Board meeting in San Antonio. The meeting was successful, and several industry speakers all confirmed that higher prices are coming. The decision was made to wait until early 2022 for any campaign donations.
- The labor market in Dallas is in better shape than others in Texas that are suffering with challenging labor issues. The \$15.00 an hour minimum wage will no longer be a battle.

DCURD

Board member Dallas Burke reported:

- The DCURD Board of Directors approved the FY2021-22 budget.
- The Board set a tax rate at \$0.80, a \$0.12 reduction from the current year.
- IFCD I and IFCD III Boards will authorize the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) for consulting, management, operation, and maintenance services with DCURD.
- The waterway projects are progressing well.
- The second of two new dams is being installed along the south fork of Hackberry Creek and is 50% complete.
- The backup generator project is continuing.
- Dredging along the Cottonwood west is underway. The dredging project on Las Brisas upstream of Cottonwood is completed, and 100 tons of debris has been collected, which is 33% more than usual by this time of year.

Arts and Culture

Assistant Executive Director/Operations & External Programs Kass Prince reported:

- Prince thanked the City for ARPA funding.
- Working to designate the rental clients or groups, mostly dance/band competitions, who have hotel room night agreements.
- Opening October 2, the Irving Arts Center is hosting *Our Voice: Celebrating the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Awards* touring exhibition.
- *Bob Nunn: A Retrospective*, runs through November 13th. Nunn is a tenured professor at North Lake College and a renowned international artist.
- Youth and family programs are back in person: HomeSchooler Happenings, JumpSTART, and Second Sunday Funday. Saturday School resumes on October 9 with the first six-week session of the year.
- MainStage Irving Las Colinas, Irving Symphony, Las Colinas Symphony, Entertainment Series, Irving Black Arts Council, Lone Star Youth Orchestra, and new Philharmonic Orchestra all kick off their seasons with performances in October.
- The Bear Creek renovation project team will meet this week to assess current pricing and plan development to move forward with renovations.
- Irving Archives and Museum is preparing for their ticketed grand opening event on November 12 featuring Rum Runners and Rug Cutters, and a free ice cream social event for the community on November 13.

Las Colinas Association

Board member Julia Kang reported:

- Kang encouraged Board members to sign up for the Paws Colinas 5k9 Run/Walk on October 9, benefiting Irving Schools Foundation.
- The Las Colinas wayfinding sign installation begins in October.
- Holiday lights are being installed.

Cooperstein added her appreciation for the ARPA funding from the City.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director