

MINUTES
IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ZOOM VIDEO MEETING
December 14, 2020

Attendance: Karen Cooperstein – Board Chair; David Cole – Board Vice Chair; Kim Andres, Beth Bowman, Bob Bourgeois, Rose Cannaday, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Herbert Gears, Todd Hawkins, City Manager Chris Hillman, Nydia Hoskins, Julia Kang, Clem Lear, Kim Limon, Rick Lindsey, William Mahoney, Greg Malcolm, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, Michael Randall, Sam Reed, and Richard Stewart – Board members; Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Taylor, Mayor Rick Stopfer, Councilman Oscar Ward, and Councilman Al Zapanta – City of Irving; General Manager Tom Meehan and Director of Sales Matt Tungett – Irving Convention Center; Operations Manager CeciliaCastillo, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders, Financial Services Director Bret Starr, and Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber – City of Irving; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Marianne Lauda, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose and Monty White – ICVB.

Board Chair Karen Cooperstein called the meeting to order at 11:45 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.

Cooperstein welcomed all new and returning Board members and introduced Operations Manager Cecilia Castillo who performed the swearing in of new Board members Rose Cannaday, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, William Mahoney, and Richard Stewart, as well as returning Board members Greg Malcolm and Joe Philipp. Board member Dirk Burghartz and new Board member Roy Santoscoy will be sworn in at a later date. Cooperstein then introduced each Board member, ICVB staff, ICC staff and guests attending the meeting.

Executive Director Maura Gast gave a COVID-19 Update.

- Three phases of pandemic: Response, Recovery and Resilience - currently in the Recovery Phase.
- ICVB will continue to constantly pivot on every front at all times and in crisis management mode vs destination marketing mode.
- Stalemate over the stimulus package
 - Key point of contention is inclusion of more federal aid to state and local governments.
 - Board will be updated and if comfortable can reach out to elected officials.
- Vaccine rollout is beginning and will continue to limit travel and tourism until it is widely available.
- Occupancy Outlook – conservative projection based on available data indicates end of 2023 before recovery and another year before rate returns.
- There is some recovery in events and meetings.
- Staff is managing expenses and still booking business.
- National Recovery Initiatives were reviewed.
- Staff is keeping the Irving pipeline full by continuing to drive room night leads, ICC event leads, CARES Meeting Campaign, CARES Staycation Campaign, Visit Irving website, and advertising engagement.
- Resilience Phase conversation points for future consideration:
 - Rebuild reserves, repayment of loans, ICC will still need a subsidy and pursue Tourism Public Improvement District (TPID) project.

- Ways to Help Irving Right Now:
 - ICC furloughed employees Go Fund Me page – open through December 16.
 - Four Seasons Resort & Club Toys and Turkeys Drive – December 14 from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
 - Staff Meal – Sunday, December 20 at the ICC.

CHAIR REPORT

- Cooperstein reported Board Orientation will be scheduled in the new year and invited everyone to attend. It is a great overview of the ICVB/ICC work, Strategic Plan, Marketing and Operating Budget.
- Commitment and perseverance will carry us through 2021 and she thanked City staff for their support.
- Board Committee sign-up sheet was emailed to Board members and Cooperstein encouraged all to sign up for a Committee where their interest dictates, and schedules allow. A draft schedule of Board and Committee meetings and Board activities is included in the packet.
- Next Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 25. There has been support to meet in person for those comfortable doing so, possibly in February.
- Irving Industry Hospitality Annual Meeting plans are being evaluated and will be a virtual event. Updates will be sent to Board members.
- Cooperstein encouraged all to donate to the tourism/hospitality industry any way they can in support of the ICC staff and broader industry. She gave a brief background of her passion for travel, tourism and hospitality industry and its value as an economic booster, including local hotels, restaurants, arts and museums and all things that make Irving great.

BOARD REPORTS

Board and Business Development Committee

- Committee Chair Bob Bourgeois gave a recap of the December 4 meeting. He thanked Board member Debbi Haacke for her leadership of the Committee for the past two years. Topics and accomplishments in her tenure were reviewed.
- Going forward, topics will include formalizing ICC bad debt policy, a Related Party policy as suggested by the recent audit, Bylaws revisions, legislative issues, rebuilding reserves and operating fund, 2026 Sunset on the Irving-specific hotel occupancy tax allocations, ongoing Board applications and the TPID. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for March 12 at 9:00 a.m., location TBD.

Community Engagement Committee

- Committee Chair Clem Lear congratulated new Board members and encouraged all to attend Board Committee meetings.
- She gave an overview of the Community Engagement Committee responsibilities and topics discussed: High Spirited Citizen nominations, Irving Industry Hospitality Annual meeting, Spirit of Irving awards, National Travel and Tourism week and community bus tour.
- The next meeting is scheduled for January 12 at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom.

Destination Development Committee

- Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported the Committee meeting schedule was cut short due to the pandemic, but the Committee did tour The Star in Frisco and Legacy Hall in Legacy West Plano,

toured Texas Live! In Arlington and had a presentation on the Irving Golf Course updates. Hoping to tour the Golf Course and host a meeting there in 2021.

- The next meeting is scheduled for February 9 at 11:30 a.m., location TBD.

CITY REPORTS

Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Taylor expressed his appreciation for the ICVB efforts to make things happen in Irving at the forefront of the community and visitors. He thanked the volunteers who participated in the recent Las Colinas Association Hot Chocolate with Santa event supporting Irving Cares.

Councilman Oscar Ward welcomed the new Board members. He announced Board member David Cole is the new co-owner and managing partner for Big State Fountain Grill. Ward asked for prayers for the Irving fire fighter recently hit by a drunk driver going the wrong way on Hwy 183, and for the young man's family. He noted there is a Special Council meeting scheduled for December 16 that will canvass votes for City Council Place 3 election. Irving Police Chief Jeff Spivey has made the final list of applicants being considered for Dallas Police Chief. Ward expressed his appreciation and is proud of the ICVB staff for enduring and going through this tough time with dignity.

Councilman Al Zapanta expressed his thanks to the ICVB Marketing and Communications team and Toyota Music Factory team for their efforts in promoting activities slated for the Olympic Day event for North Texas in June 2021. Information is going out to sponsors and volunteers.

City Manager Chris Hillman

- \$6.2 million in CARES Act funds have been distributed and the City is keeping an eye on further Federal initiatives for funding.
- South and Valley Ranch libraries hosting "Makerspaces" with labs for making digital and real-space items. Usage requires an orientation session and signing a license agreement and release form. This initiative is made possible by a grant.
- Irving text to 9-11 services are up and operational.
- The Irving Holiday Parade is canceled.
- Centennial Park is lit up for the holidays with 60,000 lights on the fences, trees, bridge, and walkways.
- Letters to Santa available at City Hall at the East public entrance through December 18. Santa will respond to all letters.
- Irving Animal Services hosting "Comfort and Joy" donation drive through. The event runs through January 20 and offering free animal adoptions through December 19.
- Virtual classes and programs are being offered by the Parks and Recreation Department and Irving libraries.

Mayor Rick Stopfer reported:

- This year there have been a lot of challenges, but also a lot of wins and noted entrepreneurship is at its best in Irving. There have been several ribbon-cutting ceremonies over the recent weeks for new businesses in Irving.
- The COVID-19 vaccine has been FDA-approved and should be available the first quarter of 2021. He is hopeful people will feel comfortable getting the vaccine, noting a survey said 47% of original

participants said they did not want to take the vaccine and it has now dropped to approximately 40%. The sooner people feel comfortable, the sooner business and travel will return.

- Stopfer thanked the Board, Board Committees, and ICVB/ICC staff for their perseverance through this challenging time. Partnerships in Irving are successful, and he is grateful and humbled by all the work that has been done.
- City Committees will be re-evaluated with the election of a new City Council member.
- The ICVB Council liaison will be Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Taylor.

Reporting on DART, Stopfer attended a DART retreat last week. He reported DART President Gary Thomas is retiring and David Leininger will be stepping in as Interim. Recruiting for new President will take 8-10 months. He thanked the City staff for their efforts in posting the diminished bus route changes to the GoPass app.

MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Gast reported staff is looking at ways to affordably deliver the Irving Industry Hospitality Annual Meeting in a digital platform, as its funding was among the many cuts from this year's budget. She encouraged all Board members to commit to a Board Committee and sign up where most interested. The Executive Committee reviews the ICC and ICVB finances in depth each month. She wished all a happy holiday season and stressed the need to continue to follow safe guidelines. She thanked the Board and City staff for their continued support of the ICVB and ICC.

SALES AND SERVICES

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- The details of her report are included in the meeting packet.
- November was a slow month due to COVID-19 and the Thanksgiving holiday.
- Cancellations from COVID are still happening.
- The economic impact is in the \$27 million range for cancellations and lost business is \$17-18 million. It is a good indication of what the industry is going through.
- The Sports market appears to be rebounding the quickest and Corporate market is hit the hardest and will be the slowest to rebound. Corporate tends to be shorter-term bookings.
- Hopeful the nationwide vaccine rollout will have a positive impact and the Corporate travel market will again begin to meet in person.
- Meeting Professionals International held its World Education Conference in November at the Gaylord in Grapevine. There were 1,739 attendees; 41% were meeting planners and 49% were suppliers. It was a hybrid event. ICVB Sales attended in person and participated in the hosted buyer program. The event had good reviews and she predicts hybrid format meetings will increase in the future.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff reported:

- Blog traffic slightly decreased in November. Upcoming blog topic of local restaurant holiday gift card options with restaurant deals will be posted soon.
- Advertising clicks reported up year-over-year.
 - Leisure clicks – 14,000
 - Meetings clicks – 4,500, a slight increase.

- CARES Staycation Campaign is doing well and has produced 52,013 sessions and 18,913 hotel referrals, which equates to a potential economic value of \$3,989,616. The Facebook advertising has a conversation rate of 42% and generated 33,232 sessions.
- Meetings Campaign generated 17,057 sessions, generating 57 leads to-date despite a hiccup in tracking sales leads from website feed.
 - Website Traffic declined slightly in November but remained higher than average, with 45,099 total sessions to both websites.
 - Visit Irving website traffic remained high with 43,235 sessions, 29% over the same time last year.
 - The industry is seeing a 22% decline in web traffic, but we are seeing an increase.
 - Campaigns will continue through May and run through Expedia/Priceline with a series of meeting campaigns.
- Pfaff commended Director of Marketing Monty White for his hard work and he was recognized as a top performer for Simpleview software management.
- The ICVB participated in the holiday tree decorating contest at the Irving Arts Center with a “Irving Rocks” theme. There is a Facebook link for voting that was distributed.
- Additionally, Pfaff expressed her appreciation for the holiday lighting at Centennial Park and the Las Colinas area and added the City looks beautiful.

Assistant Executive Director Administration and Finance Susan Rose reported:

- AirBNB for the month of October:
 - 414 available listings, a .7% decrease over last year.
 - Average Daily Rate for October is \$191.68, down 8.25% over last year.
 - Occupancy is 49.4% which is a 23.93% decrease compared to last year.
- The Administration Team is working on a total redesign of the ICVB Board portal and the new Munis HR software system, which will go live on December 27.
- Rose attended City staff training for short-term rentals and LodgingRevs for the Hotel Occupancy Tax and data collections.
- Accounting Director Marianne Lauda will be finalizing the monthly Hotel Occupancy Tax collection report by the end of the week. Collections have dropped to 60%; many hotel properties have not changed to the monthly collection schedule yet. Lauda will have the September, October, and November ICVB financials at the January Board meeting.

IRVING CONVENTION CENTER

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- Currently spending time on the ICC financials and budget, continuously looking every day for revenue opportunities and expense adjustments and making tough decisions.
- Staff size likely may have to be decreased, along with other expense cuts.
- There were three large events over the weekend which gave staff a chance to test Venue Shield protocols.
- Virtual/Hybrid events will continue in the future and staff is looking at being ready with the capabilities to produce events and partner with JSAV, the resident audio-visual company, with enough bandwidth, equipment, etc.
- The lighting project in the Grand Ballroom is 70% complete and looks fantastic.
- A heat exchanger went out and is requiring a \$41,000 fix to address the problem.

Director of Sales Matt Tungett reported:

- Bookings are slow and steady.
- December is the busiest month with six events, including: fundraiser event, body building, auto research and dance/cheer competitions.
- Staff is being flexible in adjusting space with a 50% occupancy and focusing on bookings.
- Auto research events have been successful, hosting 6–8-day events.
- Meehan added sporting event protocols requiring expanded space and audience chairs are being set according to protocols.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

HOTEL INDUSTRY

- Board member Greg Malcolm reported there is no industry STR information available yet for November. However, he reported on South Irving statistics for November: Occupancy is 36.7%, down 49.3% from last year; Average Daily Rate is \$85.91, down 34.4% compared to last year; and RevPAR is \$31.66, down 66.7%.
- December seems to be pacing the same.
- Hilton Garden Inn DFW South has put the airport shuttle service back due to demand; the restaurant is open for breakfast only and there is no bar service at this time.
- Malcolm projects the first quarter of next year will follow November and December outcomes but hoping March will be the beginning of the climb up. He is projecting Occupancy will not be out of the 40% range until the middle of 2021.

Board member Kim Limon reported:

Hampton Inn Irving/Las Colinas shows

- November statistics:
 - Occupancy ended at 23.9% with 94.9% index, which is down 60%.
 - ADR \$65.86, with an index of 114.1%, and down 60%.
 - RevPAR \$64.18, down 79%.
- December looks the same.
- Budget is complete.
- Hotel is offering breakfast grab-and-go only.

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Board Vice Chair David Cole reported:

- Hooters Restaurant on Market Place Blvd in North Irving has closed.
- Captain Nemo's restaurant owners have decided to close permanently on December 31.
- Big State Fountain Grill has sold to a group of investors, including Cole. He stated he is happy to be part of the iconic destination restaurant in Irving and it will remain a soda fountain concept. There will be operational changes/improvements and possible new menu items, as well as ADA-compliant restroom renovations.
- He encouraged everyone to read the upcoming Visit Irving blog about local restaurant gift card/deals. Gift cards are a big help to restaurant revenue and means a lot to the smaller restaurants in particular.

- Cole is excited about the City's plans for the Heritage District and the improvements that are planned. He noted it is a good chance for all shop owners and business owners to bring more people to the area.

IRVING-LAS COLINAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber Board Chair Sam Reed reported:

- The Chamber kicked off FY 2020-21 and the Economic Development team posted three project wins, 280 jobs, \$73 million in capital investment and 364,000 square-foot of commercial space.
- Staff continues to work remotely, over 70 projects in the pipeline with a potential of \$1.6 billion in capital investment and 27,000 jobs.
- Unemployment for Irving in October decreased from 8.0% in September to 6.2%, Texas reports 6.7% and national rate of 6.9%.
- Reed thanked everyone who joined the small business blitz last month, which recognized over 1,000 businesses in the community.
- Chamber held the 87th Texas legislature send-off event last week. Business leaders heard from our state delegation about their priorities for the upcoming legislative session.
- 2021 State of the City "Together Today for a Stronger Tomorrow" virtual event will be held on January 14.
- Chamber Changemakers series is scheduled for December 6 at 9:00 a.m., focusing on mental health.
- Next Business Industry Call with Judge Clay Jenkins will be on December 23 at 10:00 a.m.
- Virtual Five-Star Chamber Mixer is on January 26 from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

IRVING ARTS CENTER

Board member Todd Hawkins reported:

- Holiday tree decorating event at the Arts Center is open for voting.
- Galleries will have a limited number of people allowed and reservations are required.
- Performances are open and will be socially distanced at 26% occupancy.
- Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra event will be held this weekend.
- *"Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish - The Musical"* is a virtual event that will stream through December 27 for \$20 per household.
- Irving Archives & Museum exhibit *"Apron Strings – Ties to the Past"* will be displayed virtually or in-person with a group reservation.
- There are several gifts in the gift shop that are Irving-branded and available for purchase.
- Team is working diligently to recover and pursuing a conference and festival for a Texas non-profit theatre to produce room nights in 2022 and 2023.

Arts Board Chair Kim Andres reported:

- Arts Board is meeting and expanding/changing bylaws to add new structure and committees to include more groups in decision making.
- New Arts Board members – Sandra Zavala-Garcia and Gerald Farris.
- She noted the Arts Center is limiting audiences in performances and utilizing the utmost safety.

LAS COLINAS ASSOCIATION

Board member Hammond Perot reported:

- Hot Cocoa with Santa event was a big success and he thanked everyone who participated.
- Urban Center rolled out the LCA bike patrol in the Urban Center with the intent of being ambassadors in the Urban Center.
- Wayfinding initiative contract is complete. Signs are ready to be produced and hope to award the bid in January with the first phase of the project in Spring 2021 or early summer.
- The number of developments for the year in the community reports 85 single family homes/condominiums and 1,000 multi-family homes in construction, 100,000 square foot of commercial/retail space construction.
- Element Hotel and Embassy Suites are under construction, and the Sandman property construction will begin soon and will bring another 208 rooms.
- Mrs. Perot participating in the Reliant Gingerbread House competition, benefiting Irving Cares.

TIF

Michael Randall reported:

The TIF Board met on November 17 and included:

- Presentation on proposed development plan for land at Las Colinas Blvd. and O'Connor on the Northwest corner. The property is a 5-acre tract of land. Proposed 400,000 square feet and 13-story office building on 4 acres and an 1,850-space parking garage on the canal off Lake Carolyn on the North side of the property between the transit track and Urban Towers. Renditions of the building are for a build-to-suit single tenant occupancy building for a healthcare company that is relocating there. The one-acre tract on the west side of Las Colinas Area Personal Transit (APT) system is slated for 45,000 square-foot four-story office building for State Bank of Texas office space. It will be a beautiful addition to the gateway into the Urban Center area. TIF is requesting funds for the canal area primarily and turn it into a public green space, with cabanas and covered seating. It is a long-needed plan for the site and gateway. Updates to the project will be provided.

Cooperstein commended the City for the very well thought out transformation of Levy Event Plaza. The space is built with pads for food trucks, vendors, concerts, and arts shows and power throughout the space.

Cooperstein adjourned the meeting at 1:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director