

**MINUTES**  
**IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**ZOOM VIDEO MEETING**  
**July 27, 2020**

Attendance: Rick Lindsey – Board Chair; Karen Cooperstein – Board Vice Chair; Bob Bettis, Beth Bowman, Bob Bourgeois, Jo-Ann Bresowar, David Cole, Herb Gears, Debbi Haacke, Irving Arts and Culture Executive Director Todd Hawkins, City Manager Chris Hillman, Nydia Hoskins, Julia Kang, Clem Lear, Kim Limon, Greg Malcolm, Ron Mathai, Joe Philipp, Michael Randall, Mike Riley and Jason Wu Trujillo – Board members; Mayor Rick Stopfer, Councilman Kyle Taylor and Mayor Pro Tem Oscar Ward – City of Irving; General Manager Tom Meehan and Director of Sales Matt Tungett – Irving Convention Center; City Secretary Shanae Jennings, Chief Financial Officer Jeff Litchfield, Assistant City Manager Orlando Sanchez, Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders and City Attorney Christina Weber – City of Irving; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Marianne Lauda, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose and Monty White - ICVB; Dallas Burke, representing Jacky Knox/DCURD.

Board Chair Rick Lindsey called the meeting to order at 11:49 a.m. and noted this meeting is taking place as a video conference due to the COVID-19 restrictions. He inquired if there were any citizen comments; there were none. He asked for a moment of silence in memory of noted Irving resident John Boyle.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Approving ICVB Board Minutes for June 22, 2020
- Accepting the Irving Convention Center Financial Report for June 2020
- Accepting the ICVB Financial Report for June 2020

Lindsey asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Board member Joe Philipp made a motion to accept and Board member Bob Bourgeois gave a second. With no opposition, the motion passed unanimously.

**INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION**

Recommendation to City Council Regarding 2020 Bond Election

Lindsey presented the recommendation to ask City Council to look at all options to move the Bond Election to May 2021 election, due to concerns that current economic climate might not allow fair consideration by the voters of the City of Irving.

Lindsey asked for a motion to approve the Recommendation to the City Council Regarding 2020 Bond Election. Board Vice Chair Karen Cooperstein made a motion, and Board member Debbi Haacke gave a second. With no opposition, the motion was unanimously approved.

**COVID-19 Update**

Executive Director Maura Gast gave a brief update on resources and CARES Act funds. There is an item on the City Council agenda regarding the ICVB Simpleview digital marketing contract revision for an

integrated marketing campaign. Funding has also been received through the City's CARES Act for specialized cleaning and sanitation equipment for the Convention Center.

#### BOARD REPORTS

Lindsey encouraged everyone to review the meeting packet and noted the next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled on August 21 and the Board meeting on August 24. Both likely will be video conferences.

#### BOARD AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Committee Chair Haacke gave an overview of the Committee meeting. Board transitions and City Council support for the upcoming vacancies were discussed. In August, the Board will receive a revised one-page self-evaluation process form. Information on diversity, equity and inclusion was an important discussion; it is important to make sure that our procedures, materials, and messaging are inclusive. ICVB and ICC do follow the City's purchasing process requirements. Short-term Hotel Occupancy Tax collections update and Bond Elections were discussed. Next regularly scheduled meeting will be September 11.

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Committee Chair Bob Bourgeois reported the next meeting is scheduled for October 13.

#### DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported the meeting scheduled for August 11 will be cancelled. Further meeting dates will be updated and communicated.

#### CITY REPORTS

Lindsey welcomed Assistant City Manager Orlando Sanchez and looks forward to working with him.

Mayor Pro Tem Oscar Ward reported:

- Thanked the Board for their support in postponing Bond election to May 2021.
- Transportation and Natural Resources Committee is meeting on Wednesday, July 29 and agenda items include:
  - High speed rail update reviewing a study from North Central Texas Council of Governments
  - Diamond Interchange update
  - Signature Bridge update
  - Wayfinding project in Las Colinas

City Secretary Shanae Jennings added City Council has scheduled a special meeting on August 13 to act on the bond election postponement to November 3, amend the Ordinance calling a Special Bond election and approve the Election Services contract with Dallas County.

City Manager Chris Hillman reported:

- In final phase of budget and difficult to estimate revenues. Overall, currently looking at anywhere from \$6-8 million potential loss in total revenues this year; initially planned \$16.5 million.

- Reviewing property taxes for next fiscal year from Dallas Certified Appraisal District (DCAD) for certified estimate. Final certified numbers are expected August 21, the day after budget retreat.
- Anticipating reductions from all departments in expenses and will carry that forward into next fiscal year.
- City Development: Good news - first five months, 289 new single-family homes last year versus 266 this year.
- Working through distribution of CARES Act funding.
- In process of updating development codes to understand changes in housing and markets, integrating new technologies. It is based on the comprehensive plan that was finalized three years ago with citizen input.
- COVID impacts – City Hall is still closed with most city services available online and in-person appointments can be scheduled.
- July 4 festivities virtual event was a success, with over 10,000 views of online program.
- COVID testing at University of Dallas from 7 am – 1 pm Monday through Friday, through July.

In response to a question from Board member Herb Gears, Hillman stated property taxes will be based on the certified estimate.

Councilman Kyle Taylor reported:

- Unified development code will be the most important topic to tackle other than budget this year. A unified code will allow simplified Ordinances and a smoother process. It will involve looking at outdated Ordinances and make changes to be fair to citizens and developers and allow staff to act on requests that come forward.
- Small businesses and the CARES Act are important topics moving forward. Streamlining the process and talking with non-profits to assist in receiving services when needed.
- He supports funding to the ICVB as a fair turnaround for their work in saving citizens approximately \$745 in taxes each year. ICVB needs to be at the forefront and proactive to gear back up again in a competitive market when this difficult time is over. All tools and funding will be needed to rebuild.

Mayor Rick Stopfer reported:

Echoed all the City reports and appreciates the Board support for the City.

Chief Financial Officer Jeff Litchfield reported on Hotel Occupancy Tax collections:

- Short term rentals tax collection data contract went out for Request for Proposals. LodgingREVS is the number one candidate and he is hopeful the contract will be finalized through an Administrative Award with collections starting October 1; there will be a six-week start up process. The possibility for an early payment discount for monthly collections was reviewed by Bond Counsel but cannot be done due to the covenants in the bond repayment agreements.

- The benefit of monthly payments does increase cash flow and will add two months' worth of payments at the end of the fiscal year, reducing the amount of the loan needed on the debt service side.

Gast expressed appreciation to Litchfield and Finance Director Bret Starr for allowing the ICVB to be part of the Short-Term Rental tax collection discussion and noting the importance for neighborhood integrity as well as the potential financial benefits.

#### MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Executive Director Maura Gast reported:

- ICVB staff is working on the pipeline from a Sales and Marketing standpoint.
  - Sales is focused on booking and rebooking future dates.
  - Marketing is driving local audiences to support restaurant activity and encourage hotel staycations.

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- Sales team is juggling cancellations and re-bookings.
- A survey was sent to future events already booked asking planners for their specific concerns on safety, sanitation practices, etc.
  - Asking meeting planners to overcome their fears and building safety and sanitization links to ICC and hotels.
  - Attrition-free promotion is moving forward. To date, 13 full-service hotels have agreed to participate with their own terms and conditions communicated.
- Corporate market still is not looking good; SMERF market has seen bookings through 2025; Sports market coming back slowly.
- Site visit is scheduled for a large gaming and entertainment group in conjunction with The Pavilion for August 2021.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff reported:

- June had the highest number of RFP responses since March, but a significant decline year-over-year: 29 RFPs, 17,000 room nights.
- Web traffic increased with 31,000 sessions and continues to outperform the industry average.
- Blog traffic has increased with 8,500 views, which is the second highest views to date in history of the site.
- Social media: 105,000 followers over all channels.
- Hotel occupancy increased over Thursday through Sunday traffic with staycations; hotels have done a creative job in building packages and implementing safety measures.
- Most advertising is suspended at the moment, but with the CARES Act funding secured, Marketing was able to launch a national "safe" meeting and staycation campaign through Simpleview.
- Kidd's Kids Blood Drive will be at the Toyota Music Factory again on August 22.
- Pfaff thanked the Board members for their social media support.

Director of Marketing Monty White reported:

- Safe Meetings and Staycations Campaigns are both part of the CARES Act funding disbursement.
- Campaign has two parts, 100% digital and ad spend split 50/50 meetings versus staycations.
- Messaging heavily promotes safety.
- Safe Meetings Campaign:
  - Objective: RFPs
  - Measuring Success: Reach (impressions), website visits, and RFP submissions
  - Tactics: driving traffic to Meet-In-Irving landing page, retargeting ads on LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube, and Search Engine Marketing through Google AdWords.
- Staycations Campaign:
  - Objective: Increase hotel occupancy through direct referrals to Irving hotel websites.
  - Target Audience: Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas and possibly New Mexico residents, families in late summer before school starts, and couples in the Fall after school starts.
  - Measuring Success: Reach (impressions), website visits, hotel website referrals.
  - Tactics: driving traffic to new landing page referring visitors to hotel partners, Facebook ads, Search Engine Marketing, and email marketing.

Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose reported:

- AirBNB Report for May 2020
  - 457 available listings, 20.6% increase in listings over last year.
  - Average Daily Rate is \$168.99, down 13% over last year.
  - AirBNB subset Average Daily Rate is \$102.22, up 27% in May.
  - Occupancy is 61%.
- Administration Department
  - Working on financials, processing invoices, auditing, and expense reports.
  - Continuing to update and refine Return to Work policy with Tom Meehan for ICC and ICVB staff.
  - Board portal updates
  - Phase I of staff computer profiles moving to One Drive and training has begun with each department.
  - Phase II with involve converting all documents to One Drive

Rose thanked Hillman and Assistant City Manager Philip Sanders for the support of ICVB inclusion in the CARES Act funding. She also thanked Councilman Kyle Taylor for his continued support of the ICVB efforts and staff. She added a shout-out to the ICVB team for their efforts in embracing working remotely and making it work seamlessly.

## IRVING CONVENTION CENTER

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- Working on forecasting for the rest of the year from a financial standpoint.
- First six months of the year were record-setting and are key to setting the foundation for the last six months. Focusing on the next fiscal year.
- Most of the ICC staff has been furloughed since April.
- Continuing to identify ways to cut expenses.
- Contracts are being negotiated.
- Supply and equipment inventory are at a good level, and Meehan thanked the City for the CARES Act funding that was needed for supplies.
- Building projects include changing out the lights and Barrisol covers in the Grand Ballroom, along with other upkeep projects.
- There are no events remaining in August, a few scheduled in September.

Two small events were held at the ICC over the last few weekends with very low attendance, but he noted it was nice to have attendees in the building. Gast added her appreciation to remaining ICC staff who worked the concession stands and helped setting rooms.

Director of Sales Matt Tungett reported:

- Focusing on relationship-building with flexibility and offering options and hoping clients will remember the care extended so that they will be back sooner rather than later.
- Small public shows and fundraisers are the events still wanting to meet.

## TOYOTA MUSIC FACTORY

Board member Mike Rilley reported:

- Working on next steps and socially distanced shows.
- Looking forward to smaller scale activities and reviewing how people receive sporting event rollouts with comfort levels.
- Trying to hold onto private events and reschedule events rather than cancel.
- Live Nation rolled out a drive-in concert concept, which was psychologically successful but not financially as great. There may be an opportunity in Dallas for an event and looking at other ways to have an event like that in this market. Physically, it is a tough model to produce with social distancing guidelines in place.

## HOTEL INDUSTRY

Malcolm reported on the STR Report:

- June Occupancy is down 57% to last year at 33.4%.
- Weekend business stronger than weekday at 37% Occupancy versus 32% weekday.
- Average Daily Rate is \$71.22, down 36%.
- RevPAR is \$23.82.

- The Hilton Garden Inn DFW South is reporting 18% Occupancy for July with \$94.00 Average Daily Rate.
- The hotel is operating with a skeleton crew and has laid-off previously furloughed employees.

Board member Kim Limon reported:

- Hampton Inn Las Colinas reports Occupancy for June at 20.6%, down 9.3%.
- Average Daily Rate of \$71.75, down 6.7% versus the competitive set down 15.4%.
- July finished about the same at 20%, but Average Daily Rate was slow due to promotions that Hilton is running with Expedia and other booking channels.
- Payroll Protection Program is ending and will have to lay off employees.

Board member Nydia Hoskins reported:

- Omni Mandalay has changed names to Omni Las Colinas.
  - Signage will change
  - Thanked everyone for social media support
- Final phase of renovations is underway; pool and backyard are complete.
- Open House is planned for August 13 and all Board members are welcome to attend.
- Experiencing some cancellations. Occupancy is 15-16% with weekends stronger than weekday.
- Targeting staycation audience.
- Second wave of group cancellations has been due to the national coverage of Texas and COVID-19 case numbers.

#### RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Board member David reported:

- Spirit Grille closed by TABC last week due to over 51% alcohol-to-food sales against the Governor's orders.
  - Stats reported were from fourth quarter 2019.
  - Currently open for take-out and curbside orders only.
  - Filed paperwork for appeal/revised permit and hopefully will open for inside dining again soon.
- Stokers Icehouse in Dallas has also applied for permit to reopen.
- Aurora's Mexican on North Story Road is closed.
- JinBeh Japanese Restaurant in Las Colinas to close permanently this week.
- He noted many restaurants are choosing the days and specific times to be open to maximize their revenues, and he encouraged everyone to continue to support local restaurants.

#### DCURD

Dallas Burke, representing Jacky Knox, was not able to provide a DCURD report due to technical difficulties.

## IRVING-LAS COLINAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber President Beth Bowman reported:

- Economic Development – 16 projects won, creating 6,200 jobs, \$315.5 million in capital investment and 4.6 million square feet of commercial space.
- The Chamber team continues to work remotely and reports 94 project wins since October 1, representing \$1.5 billion in capital expenditures, 39,000 jobs and 25 million square feet of commercial space.
- Unemployment rate in June decreased 13.5% to 9.1%, Texas reports 8.6% and nationally 11.1%
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion continues to be an important topic with Chamber partners at the ICVB and City. Bowman thanked the Board members for support of the Changemaker series on race relations, the Chamber's Ongoing series that encourages personal growth and enlightening experiences to inspire change.
  - Best Business Practices – digitally on August 12 at 9:00 a.m.
- Chamber Five Star Mixer on July 28
- Chamber Virtual Coffee Break on August 5
- Business Industry Call with Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins – August 5
- Annual Back to School Luncheon, sponsored by Michael's – hosted digitally on August 3.
- 2020 State of Dallas County presented by AT&T - August 25 at 11:30 a.m.
  - Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins will provide an update on challenges, growth opportunities and economic outlook.
  - Moderated by WFAA Sports Anchor Dale Hansen.
- 2020 Virtual State of Public Education – September 1 at 8:00 a.m.

## IRVING ARTS AND CULTURE

Executive Director Todd Hawkins reported:

- In a more typical year:
  - Irving Arts Center drives tourism by welcoming more than 100,000 visitors from all over the world, many of whom choose to stay, dine, and shop in Irving.
  - Actively recruiting and trying to entice visitors to come to Irving by advertising, publicizing, and promoting the thousands of events which Irving Arts Center hosts each year.
  - Arts calendar would be filled with 200+ performances and 25+ exhibitions, best experienced in-person.
- Irving Arts Center was forced to close the facility on March 16 due to the pandemic, canceling or postponing all events scheduled thereafter.
- Reinvented business model, putting the focus on bringing art and culture into people's homes, and facilitating an entirely different kind of visitor experience: a virtual one.
- Offering video content and virtual tours of our exhibitions with assistance from ICTN.



- Family programming, such as JumpstART Stories & Art, Second Sunday Funday and summer art adventure camp program were converted to virtual formats as well. In the case of JumpstART and Second Sunday Funday, guided craft projects and inspiration were offered via video.
- Camps, meanwhile, were offered in real time via Zoom.
- Similarly, monthly lunch and learn programs and Homeschool Happenings and are now utilizing Zoom.
- This past weekend, the first, streamed, ticketed theatrical performance with Main Stage's "An Act of God" was held.
- Currently exploring with several resident art groups, and it holds great potential for rental clients as well who wish to produce performance pieces which can be streamed by audiences worldwide.
- Experience much success operating in this capacity. Fueled by new engaging virtual and video content, social media numbers and other engagement metrics are up considerably.
  - Since March 16, there have been visits to the website from 58 countries.
  - Also tracked visits from 44 countries on Facebook since the start of the pandemic.
- Summer camp program, which has always attracted those within a close commuting range, was suddenly opened to anyone around the globe, and had campers from as far away as Ireland.
- Despite having to be socially distant, the reach programs have been broadened in many respects.
- Hopeful to soon return to welcoming visitors, and promoting tourism, in the more traditional sense, but also intend to carry forward some virtual classes and programs that people can partake in, in real time, or on-demand, wherever they may be. And when the time is right and safe to visit in-person again, the doors will be open to welcome them to Irving.

#### TIF

Board member Michael Randall reported the TIF Board has not met since the last meeting and there is no further update. Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 18.

#### UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

Board member Jason Wu Trujillo reported:

- University of Dallas campus has been a COVID-19 testing site since July 1.
  - ICTN completed a very well-done video piece on the testing efforts.
  - Testing is due to end on July 31, as UD staff returns to campus.
- In-person classes will take place in the Fall semester with safety precautions.
- Beginning mid-August and ending by Thanksgiving until January 2021.
- All Fall sports and large events have been canceled, including Family Weekend.
- Smaller private and semi-private events are scheduled and safely carried out, i.e., tours, etc.

Lindsey adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME  
Executive Director