

eXplore Lawrence
DRAFT - Board Minutes
March 23, 2021
3:30 p.m.
Carnegie Building

Members Present: Ivan Simac, Anthea Scouffas, David Hoyab, Amber Sellers*, Peter Bobkowski, Mike Logan

Members absent: Fally Afani*, Heidi Champagne, Sally Zogry*, Porter Arniel*

*ex-officio members

Staff: Kim Anspach, Executive Director

Meeting Materials provided by email: March Board Packet

Meeting began at 3:37 p.m. at the Carnegie

1. Approval of Minutes –January board meeting

Action: Motion Anthea, Peter second. Approved Unanimous

2. Finance Report

Ivan would like to discuss whether the Board should discuss early repayment of the EIDL loan after the operating agreement is finalized.

Questions about accrual and funds disbursement schedule.

David Moved to approve the financials, Mike Second. Approved Unanimous

3. Staff Reports

Discussion of Visibility at SPL for and group dining options. Also in the downstairs.

Visitors Center:

- 367 Visitors in January.
- New Saturday volunteer who also volunteers at The Watkins
- Purchase State Travel Guide Listings on behalf of hotels and some strategic partners. Purchased 47 total listings on behalf of partners: hotels, large attractions, wineries and breweries.
- Final Fridays event this Friday with Jason Daily our "Why Lawrence" videographer and photographer and portrait/video subjects .

Sales:

- Kendra is attending the Destinations International Sales and Service Summit this week.
- Currently sitting at 10% of our lead goal for 2022 of securing 65 leads

- \$142,623 in estimated room revenue generated for Lawrence hotels. The goal for '22 is \$3,000,000.00
- Attend the Statehouse Industry Event at the Capitol with the State of Tourism Department
- Created the citywide calendar and presented it to the DOS. This has been a long term goal for the sales department.
- Attended a quarterly Sports Kansas meeting to discuss upcoming trade show opportunities for 2022.

Marketing:

- Total unique website visitors for February were 16,122, a 61% INCREASE from last month and 149% more than February of last year.
- In February, users averaged 1.94 pages per session (compared to 1.7 pages last February) and averaged 1:49 minutes (compared to 1:23 last February). The leading source for our traffic was Organic, Social, and Paid Search.
- Top Viewed pages:
 - Lawrence Restaurant Week
 - A Guide to Lawrence Restaurant Week blog
 - Events Calendar
 - Home page
 - Cradle of Basketball
- Lawrence Restaurant Week Advertising
 - In February, we ran a Lawrence Restaurant Week digital campaign through Datafy, Social Media, LJWorld, and Midco.
 - Datafy retargeted people who visited downtown in the past with the RW message. 621 of the people who saw the campaign arrived in market after the ad. The estimated revenue from these visitors is \$48750. 28 of those people also visited a hotel in Lawrence.
 - On social we target roadtripper, daytripper and local foodie targets. ½ million impressions 9700 clicks and over 900 event responses.
 - Why Lawrence:
 - Digital campaign began in February. So far we have featured subjects at Haskell, The Eldridge, Leid Centr, and Spencer in February. New videos premier at noon on Friday. These are our main tik tok content.

Approval of Staff Reports: Peter moves, David Seconds

4. Executive Director Report

- Hybrid Work schedule is underway with all staff on Monday's and Friday's are required to meet in person and other days as needed. As we bring our staffing back to pre-pandemic levels, a more in person schedule may naturally appear.
- There is no Strategic plan document this month. Working with Jonathan post retreat to add some new points: new reporting dashboard, deeper Haskell connections, sales plan implementation benchmarks, looking at current objectives through the DEI + belonging

lense, and how to best leverage our work within the Unmistakable Identity Strategic Outcome with the city.

- TGT Collections in February were \$108,425.
- STR report is tracking increase rate and revenue and occupancy. ADR is the most robust recovery.
- Tourism Economics report:
 - 2020 report came out last month.
 - The pandemic hit Douglas county harder than our peers, with a loss of 30% in lodging and recreational spending, whereas the state as a whole was at 26%. The spending decline contributed to a lost of 770 direct jobs and \$20 million in household income.
 - The overall drop in lodging tax was worse than the state. Dg Co fell 25% below 2011 levels whereas the state was at 15% below.
 - Hospitality and leisure employment was down 15% over 2011 while the state was 4%
 - Even on our most challenging year travel and tourism still generated \$189 million in the county and supported 2900 jobs and \$88 million in household income.
 - Retail Sales rose in the county
 - Visitor spending directly supported 2024 jobs or one out of 11.5 non-farm jobs.
 - Tourism is the 7th largest industry in Douglas County.
 - Visitor activity supported 39 million in government revenues with 21 million accrued to state and local government.
 - In 2020 DGCo unemployment reate was 6.1%, without tourism that would have been 10/6%
- City Manager update:
 - I drafted a letter to update the City Manager on el's Status. I wanted to be clear that we ended 2021 with a surplus because 604K of our total 996K budget was awarded in December 21.
 - We are spending allocations strategically. Outlined our progress in 21 even with reducedresources and shared our plans for success in 22 and beyond.
- CEO Summit Travel in April. I will be out the 4th and fly back on the 7th.
 - Key Topics: DMOs as a community asset, workforce development and retention, Diversity equity and inclusion for DMOs.
- Final Fridays at the VC!

Move to accept Executive Report: David moves, Anthea second. All approved.

5. KOMA – Tabled for time. Powerpoint is included in the board packet. Please review and be mindful of board communication.

6. TGT Grant Program

Peter gave an overview of the program.

Seven committee members, each column on the matrix, is one member. Max points are 50.

What is the Board's role in educating the committee members on where the TGT is generated and what the grant intends to do?

Anthea offered feedback as an applicant. Is it about hotels or what Lawrence is meant to represent? What is the intended mix of cultural events and room night generating?

Also sports is culture in Lawrence. What does it mean to promote Lawrence as a sports town?

Ivan mentioned that there is a need for balance in the approach. We need to support cultural events and also support events that regenerate the fund

Mike talked from a planner's perspective and discussed the building "postcard" events into our budget. Those Unmistakable Identity events should be supported in our marketing.

Amber asked about the resolution creating the program

David moved to accept report , Anthea seconded.

7. Operating Agreement

- Value to having a war chest to go after significant events
- We have to communicate the value of funding increases based on TGT Fund growth.
- We need to collaborate with arts and other cultural organizations
- Benchmarking with other communities to get
- What is our pathway to communication on the operating agreement changes needed?
- Kim will email a draft of the agreement and what else is funded TGT by the fund.
- Send out an agreement to the Board for input.
- TGT grant process is doing too many things to focus on and provide a return on investment

Motion to Adjourn Mike motions to adjourn 5.27, Anthea seconds

Next meeting Apri 20 , 2022 - 3:30 p.m.