



## Explore Lawrence

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

March 27 2024

Present: Ivan Simac (chair) Drew Gaschler, Kim Anspach, Executive Director, Mike Logan, Anthea Scouffas, Tina Tourtillott, Amber Sellers, Heidi Champagne, David Hayob, Porter Arneill, Kathy Gerstner

Absent: Anthea Scouffas, Andrew Holt

Staff: Ruth DeWitt, Sales Manager (taking notes)

Ivan called the meeting to order at 11:05

### MINUTES/FINANCIALS:

The board approved the minutes of the February meeting (which was held on March 6) without changes. (Mike, Heidi)

Kim presented the financial report in Anthea's absence. Kim had the following comments on the financials:

- No anomalies this month, and believe we're pacing well.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Q disbursement came in from the City. That will show in the March financial report.
- The separate bid fund will be divided into quarters and deposited in the money market account.

David asked a follow up question about the TGT collection for December (reported in January) that seemed low. The number reported by KDOR (for January collections) was what we were predicting. So we're still unsure what happened to the December number, but KDOR tells us to wait until the end of the quarter, as it could be resolved then.

Ivan asked about the digital line of \$26.5K when \$20K was budgeted, but Kim explained this would be allocated over the year by quarters, so it was not too concerning to her.

The board accepted the financials.

### STAFF REPORTS:

Kim urged the board to review the staff and executive director reports independently so we could allocate time to our guest and the strategic plan review. Reports are in the board packets.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

**Board Guest: Brian Jimenez, Lawrence Code Enforcement Officer**

The board requested to hear from Brian about the City's short-term rental (STR) ordinance. The ordinance is located in Section 6, ARTICLE 13A. SHORT-TERM RESIDENTIAL RENTAL PROPERTY CODE.

Brian walked the board through some of the highlights of the code as follows:

- It was updated in October 2020
- STRs are available throughout the city, and permitted in any area
- And STR in a single family zoned district must be owner occupied 270+ days/ year
- All STRs are licensed by the city. They are inspected by the city every 2 years. (Reviews act as an informal inspection mechanism)
- There are dynamic maps on the City's website as to the licensed locations
- The ordinance doesn't pertain to taxation. That is handled by the County and the County is working on updating that.

Ivan asked some questions about the regulations and STR issues, and made it known they are impacting hotel occupancy in his opinion. He noted the discrepancy between the number of properties on our AirDNA reports and the City's licensed properties. Brian cautioned that there will always be an imbalance in the numbers because some are listed on several platforms.

He shared some ways New York City and Austin, TX have worked through some issues and urged Brian to take a look at those measures.

**ACTION:** Brian said he would like to get a copy of our AirDNA reports, and we will gladly share those with him monthly.

**ACTION:** Brian also suggested starting meetings between eXplore Lawrence staff and his office in preparation for the World Cup. If changes need to be made to codes, that would start with advocacy with the Commissioners.

### **General Executive Director Report Items:**

We have received word we are being recognized by the Lawrence Business Magazine at their annual awards dinner on April 24 at 5:00 at Maceli's. Any board member who wants to go can tell Kim and is welcome to join us.

We are hard at work organizing a Tourism Summit (a Q3 goal outlined in the strategic plan). Our date is September 5, from 10-2 at Arterra. Right now, we have a KU Economics professor who talks about the Taylor Swift effect on the economy and how that might be a harbinger of things to come for the World Cup, a presentation about the state of tourism in Kansas by Bridgette Jobe, and a World Cup update by Nathan Hermiston from Visit KC (MO). We are also excited to host our first ever tourism awards – and we're working on categories, and award ideas. Please save the date to join us.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN CHECK IN:**

#### **Goal #5 Organizational Health**

Kim shared with the board that she, Mike, and Porter met with Assistant City Manager, Brandon McGuire about securing a long-term funding agreement with the City and increasing the percentage of TGT allocated to us. We have also requested a dedicated bid fund, and an expansion of the number of board members, thereby increasing the diversity of the board. (This was approved by the board in the Spring of 2023).

The feedback from the City was positive, and they definitely see EL's value as a strategic partner in promotion and economic development. They would like more detail on EL's vision moving forward and which KPIs we can provide expertise in meeting and measuring for the City. We want to draw the connection between visitors and local visits, and engagement by residents together.

Porter sent a schedule of the 2025 budget process and EL will submit a revision to the City looking ahead and drill down on specific KPIs under the Unmistakable Identity and Economic Impact objectives within the City's strategic plan. Kim will have an updated proposal for the board at the next meeting.

There will be some more information coming out as the City releases the Parks and Recreation and Arts and Culture comprehensive plan, and when the new director comes on board later this spring. Porter cautioned to not get stuck in the current KPIs, but to propose what we see as our expertise and our best ability to achieve the outcomes with the City. As we onboard new tools to collect needed data, we will know best where our expertise will fit with the City's goals.

Amber asked the board to explore a deeper conversation about DEI and selling Lawrence as a diverse community as something we need to pay specific attention to. BIPOC enrollment is down at KU, the KS legislature is trying to quell DEI programs at Board of Regents Schools.

Kathy asked the status of the new bylaws and the board expansion initiatives. Kim said that will be incorporated all as one motion when the City accepts this new agreement.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Next meeting is April 24<sup>th</sup>. 11:00 AM at the eXplore Lawrence conference room.

Ivan requested a motion to adjourn (Heidi, Tina). The meeting was adjourned at 12:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruth DeWitt