

**City of Sandy Springs, Georgia**  
**Hospitality Board Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 31, 2022**  
**8:00 AM**

**(Hybrid Format)**  
**Live via Zoom/Barfield Room (City Hall)**

**Member Present:** Mayor Rusty Paul, Chairman  
Tom Mahaffey, Vice Chairman  
Bruce Alterman, Secretary/Treasurer  
Eugene Jordan, Board Member  
John Visconti, Board Member

**Staff Present:** Jennifer Cruce, Executive Director-Visit Sandy Springs  
Samantha Marks, Marketing & Social Media Manager-Visit Sandy Springs  
Cynthia Adams, Office & Welcome Center Manager-Visit Sandy Springs  
Peyton Callanan, Marketing Coordinator-Visit Sandy Springs  
Toni Carlisle, Assistant Finance Director-City of Sandy Springs  
Jason Fornicola, Communications Director-City of Sandy Springs  
Caroline Galvin, Executive Assistant-City of Sandy Springs

**Others Present:** Scott Richmond, Director of Sales-Springhill Suites Atlanta Perimeter  
Tochie Blad, Resident, City of Sandy Springs  
Ashley Payne, Director of Sales and Marketing-Home2  
Andres Acosta, Director of Sales and Marketing, Hilton Atlanta Perimeter Suites  
Bob Pepalis, Sandy Springs Reporter

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM by Mayor Paul

Mayor Paul asked for a motion to approve the March 31, 2022 Hospitality Board meeting agenda. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Visconti and seconded by Mr. Mahaffey. The Meeting Agenda was unanimously approved by Board members present.

Mayor Paul asked for a motion to approve the January 27, 2022 Hospitality Board meeting minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Mahaffey and seconded by Mr. Jordan. The Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved by Board members present.

## **I. Finance**

**Toni Carlisle**

Ms. Carlisle presented the financials for January and February 2022. Financial Highlights reports were included in the board packets. Ms. Carlisle then noted that while the agenda stated that she was to present a budget amendment, one was not required – there had been a proposal for salary increases and bonuses for the overall Visit Sandy Springs team, but the total amount for the increase is 10.8% of the budget and could be fully absorbed into the existing budget without requiring the amendment. Mayor Paul then offered to present supporting information to the board. He reminded them that during the pandemic, Cruce had proposed temporary salary reductions for all staff that the board had initially rejected, but that staff salaries had not been increased during that period and consequently had not stayed competitive. The mayor told the board that Cruce had met with him to share comparable DMO staff salaries and to propose increases for the Adams, Callanan and Marks, which he had found fair and competitive. He also told the board that Cruce had also not had a salary increase for some time and so the increases subsequently included one for the executive director as well. He told the board that if they wanted to know the specific amounts, they could discuss that in an executive session, but that he believed they would find that they were appropriate. Mr. Alterman expressed his support and the mayor expressed his thanks and noted that he didn't think it would be an issue. He then turned the discussion back over to Ms. Carlisle, who said that the increases would be effective on the April 8 payroll.

## **II. Sandy Springs Hospitality & Tourism Reports**

**Jennifer Cruce**

### **Marketing and Public Relations**

Marks presented the print and digital ads for January and February 2022 and a summary of partnership initiatives during that period. She also reported on paid social ads, paid search and search retargeting and organic traffic.

### **Social Media**

Callanan presented the social media reports for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and blog content for January and February 2022.

### **Smith Travel Report**

Cruce reported on Smith Travel Report monthly metrics for January and February 2022 including Occupancy, ADR, and RevPar.

### **Meetings, Projects, and Communications**

Cruce reported on some of the key meetings attended by the staff including Meetings with Media One (Digital Media Agency) in preparation for 3 month trial campaign, which began February 1 (Cruce, Marks), City Manager's Monday Senior Leadership Team meetings (Cruce), Create City Springs bi-weekly Marketing Update (Cruce), GHLA Perimeter Hotel Council meeting, Jan 12 (Cruce), Comm. Dev. meeting to discuss the WaterWalk project at the Hawthorn location, Jan. 25 (Cruce), Simpleview

meetings to discuss website redesign , Jan. 28 and Feb. 23 (Cruce, Marks, Callanan), Reel Scout City Springs shoot with Craig Dominey of the GA Film Office, Feb. 8 (Cruce), an Atlanta Eats meeting, Feb. 10 (Cruce, Marks), and the 2022 City Council Retreat (Cruce).

### **III. Discussion**

Mr. Visconti began the discussion with a question about the homeless population in the community. Mayor Paul discussed the ways in which the City is dealing with the homeless population, and noted that the Sandy Springs Police Department is well-trained in the compassionate handling of situation involving homeless people. Mayor Paul also noted that the Georgia House and Senate have passed a mental health bill, which will hopefully provide some help with the homeless situation in the state. He also discussed the various ideas and discussions about affordable housing in Sandy Springs.

Mayor Paul asked for a Motion to adjourn the Board Meeting. Mr. Jordan made the motion to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Mr. Visconti. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Paul adjourned the Board Meeting at 9:17 A.M.

Next meeting May 27, 2022

Faithfully submitted:

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Mayor Russell K. Paul, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Jennifer Cruce, Executive Director-Hospitality & Tourism