

MINUTES – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

IRVING CONVENTION CENTER

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Those in attendance: Committee Chair David Cole, Committee Vice Chair Cambria Jones, Board Chair Richard Stewart, Jr., Board Vice Chair Sam Reed – Committee; Bob Bourgeois – Board member; Carol Boyer, Anabel Espinoza, Diana Pfaff, Maura Gast, Susan Rose, and Monty White – ICVB Staff.

Committee Chair David Cole called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Cole asked for any citizen comments and there were none.

Cole asked for a motion to approve the Community Engagement Committee meeting minutes of July 9, 2024. On a motion from Board Chair Richard Stewart, Jr., and a second from Board Vice Chair Sam Reed, the motion to approve the July 9, 2024, minutes unanimously was approved. On a motion from Reed, and a second from Stewart, the motion to approve the August 12, 2024, Special Meeting minutes unanimously was approved.

HIGH SPIRITED CITIZEN NOMINATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Gary Schepf – nomination was submitted last year but received too late for the November 2024 luncheon.

Cole asked for a motion to approve the High Spirited Citizen nomination for Gary Schepf. On a motion from Reed and a second from Stewart, the nomination was accepted unanimously and will be presented to the Board for approval.

Executive Director Maura Gast noted five to six additional nominees are needed to meet the maximum requirement for the High Spirited Citizen Luncheon. There will be a few carryover attendees from the 2024 event who could not attend.

Discussion was held on recognizing the Shelton Cemetery rehab crews and individual volunteers. Work has been progressing for a lengthy period of time with mostly unsung volunteers doing the work. It was confirmed there have been two or three other group inductees into the program in the past.

It was noted there is one more Committee meeting in July to gather more nominations, which gives the Committee time if additional information is needed in more detail. It was agreed that staff could review nominations and ask for additional information in advance of bringing them to the Committee.

The luncheon is normally between 120-150 people in the room – the nominee, 7 guests, a Board member and Council member at the table. The 3-5 minutes per nominee for recognition and remarks adds up quickly. It was agreed that the main qualifiers for nomination are an active volunteer in the community and resident of Irving. Gast noted the fine line is if part of their job requires them to be active in the community, or is it truly volunteer based. The Committee agreed volunteering outside of their job would

be considered at the Committee's discretion. It was noted the list of High Spirited Citizens is listed on the Visit Irving website in both alphabetical and chronological order.

STRATEGIC PLAN – COMMITTEE UPDATES

1. Irving Heritage Fish Fry
 - The ICVB had more of a presence at the Fish Fry last year through sponsorship. The event is moving to a different location in Heritage Park this year. It was agreed to use the Visit Irving tent again with Board members actively working the crowd for HSC nominations and awareness. Committee Chair Cambria Jones noted the tent allowed people to approach Board members and ask questions. It was noted the right placement for the tent will be important. Concern was expressed about tables being set in the grass area and people losing their footing while carrying plates of food. It was noted that extra people may be needed as food runners for some of the elderly attendees. Bourgeois suggested having HSC brochures and the Visit Irving brochure with impact numbers available at the tent and/or on tables. Jones suggested having a QR code or sign at the tent with a link to the website for nominations.
2. Upcoming Events:
 - The HSC Luncheon is scheduled for November 14.
 - Holiday Parade is scheduled for December 6.
 - National Travel and Tourism recognition at City Council on May 1 at Work Session.
 - Gast semi-annual presentation to City Council is scheduled for May 1.
 - Las Colinas Association Bowl-a-thon on September 18.
 - Service recognition for Councilman Kyle Taylor at May Board meeting. A donation will be made to Irving Cares in his honor.

CITY COUNCIL REPORT

There was no report.

COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT AND STAFF COMMENTS

Cole encouraged the Committee to attend the May 1 City Council Work Session at 1:00 p.m. for the National Tourism Week proclamation and Gast's semi-annual update. He asked the Committee to remain focused on HSC nominations.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff noted April 26 is the Irving Trivia Contest. It was decided Cole, Gast, Jones and Pfaff would represent the CVB as a team.

ACTION ITEM: Pfaff to let Mary Higbie know the team's participation and team member names.

Gast provided an update on the upcoming Hotel Tax Allocation item, which is scheduled to be presented to City Council later this year. She explained that, due to state legislation, beginning September 1, 2026, the portion of the hotel occupancy tax that can be allocated to the Arts—specifically for organizations such as the Irving Arts Museum will be reduced. This change represents a sunset provision in the law that will automatically lower the current allocation unless the City Council takes action. Gast emphasized the importance of being mindful of potential public reaction, as some individuals may express concern or negative feedback regarding the reduced support for the arts. She urged the Committee and Board members to remain sensitive to these sentiments. To provide transparency and context, Gast will present a detailed overview of the history behind the Hotel Tax Allocation, the legislative changes, and potential

impacts at the upcoming City Council retreat. While her goal is to share factual information, she acknowledged that the topic may generate some anxiety among community members and arts advocates.

With no further discussion, Cole adjourned the meeting at 9:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director