

MINUTES

**Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors
Monday, August 26, 2024 at 11:45 AM
Irving Convention Center – Exhibit Hall B
500 W. Las Colinas Blvd.
Irving, Texas 75039**

Attendance: Richard Stewart – Board Chair; Herb Gears – Board Vice Chair, Yasir Arafat, Michael Basoco, David Cole, Tommy DeBeaudry, Stephanie Fenley-Garcia, Colvin Gibson, City Manager Chris Hillman, Cambria Jones, Julia Kang, Kim Limon, William Mahoney, Greg Malcolm, Kelly O’Briant, Joe Philipp, and Sam Reed – Board Members; Mayor Rick Stopfer, Councilman Mark Cronenwett, Assistant City Manager Phillip Sanders, Chief Financial Officer Bret Starr, and Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber – City of Irving; General Manager Tom Meehan, and Assistant General Manager Jeremy Pierce – ICC Staff; Maura Gast, Lori Fojtasek, Marianne Lauda, Brenda Lopez, Brice Petty, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose and Monty White – ICVB.

Board Chair Richard Stewart, Jr. called the meeting to order at 11:45 a.m. and inquired if there were any citizen comments; there were none.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approving ICVB Board Meeting Minutes for July 29, 2024
- Accepting the ICVB Financial Reports for July 2024
- Reviewing the Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
- Accepting the Irving Convention Center Financial Reports for July 2024

Stewart asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. With a motion from Board member William Mahoney, and a second from Board member Julia Kang, the motion passed unanimously.

INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION:

APPROVING HIGH SPIRITED CITIZEN NOMINATIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- a. Reverend Robert D. Robinson

Board member Colvin Gibson presented the High Spirited Citizen nomination recommendation from the Community Engagement Committee. The nomination was reviewed and completed at the Special Meeting on August 12. The bio and person nominating Robinson are in the Board portal.

Gibson made a motion to approve the High Spirited Citizen nomination, and with a second from Board Member Yasir Arafat, the motion was unanimously approved.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

- Stewart requested Board members complete the Self-Evaluation Form and added that the form does not need to be submitted.
- The next Board meeting is September 23.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Board and Business Development

Committee Chair Sam Reed reported:

- The next Committee meeting is September 13 at 9:00 a.m. in the Irving Convention Center-First Floor Conference Room.

Community Engagement Committee

Committee Chair Colvin Gibson reported:

- The next meeting is October 8.

Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- The Committee visited and toured the Arlington Convention Center Hotel and Live! By Loews on August 13.
 - The Arlington Convention Center Hotel has 888 rooms and suites.
 - The Convention Center is located inside of the hotel and has about 250,000 square feet of meeting space with three large ballrooms. The Crystal Ballroom is the largest and is 51,224 square feet.
 - The exhibit hall is located in the parking garage.
- The next meeting is November 5.

CITY REPORTS

Councilman Cronenwett reported:

- Budget discussions will be continued at the Council meeting on Thursday, August 29. There appears to be a consensus to keep the tax rate at \$0.5891. There will be an opportunity for public input on August 29 and September 5 before the final vote on the budget.
- The City will be adding a Municipal Judge position and will be conducting interviews. The City is growing, and this will allow the court system to continue working well.
- Looking at renewing the contract with the current company that manages the Irving Golf Course. Cronenwett added that it has been very successful and has had a positive impact on the City.
- There is an item on the Council agenda to increase the capacity of the Jack D. Huffman Building. Looking at making more use of the space the City has after the vote for a new City Hall building failed. The renovation will include plans to move the Human Resources and Corporate Communications departments to that building.
- Council will also be looking towards acquiring additional property for more affordable housing options in the future.

Mayor Rick Stopfer reported:

- Continuing to work on the budget and will have final discussions this week to refine items.
- As Cronenwett mentioned, there will be opportunities for public input. Stopfer appreciates public input received and added that there usually is not much input on the budget, and this is due to the great work from Chief Financial Officer Bret Starr, City Manager Chris Hillman and their teams put into the budget.

- He added the importance of moving all employees to the 80th percentile and continuing to look at cost of living adjustments.
- Working on budget this week.
- The City is able to spend over \$1,000,000 due to bond sales.
- The City is able to pay for debt through bond proposals. These funds are made available for roads, water, new construction, and repairs. The majority, if not all, of these projects are voted on by the residents.
- Hillman through the Bond Committee has been diligently looking at the time frame, inflation and impact to the community.
- Continue to see a lot of interest in the City by businesses that want to be a part of our City and as a result residential will also continue to grow. Currently close to putting together the third phase of single-family homes near Delaware Creek.
- Several new restaurants are opening in the area, and there are over 600 restaurants in Irving.
- There has been much activity in the Urban Center:
 - The Cars and Cocktails at the Canal and car show took place on August 25 and had a great turn out. The organizer was born and raised in Irving and wants to give back to the City. It will take place the last Sunday of every month in the Water Street area.
 - Mama Tried Restaurant has now re-opened in its new location at the Toyota Music Factory.

City Manager Chris Hillman reported:

- Mayor and Council have a good feel on the City Budget.
- There will be a Public Hearing this Thursday, and on September 5, and then presented to Council on September 12. There are still two more opportunities for residents to provide input.
- After accounting for expenses, employee salaries, major City projects for the next two to two and a half years, and maintaining the existing tax rate, the City will be left with \$1.6 million dollars. The City will be holding steady where it is now and will not be proposing many service expansions. Will also be looking at some of the special revenue funds and how they can be used.
- The debt service rate that is charged to residents on their property tax will stay the same. Any increases are taken from the M&O side and then moved to the services side. The Bond Committee recommended that City Council increase this rate from 12 to 13 cents, but Council did not approve. Instead of raising the tax rate, the City took one cent from Operations and moved it over.
- As old debt falls off, then new debt is issued and accessed through valuations to move forward on projects. The challenge is that the cost of the projects has been significantly increasing. MacArthur Blvd. is a good example originally, had anticipated the project cost to be approximately \$10 million, but today it has ended up at \$28 million. The purchase of property that had been identified for new Parks and Recreation facilities has almost tripled in value and will have to be evaluated before moving forward. Unfortunately, several projects may not get completed because of these significant cost increases.
- In this most recent bond election, The City anticipated increases and for the first time included inflationary numbers into the project estimates. Planned on a 3% inflation rate, but cost has gone up 50-80% and higher.

- Let's Play Irving updates:
 - Senter pool is now being taken out and replaced with enclosed pool.
 - Lee pool is under construction and will be opening in May.
 - Mustang Recreation Center will be going out to bid as plans are finalized. What started out as a 75,000 square foot facility has now become a 125,000 square foot facility with the Senior Center component added. The City will be paying \$40 million in cash from savings.
- This is year seven of the Road to the Future Program. The MacArthur Blvd and Rochelle Rd. bridge projects are about 30 days behind schedule due to the significant rain this summer.

BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF REPORTS

Stewart congratulated and shared that Executive Director Maura Gast received the Marion Szurek Leadership Award from the Texas Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus during the 2024 Annual Conference. A short video was presented of Gast receiving the award. Gast thanked the Board and added that Szurek created and led the San Angelo Convention and Visitors Bureau for many years, which is her hometown. San Angelo is a small town known for its military presence and formerly being the "Mohair Capital of the world," which led to one of many creative things Szurek did to celebrate the City - the running of the sheep. Gast thanked VP of Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff and Sr. Director of Marketing Communications Monty White for getting the video pulled together.

Bureau Management

Executive Director Maura Gast reported:

- There are two large agenda items for ICVB on the August 29 Council meeting agenda. These are the Simpleview and Maloney Strategic Communications contract renewals. A presentation was shared in the Executive Committee meeting last month from VP of Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek, Pfaff and White on these contracts, with the leadership of both firms in attendance.
- Mama Tried and Alamo Drafthouse have reopened at the Toyota Music Factory.
- Currently the running number of hotel taxes owed by the two delinquent hotels is just over \$1.5 million.

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- Congratulated Gast on her very well-deserved award and added how proud we all are of her.
- Currently, most of the Sales team is representing Irving at the Connect Marketplace in Milwaukee. The organization does separate market trade shows, corporate, specialty market (SMERF) and Sports, and has a joint networking event.
- Highlighted upcoming events.
 - Automatik car launch is taking place at The Ritz-Carlton Dallas, Las Colinas and is a large piece of August business. The event takes place August 5 – September 16 with approximately 4,800 room nights.
 - VidSummit will be coming to the ICC in September with approximately 3,000 attendees. The conference brings the top video creators, YouTubers, brands, and agencies.
 - National Weather Association will be at the ICC with just under 1,000 room nights.

- The Sales team will host a familiarization trip in October. This will allow our customers to learn more about Irving and what we can offer.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff reported:

- Thanked Technology Manager Brice Petty for getting Gast's award video up before the meeting. There will also be a video on social media with speech with captions. Congratulations to Gast and added that she is a rock star of the industry, nationally and internationally.
- Staycation campaign is the leader of our digital campaigns, with a 172% increase from July of last year, with 26,000 hotel referrals.
- The new DFW Entertainment Hub campaign which promotes Irving as a launchpad for travelers to explore DFW, continued growing in July. It produced 91,379 ad click-throughs, reflecting a 35% month-over-month increase. The campaign has also been promoted on Spotify and has reached 140,000 since it was launched.
- Event-Based Micro-Campaigns delivered 12,000 ad click-throughs in July. The Evergreen Campaigns, similar to the Micro-Campaigns but are continuously running, generated 3,215 click-throughs.
- To date, the OTA campaign, in partnership with Expedia, has produced 18,582 room nights, and generated \$2.6 million in direct hotel revenue.
- Social media in July added 3,338 new social media followers. This is the largest growth seen and brings our total to 179,593 followers.
- Two of the Marketing staff members are attending Connect Marketplace with the Sales team to better understand the Sales functions "in action" at a trade and appointment-based show, to better refine support materials and resources such as collateral and the sales app.

Administration and Finance

Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose reported:

- STR Date for Irving in July 2024:
 - Occupancy was 64.1%, Average Daily Rate was \$121.65.
 - DFW North, primary zip codes from 75063. Occupancy was 66.1%, Average Daily Rate of \$115.
 - DFW South, primary zip codes 75060, 75061, 75062, Occupancy 61.7%, Average Daily Rate of \$100.
 - Las Colinas, primary zip codes 75038, 75062, 75063, Occupancy was 64.2%, Average Daily Rate of \$139.
- Short term rental data shows there were 545 available listings. The Occupancy rate was 57.7%, up 2.1% from last year, Average Daily Rate of \$175.74, increase of 11.8%.
- Hotel comparable subset, the Occupancy rate was 53.7%, a decrease of 7.7% from last year and the Average Daily Rate was \$122.61, an increase of 9.6% from last year.
- The Las Colinas Association 5th Annual Bowl-a-thon is on September 4 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Pinstack. The ICVB has two teams registered and needs three bowlers. Rose added to please let her know if anyone is interested in bowling or being a spectator. Proceeds will benefit Irving Cares.
- The Finance and Administration team is gearing up for year-end. Rose congratulated Accounting and Budget Director Marianne Lauda and her team for all their hard work.

CONVENTION CENTER MANAGEMENT

General Manager Tom Meehan reported:

- In July, there were 13 events with 154 total for year, 24 events down from last year.
- Currently attendance for year is 220,804, up from 207,653 for last year.
- Room nights year to date 31,295, up from 30,235 for last year.
- Customer service score 92.9%.
- ICC had a remarkably busy August hosting several events which included:
 - Irving ISD, North Texas Sewing and Quilt Expo, City of Irving Transportation Summit, Cocina Sabrosa, and TexSom conference.
- Upcoming events in September:
 - VidSummit, Ultimate Women's Expo, National Weather Association, Las Colinas Bridal Show, DFW Fiber Fest, Society of Cosmetic Chemists, Texas Podiatric Medical Association.
 - Meehan added that the last month of the year will be a huge month for the Convention Center.
- On the financial side, currently well above the financial records set last year, with another exciting year. Attendance is up with less events for the year.
- Started audit process last week and it will continue through October.
- SMG/ASM was officially bought by Legends this past week. Although currently referred to as SMG, the company is ASM Global, and our new company is Legends. Meehan will inform the Board as more information comes out. Everyone is excited for this change.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

The Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory/Live Nation Report

Board member Tommy DeBeaudry:

- Currently 99 promoted confirmed events, better than show budget for 91 events for the year.
- Revenue is down, not only for The Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory, but is also across the board of Live Nation venues, and currently in a "correction" year.
- August and October are busy months, with 20 promoted events in August and 19 promoted events, plus 3 special/private events in October.
- The Dark Realms special event scheduled for September 7-8 has cancelled.
- Have confirmed the Indian Overseas Conference event on September 8. This is a political event and required special approval from corporate. The event is being closely monitored by the security division due to current political issues in India. There is no cause for any concern according to the Global Security Division.
- A private event has dropped off for December 18 but looking at possibly adding a Christmas Event. DeBeaudry will share as more information is available.

HOTEL INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member Greg Malcolm reported:

- The STR report for July shows Occupancy was 64.1%, down 2.2% from previous year.
- The Average Daily Rate of \$121.65, up 6.3% from previous year.
- RevPAR at \$78, up 3.9% from previous year.

- For the hotels on HWY 183 at Valley View, South Irving through August 17:
 - Occupancy was 69.9%, down 3.6% from previous year.
 - Average Daily Rate is \$130.40, down 8.2% from previous year.
 - RevPAR at \$94.13, down 11.5% previous from last year.

Board member Kim Limon:

Reporting for Hampton Inn Irving/Las Colinas for July:

- Occupancy reporting 70.4%, up 8.7% from previous year.
- The Average Daily Rate was \$103.92, down 13.7% from previous year.
- RevPAR \$73.18, down 6.1% from previous year.
- The market has changed in the area.
- Have started 2025 preliminary budget, hoping to be approved, will stay flat.

Board member Stephanie Fenley-Garcia reported on the Industry-at-Large:

- Surprised to hear the report regarding the Arlington Convention Center Hotel Exhibit Hall, being in the garage and could be a positive for Irving.
- Congratulated Meehan on having fewer events, but more revenue.

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member David Cole:

- Summertime is slow for the restaurant industry but have not seen any closures.
- There is a new breakfast restaurant in the High Point area, name Yolk.
- There was a big victory for the Restaurant Association. The United States Court of Appeals Fifth Circuit overturned the Department of Labor decision on the Tip Tax Credit, which allows restauranteurs to pay a minimum wage between \$2 to \$5 per hour, with staff able to make \$25 to \$40 per hour from tips. The Department of Labor continues to support the need for people to make \$15-20 per hour.

Stewart added that there is a YOLK location in Dallas that always has long wait lines.

Irving Arts Board Chair Kelly O'Briant reported:

- Arts Center repairs continue. Currently fixing a small roof leak but everything else is on track and should not affect the resident groups' schedules.
- Opening on September 21 in the Main Stage – Children's Hour.
- Many of the other resident groups will be opening in October. This will include the Irving Philharmonic, Irving Symphony Orchestra, and the Entertainment Series. Tickets can be purchased online or at the box office.
- The Irving Archives & Museum is closed for maintenance through August 28.
- *The National Blueprint: Biomimicry in Art and Design* will open on September 4.

Stewart added that O'Briant is an Associate Professor of Ceramics at the University of Dallas and is a talented Sculptor. Stewart thanked O'Briant for her contributions to our community.

LAS COLINAS ASSOCIATION

Board member Julia Kang reported:

- The Las Colinas Bowl-a-thon on September 4 is sold out. If you would like to join the ICVB team, please let Rose know. Stay and Play tickets are also available for purchase for \$25 which includes player card for the arcade, dinner, and dessert, two drink tickets and a front row seat to the competition. For more information, please visit lascalinas.org.
- The Mandalay Canal Light Club will be returning on September 11-12, October 16-17, and November 13-14. There will be live music and bites from Toyota Music Factory restaurants with beverages available for purchase. The Venetian Terrance will be open for dinner exclusively during the event dates.
- The Las Colinas Day of the Dead Canalside Celebration will be held on November 2, in partnership with the U.S.-Mexico Cultural & Education Foundation. Additional information is located on the Las Colinas Association website.

With no further discussion, Stewart adjourned the meeting at 12:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director