

MINUTES

**Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors
Monday, July 29, 2024 at 11:45 AM
Irving Convention Center – Junior Ballroom C-D
500 W. Las Colinas Blvd.
Irving, Texas 75039**

Attendance: Richard Stewart – Board Chair; Herb Gears – Board Vice Chair, Yasir Arafat, Michael Basoco, Beth Bowman, David Cole, Colvin Gibson, Todd Hawkins, Cambria Jones, Julia Kang, Kim Limon, William Mahoney, Greg Malcolm, Hammond Perot, Joe Philipp, and Sam Reed – Board Members; Mayor Rick Stopfer, Councilman Mark Cronenwett, Councilman Kyle Taylor, and Senior Assistant City Attorney Christina Weber – City of Irving; Sales Manager Cassie Molinari, Assistant General Manager Jeremy Pierce, Sales Manager Kimara Spence, and Director of Sales Casey Villasenor – ICC Staff; Maura Gast, Breahn Fisher, Lori Fojtasek, Marianne Lauda, Brenda Lopez, Brice Petty, Diana Pfaff, Susan Rose, Matt Tungett, and Monty White – ICVB. Toyota Music Factory General Manager Eric Albert, and Irving Arts Board Vice-Chair Deborah Fleck – Guest.

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 June 24, 2024
- Accepting the ICVB Financial Reports for June 2024
- Reviewing the Hotel Occupancy Tax Collections
- Accepting the Irving Convention Center Financial Reports for May and June 2024

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

PRESENTATION

Toyota Music Factory Updates – General Manager Eric Albert gave an update on the TMF planned renovations and a handout of the presentation was distributed:

- Leasing Updates:
 - Mama Tried is tentative to open mid-August and going through construction.
 - Chino Mojito will be above the Mama Tried space with a mid-October opening date.
 - Shoals BBQ is a concept with Hospitality Alliance and will take most of the C1 building and have submitted plans for a smokehouse behind the building. Tentative open for October, in the previous Mama Tried space.
 - Pistil Cocktail Lounge has gone through demo and is working on the building, scheduled to open mid/end of October.
 - Jaxon Texas Kitchen will open mid-October and will be a key piece to activating the Plaza.
 - The Table is scheduled to open in September, located in the previous Nosh & Bottle space.
 - Drizzle Cheesecake is a big operator at the State Fair of Texas and Six Flags. Tentative opening in August, in previous Freshii space.

- The Rayleigh Underground is redeveloping their activation schedule to be aligned with the Plaza opening, currently focusing on special events.
- Alamo Drafthouse will be reopening August 23. Alamo Corporate will be bringing success from Austin and re-implementing at the TMF location.
- Future Tenant Spaces:
 - In talks with a future restaurant group for the space next to Gloria's, hopeful to have lease negotiations done in the next 30 days.
 - In current negotiations with an entertainment group for the former Blaze space.
- Stumpy's Hatchet House has closed.
- Tentative Plaza opening on track for end of November 2024. The property will be 98% occupied by the end of the year.
- Parking garage design, sitewide wayfinding and directories have been finalized and working on approvals and permitting.
- Mural designs have been going up and will continue through the end of September.
- Working with the Irving Arts department on the new "Artist Alley."
- Customer traffic report shows that there has not been a drop in traffic throughout the plaza construction closures.

Albert added that all event parking has been moved to the Urban Towers garage to allow more access for tenants during concerts, event traffic is not allowed at the TMF garage. Focusing to ensuring that tenants use parking validation to secure the garage parking for tenant spaces. Moving event parking has opened approximately 800 parking spots for tenant spaces.

Stewart asked about valet parking. Albert added they are implementing a central valet parking available Monday – Sunday, comparable to what is offered at Water Street. Currently working with tenants that will do a validation program. Valet parking is offered on event nights. New wayfinding signs will help address parking concerns.

Councilman Mark Cronenwett asked how the garage validation works when parking in the TMF garage. Albert explained that you do not pay when you enter the garage. When you tap your credit card it opens a session, a picture is taken of your license plate and will charge you once you leave, unless validated.

Discussion was held on information security for the TMF parking garage. Albert added that he can share the third-party information security policy information with the Board. Stewart thanked Albert for the TMF update.

INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION:

APPROVING HIGH SPIRITED CITIZEN NOMINATIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- a. Dixie Morton Caraway
- b. Karen Cooperstein
- c. Chuck Cooperstein
- d. Michael Crotty
- e. Juan Carlos Gonzalez
- f. Nancy Payne
- g. Saeed Purcell
- h. Delia Watley

Committee Chair Colvin Gibson presented the High Spirited Citizen nominations recommended from the Community Engagement Committee. Their bio's and persons nominating them were included in the Board portal.

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

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

- Stewart deferred to the VP of Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff and ICC Director of Sales Casey Villasenor for the new employee introductions.
 - Pfaff introduced Marketing and Communications Specialist Breahn Fisher. This is a new position to the Marketing team, she will be overseeing digital content, enhancement, and maintenance of the ICVB website, manage digital platforms and will be the dedicated team member for the ICVB Sales team. Fisher expressed her excitement in working in destination marketing and is thrilled to be part of the team.
 - Villasenor introduced ICC Sales Manager Cassie Molinari who was previously a Programming Manager for Downtown Detroit for 1 1/2 years. Molinari will be handling the markets starting with A-G for the convention center. Molinari added she recently moved to Texas from Detroit and is excited to sell the Convention Center.
 - Villasenor introduced ICC Sales Manager Kimara Spence. She was previously a Sales Coordinator with the Sheraton Dallas for 5 years. Spence will be handling the markets starting with Q-Z for the convention center. Spence expressed her excitement to be working with the ICC Sales team.
- Stewart added the Interest in Board Leadership Position handout has been included and asked for voting board members to fill out and return by August 15, 2024, to be shared with the Nominating Task Force.
- Stewart congratulated Board member Cambria Jones on her promotion to Chief Marketing and Experience Office.
- The next Board meeting is August 26.

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 Committee met on July 9 focusing primarily on the High Spirited citizen nominees.
- Briefly assess support for three other initiatives: December Holiday Parade, Irving Schools Foundation ICVB Hospitality High School Scholarship Breakfast with the Stars, and the Heritage Society Fish Fry and Cake Auction.
- The next meeting is October 8, with a possible special meeting in August.

Destination Development Committee

Committee Chair Greg Malcolm reported:

- The next meeting is August 13 and will be an off-site at the Arlington Convention Center, Loews Hotel.

CITY REPORTS

Councilman Kyle Taylor reported:

- There was a meeting on Friday regarding the proposed development near The Ritz-Carlton. There is much interest to see what is presented and what they are proposing to Council.
- Poker/Card houses have been wanting to establish in the City. There have been concerns and questions that Council has asked the City Attorney's Office on the best way to include in our community.
- Budget process begins in August. Future in Focus presentations will be presented in the City Council meetings. Departments will focus on plans for the next five years.
- There is a focus on payroll and labor for the next five years, and making sure the City is set up in case there is a recession or a downturn in the market.
- Board and Commissions appointment process will be starting at the end of August and goes through October.

Councilman Mark Cronenwett reported:

- There have been many improvements and investments seen from the Ritz-Carlton taking over the Four Season, and it leads directly to the condominiums in the area. This is something positive for the community. There was an opportunity at the meeting held on Friday for the homeowners to address the developer for more information.
- Looking forward to hearing the ICVB and Irving Arts department budget presentations this week. It is impressive see all the improvements in the City.

Mayor Rick Stopfer reported:

- The City is currently in a place where one of the challenges it is facing is there is less than 4,000 acres to be developed and is looking at redevelopment.

- Office property evaluation went from 78% of our tax base to about 68% this year. Have seen about 10% reduction in volume. This is concerning because the whole hospitality industry then operates on events and travel. The driving goal is the office market and need to continue to see how we can pull that back together.
- There is a focus on housing affordability in the City. One of the challenges with developing the Southern sector was that it did not meet many of the income guidelines for businesses in the downtown area. The City has spent upward of \$50 million dollars in improving roads, enhancing parks and redevelopment. Currently starting on Phase 3 of the single-family homes and will be opening an affordable apartment complex. Working diligently with the builders in the southern section to make sure they include affordability.
- Continue to strive for our employees to be paid accordingly and have raised the majority to the 80% percentile. This started first with Police, Fire and Emergency Services, but the goal was to be available for all departments. This was a \$22 million dollar expense.
- City Manager Chris Hillman has informed the departments that there might not be any of their Future in Focus five-year plans used this year, the funds will be mostly used on salary increases.
- The Fire department will be calling on a vote for the association to have a stronger presence as they move forward. It will be under discussion next week to determine how the City will move forward.
- The City received a AAA Bond rating and sold \$880 million of bonds. The City was able to get water rates down to the lowest they have been. Bonds were sold to assist with the development of the outdoor recreation center, two indoor swimming facilities, a senior facility, an outdoor facility, and staffing. Next year will only be looking at \$30-40 million in the bond market, which will be street, water, and sewer.
- There are two components that have kept the City in the forefront, one being what the ICVB has been able to do with their dollars and what the City has been able to do with the TIF, which built the ICC, the Westin hotel, entertainment venue, Water Street and rebuild the Mustang Museum.
- DART Update:
 - The City passed a resolution wanting 25% of the DART dollars back. The City is contributing \$808 million. Every person in the City should have access to transit.
 - DART does not have a cap on their revenue. In 2011 there was 71 million people that rode DART, and 41 million in 2021. There has been a decrease in riders, but the City is paying more money.
 - It needs to be looked at from a different perspective. The City is not looking to get rid of DART, but riders deserve quality in transit.

Stewart thanked Stopfer for sharing such valuable information with the Board.

BUREAU MANAGEMENT AND STAFF REPORTS

Bureau Management

Executive Director Maura Gast reported:

- Currently in the City Budget process and scheduled to present the ICVB Future in Focus on Thursday with the Irving Arts department. Staff, City management, Mayor and Council will focus on the big things in the next 3-5 years that will impact staffing and programing levels.

- There will be changes to the budget, our TMRS cost will be going down but cost for insurance will be increasing.
- City Manager Chris Hillman is proposing a 1.5% cost of living adjustment for City salaries in his budget request to the Council. Once the Council adopts the budget, ICVB will fund any changes through the fund balance, which is in good shape.
- Local dining establishment Michelin guide standards will be coming to Texas. The State of Texas along with our counterparts in Austin, Houston and San Antonio put together a funding partnership. It is too early to understand how the partnership will guide the dotted lines between the different cities. Gast will make sure to keep everyone aware as more information becomes available.
- Gast thanked the Executive Committee for the extra time at the July 26 meeting to review the Simpleview and Maloney Strategic Communications presentations. They are the ICVB's two key partners and biggest ticket items on the budget. Present at the meeting were key leaders from both organizations along with our staff leadership who explained the relationships in great detail.
- Currently at about \$1.5 million owed to the City in Hotel Occupancy Tax from the two delinquent hotels and \$213,000 is newly delinquent.
- Gast thanked Senior Director of Marketing Communications Monty White for the update to the Board meeting packet cover pages and dividers.

Assistant Executive Director Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reported:

- The Sales team has been busy and is currently fully staffed. Slightly behind pace, but the summer months are usually slower and will be working on finishing strong for the year.
- Director of Sales Matt Tungett has been working with the company that recently purchased Drive Nation. The Pickler Universe will be opening a pickleball facilities and will include 23 courts and a restaurant lounge. It will be opening in Spring 2025.
- The Invited Celebrity Classic will not be returning and is no longer hosting the tournament.
- Highlighted a few of the larger groups in July:
 - International Municipal Signal Association, USA Badminton, North Texas Sewing and Quilting, Automatik Car Launch at The Ritz-Carlton, and a large wedding, which was the biggest event this month.

Assistant Executive Director Marketing and Communications Diana Pfaff reported:

- Slower month for business travel, but strong for leisure travel.
- Website traffic was the largest in the last rolling 12 months with an 43% increase from June 2023 with 150,000 website sessions, driven by 132,000 users who triggered 1.2 million events.
- The biggest of those page views came from the newly launched DFW Entertainment Hub campaign through Simpleview. It highlights Irving as a gateway to exploring DFW, primarily in the entertainment options in the City but also what can be explored in the DFW area while staying in Irving.
- The Online Travel Agency campaign, partnered with Expedia this month and yielded nearly 100,000 hotel bookings and translated into 18,500 room nights, \$2.6 million in direct Irving hotel revenue in June.

- Social media marked the second largest increase this year, the social media outreach is now 176,000 followers.
- White will be presenting a version of the presentation given at the Executive Committee meeting at Rotary on Thursday.
- Pfaff and White attended Destinations International conference. Pfaff congratulated Jones on her promotion and added that Jones was also a speaker at the conference, held two sessions on Navigating the Workforce Development and Tourism.

Administration and Finance

Assistant Executive Director Finance and Administration Susan Rose reported:

- STR Data for Irving in June 2024:
 - Occupancy was 69.5%, Average Daily Rate of \$129.35 and RevPar of \$89.94.
 - Comp markets for Texas were 67% increase of about 1%, United States was 69.6%.
 - Slide also shows Arlington and other cities that the City benchmarks against.
 - Short term rental data shows Occupancy of 60%, Average Daily Rate of \$233.32, increase of 8%. Revenue per available room of \$140.03, increase of 4%.
 - Short term rental data for hotel comparable shows Occupancy of 58.4%, Average Daily Rate \$122.00, increase of 6%, RevPar of \$71.31, increase of 2%.
- Rose thanked Accounting and Budget Director Marianne Lauda and team for all their work and continued assistance with the new Certify expense report software.
- The team is gearing up for year end on September 30 and next fiscal year.
- Office Manager Carol Boyer is currently out of the office. Rose thanked Sales and Services Coordinator Brenda Lopez for assisting while she is out.

CONVENTION CENTER MANAGEMENT

Director of Sales Casey Villasenor reported:

- In June there were 17 events and 21,410 attendees. Year to date there have been 141 events and 207,107 attendees. Last year there were 166 events with 197,848 attendees.
- Focusing on booking longer and bigger programs this year, which is better business for the convention center.
- Received five surveys in June with a score 92% based on the Irving Overall Experience for the Irving Convention Center. Have received 26 YTD, with a score of 91.5%.
- Upcoming events:
 - Irving ISD, Battle Up Productions, City of Irving Transportation Summit, Cocina Sabrosa tradeshow and TexSom conference.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

The Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory/Live Nation Report

Gast reported on behalf of Board member Tommy DeBeaudry:

- There were 96 confirmed promoted events on a budget of 91 events. Several more have been confirmed but have not been announced. Likely to finish the year with over 100 promoted events.
- Five rentals/private events that have booked for the year with more pending likely.

There are 21 special events on the calendar this year with some events covering several days each, including the Mike Tyson/Jake Paul fight weigh in and activities related to that. The fight will not be in Irving, but the City will still receive benefit from it. H

HOTEL INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member Greg Malcolm reported:

- The STR report for June shows Occupancy was 69.5%, down 4.2% from previous year.
- The Average Daily Rate of \$129.35, up 5.2% from previous year.
- RevPar at \$89.94, up .8% from previous year.
- The Tru by Hilton is the 120-room project being built in front of the Hilton Garden Inn DFW South. It is scheduled to open in June 2025. Currently working on two stories, but it will be a six-story building and construction is ahead of pace.

Board member Kim Limon:

Reporting for Hampton Inn Irving/Las Colinas for June:

- Occupancy reporting 74.7%, up 2.4% from previous year.
- The Average Daily Rate was \$115.38, down 6.3% from previous year.
- RevPar \$86.15, down 2.9% from previous year.
- Learning that all the comp-set cannot be done on Demand 360, but also need to use the STR Report.

RESTAURANT INDUSTRY UPDATES

Board member David Cole:

- In regard to the Michelin guide, later this year they will debut in the five partnering cities, Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio and Houston and it will branch out from there.
- Bruncheon Las Colinas opened in Water Street and offers breakfast and lunch options.
- Rocking Crab is open on Irving Main Street, in the former Big State location.
- Haraz Coffee House has opened in North Valley Ranch.
- Bigdash Irving offers ice cream and pastries and has opened at the 7300 block of MacArthur Blvd.

PARTNER ORGANIZATION AND STAKEHOLDER REPORTS

Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber President Beth Bowman reported:

- Unemployment rate for Irving in June is 3.9%. Increased slightly but still above the state rate of 4.5% and under the national unemployment rate of 4.3%.
- Irving's unemployment rate has stayed below 4% since March 2022.
- The City was invited to join Governor Abbott for the Texas Asia Business Mission. Irving was in Taiwan, South Korea and Japan having business meetings focusing on the opportunities in foreign direct investment in Texas, specifically in Irving, Texas. Bowman thanked the Mayor and Council for their support in the international companies that are running global operations out of Irving and support to amplify the Irving, Texas story on a global stage.
- DFW was ranked #1 among 20 U.S. metros for small business employment growth in June, this includes Irving. DFW recorded the best score in the country on small business jobs index,

release by Paychex Inc. Our DFW region scored 102.62, which showcases the robust hiring that is taking place amongst the small business industry.

Irving Arts and Culture Executive Director Todd Hawkins reported:

- The Irving Arts Center is currently under construction. The HVAC system has been removed and a new roof and HVAC system will be installed.
- The basement is being remodeled and lighting on both stages is being retrofit to LED lighting.
- Much of the cost for the remodel is being covered by City Bond money. Hawkins thanked the City and Irving residents for the center's new roof. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds are being used for the lighting and basement renovations and savings is being used for the new HVAC system.
- Reopening in September with residence organizations rolling out the season.
- Presenting Future in Focus alongside the ICVB on Thursday. Items on the strategic plan include initiatives that pull closer to the ICVB. Created two new committees: Destination Development Committee and Community Development Committee. They will line with the work the ICVB is doing and hoping to work closely to focus on driving tourism. Will also be talking about the relocation of the Hotel Occupancy Tax. \$1.6 million can be retained by the Arts department because of a legislative bracket that will expire in September 2026. Requesting some of the funds to assist in closing some of the fundraising gaps in the museum.
- There has been an increase in museum visitors. Last June there was 152 visitors and 952 visitors this year. This is directly associated to June programing.
 - *La Frontera* exhibit, a partner exhibition with Latino Cultural Arts Program.
 - *Badge of Pride* exhibit, a partnership with the Badge of Pride organization in Dallas.
- Irving Archives and Museum is being nominated for a 2025 National Medal of Honor for museums and libraries work in the community.

LAS COLINAS ASSOCIATION

Board member Hammond Perot reported:

- A new security service contract will be taking place on July 21 at 10:30 p.m. They will handle alarm monitoring, dispatch operations, and 24/7 patrol vehicles. They have been working on ongoing training. This will also include Urban Center bike patrol operations.
- Reviewing the landscaping services contracts as well, presently three providers. No indication of change in that regard other than to maintain and keep activity at top of the line.
- Currently working on improvements in the Mandalay Canal lighting system installed last year and solving future issues.
- The Las Colinas Association Bowl-a-thon is on September 4th at Pinstack, benefiting Irving Cares.
- Starting budgeting process in August for next year.

Stewart highlighted the useful information in the Board Packet. Office Manager Carol Boyer has added a page after the agenda that lists all the attachments with links to make it easier to navigate.

With no further discussion, Stewart adjourned the meeting at 1:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Maura Allen Gast".

Maura Allen Gast, FCDME
Executive Director