

MINUTES

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting June 19, 2013

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at the
Chapel Hill/Carrboro Chamber of Commerce 104 S. Estes Dr. in Chapel Hill

Board Members Present: Dave Gephart, Gordon Jameson, Greg Overbeck, Karen DeHart, Laura Morgan, Lee Pavao, Lydia Lavelle, Mike Gering, Penny Rich, and Annette Stone

Not Present: Anthony Carey, Gene Pease, Jack Schmidt, Jim Parker, Mark Sherburne, Meg McGurk

Staff attendance: Steve Brantley, Laurie Paolicelli, Linda Ekeland, Patty Griffin, Allison Phillips, Martha Shannon and Tina Fuller. Stephanie Perri /Clean Design

Welcome

Chair Gephart began the meeting at 8:08 am and welcomed everyone to the final board meeting for this fiscal year. Mr. Gephart noted that the next board meeting would be hosted by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association's headquarters on Finley Road on August 21st at 8am.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Gephart requested a motion to approve the minutes. Lee Pavao so moved and Penny Rich seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Gephart gave the floor to this meetings' host, Aaron Nelson, CEO of the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Nelson spoke on the business community's concerns with the current General Assembly's budget and tax reform, but optimistic about renewable energy utilities driven economic development. Nelson also spoke on the Chambers services, upcoming calendar events and local events.

Reports

Budget/Finance

Laurie Paolicelli reported that the BOCC adopted the proposed 2013/2014 budget, which included the Visitors Bureau's budget of \$1.2 million, reflecting a 7% increase in revenue due to the addition of the Carrboro Hampton Inn's opening and an optimistic projection of occupancy tax revenues. Paolicelli also reported that Chapel Hill's support remains pledged at \$175k. Paolicelli noted that the new hotel proposed by DR Bryan for the 15-501 southern corridors goes before Town Council in September.

A motion was made to accept the proposed budget.

Hillsborough

Due to Hillsborough Town Board Member Mike Gering having to depart early, he updated the VB Board on their new Tourism Development Authority (TDA) noting that this is an independent council created from statute requirements; the town council has little influence over the decisions made by the TDA other than appointing members. The TDA is a necessary instrumentality required by the occupancy tax legislation. <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Sessions/2011/Bills/Senate/PDF/S269v3.pdf>.

Lydia Lavelle noted that Carrboro also created a TDA board with three members and their legislation requires specific types of appointees in that the appointee must be associated with tourism, a hotel, etc. – also legislations spells out that 100% revenue collected must be spent on tourism related items. <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Sessions/2001/Bills/Senate/PDF/S92v6.pdf>

Penny Rich inquired if the revenue collected had to be spent with-in the fiscal year collected- Mike replied that Hillsborough's legislation does not specify a time limit for revenue expenditures but the statutes did specify board make-up and how the dollars should be used to build and maintain tourism.

Mike went on to say that he is hopeful the Hillsborough TDA will contract with CHOCVB even with Hillsborough having its own program; the VB has great buying power and media options.

Laurie stated that after the tourism summit in Hillsborough, she sensed that Hillsborough would like to maintain separateness with the County's tourism efforts, especially considering the Chapel Hill brand used in national advertising. Mike clarified that the CHOCVB would not manage but provide resources in marketing and other tools in order to use buying power and momentum of county visitor bureau programs.

Signage

Mike Gering informed board members that Anjan Desai (Holiday Inn Express) is asking for signage for their hotel. Mr. Gering stated that town ordinance prohibits road frontage signage. He stated that he began the project pushing for better signage, however, Anjan declined involvement. Gering asked board members for any creative ideas for Anjan without opening up Pandora's Box. Lee Pavao inquired if Hillsborough ordinance allows for directional signage – Mike replied that it does but not pointing to specific businesses. End of discussion on this topic.

The agenda switched to the nomination of new officers. The nomination committee voted to have Anthony Carey serve as Chair, Laura Morgan as Vice Chair and Penny Rich as Finance Secretary. Greg Overbeck moved with Lee Pavao seconding. All members were in favor and the motion was approved to have new officers begin duties at the next board meeting scheduled for August 21, 2013.

Paolicelli thanked David Gephart for leadership during a banner term which included market research, the hiring of Clean Design and a brand transition to the Edge of the Triangle; new publications and supporting web materials and increased awareness of tourism in Orange County. Gephart accepted applause.

Marketing Report

Stephanie Perri of Clean Design gave an overview of the past year's partnership that included new creative execution on print and on-line ads with less emphasis on "Edge of Triangle" and more emphasis on the Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough name. The new advertising also used local personalities in food, art, music, residents and local celebrated locations. Ms. Perri continued with a recap of new initiatives that Clean Design helped create the past fiscal year including: and 8 page agritourism campaign, support for a downtown parking initiative, Goodnight Carolina scavenger hunt map, and the benchmark research. Ms. Perri stated the Ad Agency was in constant contact with the Visitors Bureau and was confident that creative implementation reflected overarching strategies to build tourism.

Relocation of Visitors Bureau Committee

The relocation committee consisting of Penny Rich, Dave Gephart, Lee Pavao, Steve Brantley and Meg McGurk (in absence, relayed message to Frank Clifton separately) met with Frank Clifton to discuss the possible relocation of the Visitors Center. Lee Pavao provided a summary:

- Currently no indication that the bureau would be moving anytime soon.
- Possible reasons visitor center numbers are down
 - o Recession cut down on occupancy
 - o On-line and mobile devices
 - o Signage pointing to UNC VC
 - o Majority of visitor centers experiencing same
- Current location is decent but presents some challenges
 - o Signage – staff will work with town
 - o Absence of parking
- Possible new locations
 - o 15-501
 - o MLK Jr. Blvd as close to intersection as possible
 - o Seek limited space for pilot program to see if anything changes
 - o Mobile unit(s)
- Questions that arose
 - o Could we find same space for same price - \$4000/mo
- Next steps
 - o Staff to research and present results at October 16th board meeting.

Laura Morgan mentioned that they are losing space at Morehead Planetarium and looking at other possibilities – however not necessarily looking to combine the two centers.

Penny Rich suggested better utilizing the closest NC Tourism funded rest areas, inquiring about which rest area referred business to Orange County. Paolicelli agreed to provide that update on state rest areas during the October meeting.

UNC Report

Laura Morgan stated that Dr. Carol Folt began her new duties as Chancellor. Dr. Folt will be installed as the University's eleventh chancellor on Saturday, October 12 during University Day.

www.installatin.unc.edu Ms. Morgan reported that Jim Dean was named as Provost.

Executive Director Report

Laurie Paolicelli reported that sales associate, Allison Phillips, has been working with [Epic](#), a healthcare system that Duke and UNC have contracted with Duke's addition of software contributing to a rise in occupancy in Orange County, with June anticipated at a +10 % jump. UNC is scheduled next for training in 2014.

Paolicelli reported that Carrboro's Hampton is moving along but probably not opening by the 15th of August as hoped. Their calendar is full with bookings for late August, Sept and October.

She informed members that the Bureau will provide 200-250 goodie bags for an October bike conference. Currently Linda is trying to find more meeting space for an overflow of 150-175 people. Lydia suggested using the elementary school for space.

Ms. Paolicelli mentioned that UNC-Chapel Hill's Department of American Studies, will host a summit and festival September 26-28, 2013 in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. The Summit is a film & music 2-day event that showcases traditions and education in a music fest format and is part of the 2013 Statewide Folk Life Festival.

A new project in place by the Visitors Bureau: A printed map and scavenger hunt for families. Goodnight Carolina, a suggested itinerary for families & Mondays taps into ideas of locals with illustrations and an overview of area offerings and incorporates that into a scavenger hunt and tour of OC. The project includes a scavenger hunt, 5,000 distribution run and colorful marketing across the Atlantic Coast.

Orange County Arts Commission report

Gordon Jameson reported the commission's board had 45 thousand dollars in grant requests in which they were able to award about 30 thousand. Funds were awarded in part to the arts genre and the other half to educational programs. Awards will be granted after the State finalizes their budget. Information on the upcoming Artist Salon, Emerging Artist grant program and the new Piedmont Laureate was given.

Carrboro

Annette stone reported that the branding project is moving along. She also talked about the Lets Talk Carrboro and reported that Cameron's is moving to the retail space at the new Hampton Inn.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:34 am

Minutes reviewed by: Laurie Paolicelli,
Executive Director

Date

Minutes accepted by: Anthony Carey,
Chairman

Date

Amendment to June 19, 2013 minutes, page 2:

Mike Gering informed board members that Anjan Desai (Holiday Inn Express) is asking for signage for their hotel. Mr. Gering stated that town ordinance prohibits ~~road frontage off-site~~ signage. He stated that ~~he the Town~~ began the project ~~pushing for better signage~~ to update the ~~sign ordinances~~, however, Anjan declined involvement. Gering asked board members for any creative ideas for Anjan without opening up Pandora's Box ~~of off-site signage~~. Lee Pavao inquired if Hillsborough ordinance allows for directional signage – Mike replied that it does but not pointing to specific businesses. End of discussion on this topic.

As Amended:

Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Date

Anthony Carey, Chairman

Date