

Approved May 21, 2014

MINUTES

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting April 16, 2014

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at
The Ernie Williamson Athletics Center, UNC Campus, Chapel Hill
Hosts: Rick Steinbacher and Burt Jenkins, UNC Athletics

Board Members Present: Anthony Carey, Dave Gephart, Lee Storrow, Debbie Hepp, Greg Overbeck, Mark Sherburne, Karen DeHart, Laura Morgan, Michelle Johnson, Mike Gering, Annette Stone, and Meg McGurk

Not Present: Jim Parker, Lee Pavao, Penny Rich

Staff attendance: Laurie Paolicelli, Linda Ekeland, Martha Shannon, and Tina Fuller

Also attended: Aaron Bachenheimer, UNC Student Affairs; Sarah DeGennaro, Alliance for Historic Hillsborough; Kristen Smith, Chapel Hill/Carrboro Chamber of Commerce; Bob Ward, former board member; and Natalie Perkins and Stephanie Perri of Clean Design

Call to Order

Chairman Anthony Carey welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 8:15 am. Mr. Carey acknowledged Natalie Perkins and Stephanie Perri with Clean Design, Aaron Bachenheimer, Dir. Frat./Sor. Life & Comm. Involvement UNC Chapel Hill. In addition to acknowledging guests, Carey pointed out that Kristen Smith was visiting from the Chamber and Deb Hepp was a new representative from the Arts Commission Board.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Carey requested a motion to approve the March 19, 2014 minutes. Dave Gephart so moved, Greg Overbeck seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

UNC Athletics

Tar Heel Sports Marketing's Burt Jenkins updated the board on the past partnership with college sports and tourism. Jenkins informed board members that the Bureau and Tar Heel sports advertise in the Charlotte market, where there is a huge fan base including Alumni, is a geographic location they focus upon. The partnership included access to facilities, the fan base, the other team's fan base and more.

Agency of Record Update

Natalie Perkins discussed the past three years, its challenges, the accumulated experience in tourism marketing, and the growth in the brand. She reviewed key measurements from the original AAU benchmark study and current trends to watch. She recommended incorporating strategic planning workshops into the Bureau's marketing plan review and agreed to work with the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough as part of the services rendered under the Bureau's agreement with Clean Design. Ms. Perkins assured that while Stephanie is on maternity leave, our account would be placed in experienced hands and that she is always available. Annette Stone inquired on when the results would be available from the follow up benchmark study. Paolicelli replied that they hope to have by the June board meeting.

Reports

Budget/Finance

In the absence of Penny Rich, Laurie Paolicelli reported on the current budget, noting that revenue is running about 8-10% over budget. Paolicelli confirmed with Anthony Carey that he, Penny Rich and Lee Pavao still plan to discuss the rent and administrative fees charged to the Bureau with Commissioner Jacobs. She noted that the Bureau was originally thought to become a 501C3, and the budget was based on that model. Anthony Carey commented on the occupancy tax report, noting that occupancy revenue overall is strong; March numbers have not come in yet however they [Siena] and the Carolina Inn were at 90% plus occupancy for March.

Mike Gering inquired if there is a way to compare our revenues with others. Paolicelli replied that we are trending ahead of Durham and Raleigh and slightly above the national numbers and would send him that information. Gering also inquired on the status of the public art project discussed last month. Paolicelli deferred to Martha Shannon for an update. Ms. Shannon reported that the project is on hold now due to the Interim Manager's hesitancy to sign an agreement that had not been seen by the BOCC. The funding source remained uncertain. Gering asked for clarification. If the funds are not available now, will we look at this again in FY 2016? Shannon confirmed.

UNC Athletics

With the arrival of Rick Steinbacher, conversation returned to the partnership with Tar Heel Athletics. Steinbacher spoke on strategic plans which is set to include developing relationships with marketing moguls; the Disney Institute, Nike and Coca Cola to assist with specific branding and game day events. Steinbacher also reported that he hopes to bring Tar Heel Town to downtown twice this fall, one on a Friday and one on a Saturday. Meg McGurk cited that the economic impact to Chapel Hill and local businesses from last year's Zero Dark Thursday event/game amounted to over \$5 million.

Discussion turned to the Touch Downtown campaign. Laurie Paolicelli gave a brief overview of the project and noted that it should be revisited. Rick Steinbacher stated that it should be a combined branding and tangible effort rather than just the branding aspect as was done in Touch Downtown. Lee Storrow inquired if there is a way to tell a broader story that incorporates athletics with town assets. Steinbacher agreed but not sure how to go about it. Paolicelli suggested this board look into it further, and bring Hillsborough to the table as a daytrip stop for visitors coming from Virginia. Concluding the discussion, Paolicelli offered to have Clean Design develop some ideas.

Executive Director Report

Laurie Paolicelli reviewed the 2014-2015 Strategic Plan stating that as always, fits with the mission of the Bureau. Paolicelli discussed revenue sources, expenditure allocations that match internationally recognized best practices, target audiences, geographic focus, and opportunities and objectives. Paolicelli stated that high school and non-traditional sports along with the LGBT groups market would be prime targets next fiscal year. She also reported that PR campaigns would focus on food, farms, personalities, and festivals along with UNC Arts Venues.

Downtown Partnership

Meg McGurk updated the board on the Live & Local Friday night events that will run through June 27th, the Summer Solstice event. She also mentioned an article in the Chapel Hill News about the public art display Exhale and skateboarders. All events benefit tourists.

Arts

Debbie Hepp reported the OCAC is gearing up for the Spring Arts Grants awards. Martha Shannon spoke on the Congressional Arts Competition. Hepp distributed upcoming art related events.

UNC

Laura Morgan reported UNC is gearing up for Commencement noting that classes end next week. She also spoke on a recent event through Carolina Dreams, a non-profit started by UNC students-Athletes to support sick children and their families.

Chapel Hill

Lee Storrow reported that the Ephesus redevelopment discussion is back on the agenda for the upcoming council meeting.

Carrboro

Michelle Johnson spoke on the 2nd annual Open Streets event, the 2nd meeting for the new library. She also spoke the soon to be vacant property above ACME. Annette Stone spoke on the Carrboro TDA's funding projects.

Hillsborough

Sarah DeGennaro spoke on the preservation summit on May 30th at the Carolina Inn and the collaboration with the county's DEAPR department. She stated she is going through the tourism boards grant applications. Mike Gering spoke on the second phase of Riverwalk which should be completed by this fall, a big celebration is planned.

Sales

Linda Ekeland reported 3 leads and 4 bookings so far for April. She also reported June 12th is the date selected for the University event which will include Duke and Central as well as UNC. TOPO will host the afternoon event. Ekeland also discussed State and Federal hotel per diem rates stating that Federal rates for Chapel Hill are higher, compared to Raleigh and Durham rates.

NCHSAA

Karen DeHart updated the impact of the recent Basketball Championships stating that 9000 tickets were sold overall. The Sheraton and Quality Inn hotels picked up room nights. She stated that they are trying to get all games held in Chapel Hill next year. DeHart also reported that the Kenan Stadium field will undergo much needed maintenance during the next H.S. Football Championships. Concluding her report, DeHart announced that their board of directors would be staying at the Sheraton while they are in town.

Alliance for Historic Hillsborough

Dave Gephart spoke on the Appraisal Fair at Ayr presented by Ayr Mount. He also talked about NCRLA's positioning on legislative issues.

Other Business

Kristin Smith recommended attending the Town board meeting as the Ephesus redevelopment proposal includes hotel properties. She also mentioned that Scott Maitland, TOPO, is lobbying to sell bottles on sight.

With no other business to discuss, Chairman Carey adjourned the meeting at 9:51 AM.

Minutes reviewed by:
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Minutes accepted by:
Anthony Carey, Chairman

Date

Date