

MINUTES

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting February 19, 2014

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at
Hampton Inn & Suites Chapel Hill/Carrboro

Board Members Present: Anthony Carey, Dave Gephart, Lee Storrow, Gordon Jameson, Greg Overbeck, Mark Sherburne, Karen DeHart, Laura Morgan, Lee Pavao, Michelle Johnson, Mike Gering, and Penny Rich.

Not Present:

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

Also attending: Sarah DeGennaro, Executive Director - Alliance for Historic Hillsborough; Art Menius, Executive Director - ArtsCenter.

Welcome

Chairman Carey began the meeting at 8:14 am, introducing Carrboro Board of Alderman Michelle Johnson and welcoming her as the newest member to the board. Introductions from the rest of members and staff. Barbara Leedy as meeting host, welcomed everyone, gave an overview of the hotel's layout, and briefly discussed the hotel's first six months of business in groups, community and partnerships.

Welcome to Carrboro update

Annette Stone reported they are in their final stages of rolling out the town's new brand: "Carrboro Feel Free." She also reported that February is for the Love of Carrboro month, which has a designated website listing business openings, promotions and events all month long. Lunch time dance party this Friday. She thanked the Visitors Bureau for giving Carrboro a full page Ad in the 2014 Visitor Guide.

Arts in Carrboro – guest speaker Art Menius

Chairman Carey welcomed Art Menius as guest to the meeting giving him the floor for an update on two new proposed projects. Mr. Menius shared the vision of an arts and creativity district spanning Main Street, Carrboro and beyond. The first public meeting discussion was January 16, at the Century Center; the second meeting is scheduled for March 10 at the ArtsCenter. Mr. Menius discussed the proposed Arts & Innovation Center for the corner of East Main and Roberson stating it would be 5-stories and cost approximately 5-6 million to complete. Mr. Menius announced that March would mark the 40th anniversary of the ArtsCenter and celebration plans are underway; Menius noted that the ArtsCenter brings a 3.5 million dollar economic impact to the community.

A brief discussion commenced if B&B's would be considered by the Town of Carrboro and sharing economy trends such as lodging rental company, Airbnb.com.

Reports

Budget/Finance

Penny Rich gave an update on the current budget, reporting that January's revenue and expenditures were on target. Rich acknowledged that a request to appropriate \$200,000 of the fund balance is in the 2014-15 proposed budget earmarked for culinary tourism events, visitor center enhancements, and heightened sales efforts. She indicated that a discussion would have to be held on the \$20,000 in funds that the Orange County Arts Commission is requesting and either the Executive Director or the Arts commission would address before budget process began. Rich reported that the request to discuss reducing the VB department rent and administrative expenditures was discussed by the BOCC and would continue to be discussed during the budget cycle however a date has not been set so for budget planning purposes, staff kept these items in the VB proposed 2015 budget.

Executive Director Report

In the Executive Directors report, Laurie Paolicelli reviewed the feedback received from the January Needs Analysis survey. Key takeaways included a desire among VB board for expanding sales staff, developing more social media presence, reaching out to new groups that are positively influencing the local economy, form a better partnership with UNC, Franklin Street is the preferred location for the Visitors Center, and the "Visit Chapel Hill" brand makes sense to the majority.

Continuing her report, Paolicelli reviewed the preliminary proposed 2014-15 budget with board members. Major budget line items included spending down the fund balance on county wide food events and an LGBT campaign, and expanding the sales staff to capitalize on the new and incoming inventory. Paolicelli expressed her desires to recruit someone with CVB related experience. Lee Storrow inquired on what the funds would be used for if the BOCC agreed to decrease overhead expenses, in which Paolicelli replied she would provide more direction on that revenue in the coming months.

Sales

Linda Ekeland reviewed January's group sales production, upcoming meeting conferences, and collaboration intentions with Spartanburg, SC CVB. Ekeland reported some overflow bookings from the US Open event and from Epic

Arts

Gordon Jameson informed members that Meg McGurk would be the guest speaker at the next Artist's Salon which is tied in with the 2nd Friday ArtWalk. Jameson reported \$24,926 in county grants were issued, and announced the 'postcard' project.

Downtown Partnership

Meg McGurk announced the hiring of a full-time special events coordinator who will concentrate on 140 West Plaza. A list of upcoming events would be released soon. The DTP is hosting its annual meeting at the Carolina Inn March 15 at 5:30pm.

Hillsborough News

Dave Gephart reported that three groups have resurrected Hog Day setting the date to what it was formally, the 3rd Saturday in June. He also reported LaPlace is open for business.

County News

Penny Rich announced the upcoming Agricultural Summit February 25 beginning 8:30 am at the Maple View Agricultural Educational Center. Commissioner Jacobs' commentary on the summit aired this morning.

Other Business

Laurie Paolicelli recognized outgoing board member Lydia Lavelle as an advocate to tourism and an asset to Orange County. Ms. Lavelle is assuming Mayoral duties for the Town of Carrboro.

Next month's meeting is tentatively at the Weathervane

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Carey requested a motion to approve the January 15, 2014 minutes. Dave Gephart motioned to approve, Lee Pavao seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

With no other business to discuss, Chairman Carey adjourned the meeting at 9:33 AM.

Minutes reviewed by:

Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Date

Minutes accepted by:

Anthony Carey, Chairman

Date