

## MINUTES

### Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting April 17, 2013

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at Radius Pizzeria & Pub, Hillsborough

**Board Members Present:** Anthony Carey, Dave Gephart, Gene Pease, Gordon Jameson, Greg Overbeck, Jim Parker, Lee Pavao, Lydia Lavelle, Mark Sherburne, Mike Gering, and Penny Rich

**Not Present:** Jack Schmidt, Karen DeHart, & Laura Morgan

**Staff attendance:** Laurie Paolicelli, Steve Brantley, Linda Ekeland, Patty Griffin, Martha Shannon, Allison Phillips, and Tina Fuller.

**Guests:** Mayor Tom Stevens, and Margaret Cannell

### Approval of Minutes

Chair Gephart began the meeting at 8:10 am with a request for a motion to approve the minutes. Lee Pavao so moved and Penny Rich seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as written.

### Welcome

Chair Gephart welcomed everyone and introduced the meeting hosts, Kate and Mick Carroll, owners of Radius Pizzeria & Pub. Ms. Carroll welcomed everyone and gave a background on their lives in Hillsborough; school and careers away and eventual return to Hillsborough, a town they love and hope to stay in, adding "I am pleasantly shocked at how beautiful Hillsborough has become with smart planning, preservation and growth. We are thrilled to be back."

Mr. Gephart then introduced Hillsborough Mayor, Tom Stevens, who also welcomed everyone to Hillsborough. Mayor Stevens gave an update on current happenings in Hillsborough citing new businesses in town, road and sidewalk improvements and the Mountains to Sea Trail project. He expressed gratitude to the Visitors Bureau for their continued marketing of Hillsborough.

Margaret Cannell, director of the Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber gave board members an update on the upcoming Hog Day, newly changed to Hogg Day to commemorate the historic aspect of James Hogg's relation to Hillsborough. Ms. Cannell also announced the upcoming events, Ladies Night Out and the Spring Garden Tour, and thanked the Visitors Bureau for marketing support.

## Reports

### Finance

Mike Gering reported that the budget is on target stating that some accounts went over budget but were compensated by under spending in other accounts. Mr. Gering informed board members that the proposed budget for 2013-14 would be discussed at the next meeting but did mention that \$175,000 would again be requested by the Town of Chapel Hill. Paolicelli discussed briefly the history of the legislation and how the Bureau came to receive its current percentage of revenue. In response to the discussion, Chapel Hill Town Councilman Gene Pease inquired on the specifics of the performance agreement with the Town. Ms. Paolicelli replied that \$175,000 was allotted last year with the potential of receiving 50% of any revenue over one million. Mr. Pease encouraged Bureau representatives to speak with town council members regarding an increase in funds and suggested to specifically show their ROI, however cautioned that several major items on the towns' agenda might take precedence over tourism. Anthony Carey reminded everyone that if it weren't for the 14000 room nights shut down for several months this year, the industry would have seen more than \$1 million in revenue which would have qualified them for additional dollars based on the Town's incentive program. Mr. Pease agreed stating that with the current agreement, funds for performance would not be received until the following fiscal year. He added that he would be open to any creative solution to get more funding. More discussion ensued encouraging the Bureau to work with Town's EDC director Dwight Bassett for support in this effort.

### Executive Director

Laurie Paolicelli briefed the board on her presentation to the Interlocal Parks group on the potential of attraction more amateur athletics to Orange County. Discussion ensued on this.

Penny Rich commented that they (Intergovernmental Parks Work Group) have been trying to push downtime dates to tournament planners. Mark Sherburne commented that those groups want very low rates and they (Aloft and other Chapel Hill hotels) get priced out of the market. Anthony Carey added that competitive rates could be offered but during the summer months only.

Lydia Lavelle suggested pursuing non-traditional indoor sports such as Bridge for gaming tournaments. Concluding this discussion, Ms. Paolicelli offered to invite the NCHSAA Executive Director to the next board meeting to give an overview of why fewer tournaments are being held here. It was also suggested to invite Robert Cox, Alamance County CVB and representatives from other NC sports groups.

Continuing with her report, Ms. Paolicelli informed board members of the tremendous momentum the Bureau has received in support of saving the TerraVita event. The organizer of the event, Colleen Minton, accepted a full time job and therefore unable to commit to the event full time. Mr. Carey

jumped in and explained that the TerraVita event brought food and travel writers here who in turn wrote articles on the area's hotels and food establishments ultimately putting this area on the map. Compared to the purchase of an ad in a popular magazine, which is hard to measure in ROI, the TerraVita event continues to grow each subsequent year, attracting influential people, bringing national publicity. Carey also talked about the tremendous ability of this event to spotlight our farm and fork culture; pasture to plate brand. He talked about how unique this event was in that it spotlighted STATE food and wine gurus who brought with them a large traveling fan base from across the region. Carey said that hotels, restaurants, breweries and suppliers were all united behind the success of this event.

Mr. Carey suggested that the Visitor Bureau step up to support the event with substantial funding. Mr. Carey then motioned to give \$20,000 in support to TerraVita. Jim Parker seconded.

Mark Sherburne inquired on how the funds would be used. Ms. Paolicelli replied that the event has a \$48,000 budget and Ms. Minton would still head the event; Paolicelli stated she would feel comfortable in letting Ms. Minton decide the best way to use the funds with the criteria that it would put heads in beds. Mr. Carey commented that area hotels are willing to give support as well to keep the event here. \*Lydia Lavelle requested Ms. Paolicelli get the Carrboro Hampton Inn involved with this event. Lee Pavao asked if Ms. Minton, having a full time job, would have the time to direct the event. Ms. Paolicelli replied that she would.

Mark Sherburne suggested appropriating money from the fund balance to support the event. Chair Gephart revised the motion to include requesting the \$20,000 from Fund Balance. Penny Rich seconded. With all members in favor, the motion was passed.

## Group Sales

Laurie Paolicelli introduced Allison Phillips to board members, newly contracted to help Linda Ekeland reach new markets. The hire was a result of the sales committee's request. At the request of Ms. Paolicelli, Ms. Phillips gave a brief history of her background. Linda Ekeland added that she is looking forward to working with Ms. Phillips, brain storming on new ideas to bring in more group business.

## Sector Reports

### Town of Carrboro

Annette Stone reported that the Open Streets event was very successful and there is talk on scheduling another one. She reminded members that Carrboro Day is May 5<sup>th</sup> and Cats Cradle is hosting a block party featuring Lost in the Trees. Ms. Stone spoke on the new branding in progress and informed on a new website "<http://letstalkcarrboro.com/> which is designated for citizen input.

Lydia Lavelle mentioned the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Bike Summit would be held in Carrboro at the end of October. Linda Ekeland added that the Hampton is the host hotel. Ms. Paolicelli, Ms. Stone and Ms. Lavelle plan

Approved May 15, 2013 as amended\*

to work together on some marketing ideas to harness the board contacts of Carrboro Advisory committee members, to get them to bring their groups to Carrboro's Hampton Inn.

### **Downtown**

Meg McGurk, Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership reminded members of the 140 West Dedication ceremony April 26<sup>th</sup>, 7-9 pm. May 1<sup>st</sup> is the launch of the [Venture Lab](#), two weeks away from announcing the Locally Grown line-up; a new element has been added, short films from local film makers. "Rosemary Imagined" – 5 ideas – innovation for entertainment hub.

### **Orange County Arts Commission**

Gordon Jameson informed members that there are a few tickets remaining for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary "Off the Wall 2013" gala happening this Saturday. \$60,000 in art donated this year; it is the gallery's major annual fundraiser event. Mr. Jameson reported that the gallery attracts approximately 14,000 people annually.

Martha Shannon read statistics taken from the recent prosperity study that referred to survey results of people traveling to destinations for the arts. She reported on the upcoming 2013 Congressional H.S. Art Competition also reported that they were asked by the State Arts Council to co-sponsor a strategic planning tour.

### **Orange County Economic Development**

Steve Brantley reported that a business loan from the loan program was given to The Accidental Baker which will be located in the Daniel Boone shopping center. He also discussed the UNC/Chapel Hill involvement with Durham Tech campus as an incubator location, the Governor's office talk of privatizing the state's economic development commission, moving Orange County from the Triangle to the Triad, and concluding, the loss of several potential businesses due to lack of product availability in the county.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 am

\_\_\_\_\_  
Minutes reviewed by: Laurie Paolicelli,  
Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Minutes accepted by: Dave Gephart,  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date