

Approved June 15, 2016

MINUTES
Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors Meeting
May 18, 2016

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau met at
Extraordinary Ventures, Chapel Hill, NC

Board Members Present: Jeffrey Strickler, George Cianciolo, Tim Hoke, Rosemary Waldorf-Chair, Mark Sherburne, Allison Nichols-Clapper, Karen DeHart, Aaron Bachenheimer, Lee Pavao-Vice Chair, Michelle Johnson, Mark Bell, Penny Rich, Lee Storrow, Shannan Campbell

Not Present: Andrew Strickland, Nitin Khanna, Annette Stone, Meg McGurk

Staff attendance: Laurie Paolicelli, Marlene Barbera, Allison Chambers

Also present: Bernard Mann, Publisher/Owner, Our State Magazine, Lisa Ganzzermiller, General Manager, Courtyard Chapel Hill

Call to Order

Chair Rosemary Waldorf called the meeting to order at 8:10 am.

Introductions were given by all.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Waldorf requested a motion to approve the April 20, 2016 minutes. Lee Pavao so moved, Tim Hoke seconded. With all members in favor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Guest/host speakers

Extraordinary Ventures hosted our meeting and they were represented by General Manager, Cyndi Whisnant. Extraordinary Ventures is a nonprofit that was formed eight years ago by a group of parents of children with developmental disabilities. They have created businesses that provide meaningful jobs and careers for this group of individuals and provide services to the community. Their businesses include a laundry, office solutions, gifts, bus crew and the events center. Their goal is to be sustainable long term.

Chair Waldorf asked Laurie Paolicelli to introduce Bernie Mann of Our State Magazine. Mr. Mann shared that he has been on the Greensboro CVB board for the last six years and so is familiar with what our board does. He further shared that tourism is the biggest single category for Our State Magazine. Each area of NC has their own unique story to tell. He is seeing an increase of about 6% across the state in CVB budgets. Because of the problems caused by HB2 many CVBs are focusing more on in-state tourism with 60% of visitors being from NC. NC people love their state. People love Chapel Hill but we must keep reminding them because other destinations are reminding them. Ms. Paolicelli asked Mr. Mann if we should feel threatened by Durham. He pointed out that Durham has many things going on; they are different than what is going on in Chapel Hill/Orange County. We want to say this is a very special while being mindful of not being elitist, remembering that only 21% of North Carolinians have a passport and that 26% have a college degree. Dollars spent to promote tourism create more dollars coming back to the community. Mr. Mann stated that he is seeing many small towns around the state revitalizing them.

Chair's Report

Chair Rosemary Waldorf reported on the meeting with county hotel General Manager's that was held at the Basketball Museum on May 12, 2016. Notes from that meeting are attached to these minutes. HB2 was discussed and it was agreed that we need an advertising strategy to counteract the negative effects of this legislation. We have a documented quarter million dollar loss at this time which does not include business that had not already announced itself. We will be working with Clean Design to emphasize that everyone is welcome here and that we do not discriminate. Improving communication with UNC Healthcare was also discussed in an effort to draw hotel business, generated by them, to stay in Orange County. We want to help them shift those guests to Orange County hotels because of the overall economic impact. The company UNC Healthcare uses to help place patients and their families tend to place them in Durham. Mark Sherburne commented that we would like UNC to keep us apprised when they are going to bring in consultants such as Huron. Jeffrey Strickler reminded the board that UNC Healthcare looks at this from the point of view of the patient families and is focused on making it as easy for them as possible. Chair Waldorf referenced the possibility of adding a portal on the Visitors Bureau Website to make it easy for UNC to let us help them with their accommodation needs.

Sales Report

Marlene reported that the Executive Director, Helen Hernandez, of NATJA is returning to Orange County. Marlene requested statistical data from her following their most recent conference in Oxnard, CA. She shared that during the conference there were 3.4 million impressions on twitter and Instagram. Before during and after the conference there were over 6 million impressions. Carrboro and Hillsborough (through their Tourism Board and Tourism Development board have contributed funds for the conference. She is still reaching out to Chapel Hill and UNC. She is attending tradeshow Destination Southeast in Columbia SC. After six months of contracting with a Sales Specialist we have decided not to renew the contract as leads have to be produced. We will try another avenue.

Executive Directors Report, including Budget Report

She shared that the Orange County Manager, Bonnie Hammersley, enjoyed meeting with the board last month and that the manager really defends the marriage of tourism and the arts and wants to see that relationship continue. She stated that we are wrapping up this year's budget. Last year's budget was \$1.4 million and we spent down the fund balance to do a major advertising web campaign. Next month we will bring in web consultants from Atlanta who will talk about how we are going to highlight Carrboro and Hillsborough. Budget report in June will include update on what is going on with the Manager's Recommended Budget as it pertains to the Visitors Bureau. A \$500,000 advertising campaign will be rolled out in the coming months with \$350,000 devoted to media. Our ad agency is recommending that we get a message out immediately to state associations (we have seen a quarter million dollar loss in this area) in NC that HB2 aside, Orange County welcomes everyone and that we have always been in the for front on Civil Rights and Human Rights. Paolicelli stated that we see more association business here that corporate due largely to the University. Penny Rich asked about the resolution that the board had committed to and Ms. Paolicelli stated we would have that prepared for the next meeting. Paolicelli will go back to our ad agency for clarification on in state needs for spreading the word as opposed to the greater Atlantic coast region.

Rosemary Waldorf shared that she, Ms. Paolicelli and George Cianciolo are working together to try to get an additional \$25,000 in funding from the Town of Chapel Hill the help fund the HB2 response. Ms. Paolicelli stated that going forward we would be reaching out to Carrboro and Hillsborough to form a greater fiscal partnership. Cianciolo shared that he wants to insure the Town Council understands in importance of keeping the occupancy tax increases going.

New Business/Roundtable

Chair Waldorf acknowledged all for updates in their respective fields:

Karen DeHart reported that the NCHSAA has had several events since we last met including one recognizing 160 athletes at the Sheraton. They have listened to an appeal from Eastern Alamance about a rules violation.

Aaron Bachenheimer report UNC experienced a beautiful graduation weekend.

Michelle Johnson stated that the Carrboro Freight Train Concert series starts May 20, 6:30 to 8:30 at the town commons. There will be four concerts. She suggests including people who are directly impacted by HB2 in meetings.

Shannan Campbell reported that it is Historic Preservation month and that the Hillsborough Visitors Center with the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough is doing increased tours. #thisplacematters. Last Fridays are starting back. A half marathon is coming in October.

Mark Bell reported that the town board is doubling the funding for the Hillsborough Arts Council.

Penny Rich stated that she petitioned the BOCC to bring back a report from Economic Development and the Visitors Bureau about the effect on hotels and agri-tourism from the Mountains to the Sea Trail.

Tim Hoke shared that the Orange County Arts Council has instituted a liaison to the Hillsborough Arts Council and has requested that they be able to have a liaison with the Chapel Hill Arts Commission. They have advertised to fill Martha Shannon's position. Starting May 31 they will be accepting grants applications that will be reviewed in June.

Jeffery Stickler reported he had taken his team on the Historic Homes Tour in Hillsborough and highly recommends it. The Alliance for Historic Hillsborough is having their annual meeting May 19 at UNCHHealthcare, Hillsborough Campus.

Mark Sherburne shared that the Carolina Inn is completing its fiscal year June 30 and it has been a record breaking year. Graduation was a huge success. They sold out for graduation 2017 weekend in forty-two minutes.

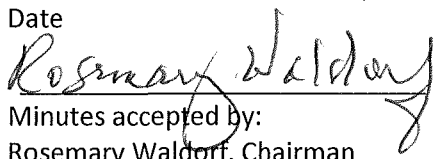
Laurie Paolicelli reported that Terra Vita is in the planning stages and she would like to see continued support for it as it expands. Farm to Fork is the first weekend in June and it celebrates local food and local farms.

Chair Waldorf adjourned the meeting at 9:28.


Minutes reviewed by:

Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Date


Minutes accepted by:

Rosemary Waldorf, Chairman

Date