

MINUTES

ELKHART COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

COMMISSION AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PUBLIC MEETING

Friday, November 8, 2017

8 a.m.

Elkhart County Visitors Center, 219 Caravan Drive, Elkhart, IN

PRESENT: Ms. B. Ronzone, Commission

Mr. D. Shoup, Commission

Mr. R. Jenkins, Commission

Mr. A. Patel, Commission

Ms. G. Patel, Commission

Mr. K. Janowsky, Commission

Mr. L. King, Board of Directors

Ms. E. Billey, Board of Directors

Ms. K. Clarke, Board of Directors

Mr. B. Hoffer, Board of Directors

Ms. D. Lawson, Executive Director

Mr. T. Mark, Staff Recorder

ABSENT: Mr. S. Baker, Commission

Mr. D. Bearss, Board of Directors

Mr. A. Dawson, Board of Directors

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. B. Ronzone called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

APPROVE SEPTEMBER MINUTES

Mr. D. Shoup moved to approved the minutes of the September 8, 2017, meeting. Ms. K. Clarke seconded. ***A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.***

FINANCIAL REPORT

Ms. K. Clarke reviewed the highlights of the financial report, which was provided to all members in writing. She said there is \$1.3 million available on the balance sheet and all receivables have been collected. The ECCVB has received all of the budgeted innkeepers tax collections and there will be a \$900,000 carryover which will be received in January 2018. Ms. K. Clarke said research expenses were over-budget, but there is under-budget spending in areas that will offset it. Ms. D. Lawson said approximately \$50,000 to \$70,000 not spent in 2017 will be paid forward to other projects that are planned in 2018. One example is the place identity project. Ms. D. Lawson said revenue will be ahead about 4 percent over 2016, but some of it can't be accessed until next year. The increase in revenues also comes from providing services to RV

rallies. Ms. D. Lawson said the ECCVB doesn't make much money from that source, but it is an essential part of our mission to help connect RV rally visitors with small businesses.

Mr. L. King moved to approve the financial report. Mr. R. Jenkins seconded. ***A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.***

NOMINATIONS

Mr. K. Janowsky presented the slate of 2018 officers for the commission: Mr. D. Shoup for president, Ms. G. Patel for vice president, and Mr. R. Jenkins for secretary/treasurer. Mr. K. Janowsky moved to close nominations. Mr. A. Patel seconded. Nominations were closed, and the vote will be conducted at the Jan. 12, 2018, meeting.

Mr. B. Hoffer presented the slate of 2018 officers for board: Mr. L. King for president, Ms. E. Billey for vice president, and Ms. K. Clarke for secretary/treasurer. Mr. B. Hoffer moved to close nominations. Ms. K. Clarke seconded. Nominations were closed, and the vote will be conducted at the Jan. 12, 2018, meeting.

BUREAU UPDATE

Ms. D. Lawson thanked all commission and board members following her individual meetings with them recently. She said that everyone is pleased with the direction that we're heading. She said one member's question about whether ECCVB reassesses ongoing projects fits with 2018, because as a staff the ECCVB is viewing it as a "re-set" year. The ECCVB staff has been having this conversation for a number of months. Ms. D. Lawson said we are reviewing how we are talking about ourselves, auditing our processes and the tools that we use. An audit of social media practices confirmed our belief that we were over-communicating. Ms. D. Lawson said changes will be implemented in 2018, backed by research, to make sure we are on the right path. ECCVB will be working with Destination Think on place identity on next steps. Ms. D. Lawson mentioned a meeting at 3 p.m. Tuesday with Destination Think to reveal its findings on place identity. She said there was a very good response from surveys, plus Destination Think also reviewed online conversations about Elkhart County.

Ms. D. Lawson said the city of Goshen was recognized by Indiana Chamber of Commerce as community of the year. Mr. L. King attended the banquet in Indianapolis and said there were three Goshen tables, including past mayors Mr. A. Kauffman and Mr. M. Puro. The mayor of Elkhart, Mr. T. Neese, also attended the banquet.

Ms. D. Lawson said the ECCVB staff completed the process to renew our accreditation. There are 16 pillars that are part of the accreditation.

Ms. D. Lawson said she met recently with Mr. A. Perri of the city of South Bend. She said she introduced idea of making the Elkhart Jazz Festival a regional event and he was open to it. They also discussed cross-promoting other parts of the region and viewing assets as that of the entire

region. She said Notre Dame has the same mindset, staging a Shakespeare Festival event in the Goshen Theatre, where they drew a standing-room-only crowd.

Ms. D. Lawson said that the ECCVB is doing very well to date in 2017 and that the staff was meeting the measures we set out to meet.

The ECCVB is continuing its partnership with the Indiana Office of Tourism Development on the co-op marketing campaign. Its performance has been very positive, with a spike in traffic from the Chicago and Indianapolis areas. Ms. D. Lawson detailed an ambassador program in which IOTD representatives visited places such as Taste of Chicago to survey attendees and deliver information about Elkhart County. Ms. D. Lawson said she is also pleased with the partnership with the Northern Indiana Tourism Development Council.

Ms. D. Lawson said Epic Art Adventures was a great project. She said research has revealed that no other projects could have had the impact that the Seward Johnson sculptures did. She said there has been some preliminary conversation on some type of LEGO exhibit.

Mr. T. Mark reported on the success of Little BIG Idea Grant program that was launched as part of Vibrant Communities. Ms. D. Lawson said the program is all about empowering people to take on things that are positive. The ECCVB is also working with enFocus on mapping assets and amenities and creating a database in 2018. She said St. Joseph and Marshall counties also are interested in adding to this database.

Ms. D. Lawson reviewed the details of a bid for Elkhart County to host an NAIA basketball tournament. She said the level of cooperation on this was set up by the Regional Cities effort on collaboration. She said Mr. L. Johnson of Elkhart Community Schools came forward and brought together partners to submit a bid to host the tournament. The commitment of \$50,000 would result in approximately 680 athletes and 2,500 spectators for a one-week tournament in March. Organizations came together to put their pieces together to submit a bid -- Elkhart schools were on board and Elkhart/Goshen hotels were willing to commit room blocks. Ms. D. Lawson said the effort underscored that the need to have an attractive gateway at North Pointe space is important, especially if this area is going to host tournaments. Ms. D. Lawson said that in 2018 Ms. S. Nash of the ECCVB staff will be attending sports trade shows. She said an aquatics center staff will be on board in spring and the ECCVB will be working closely. Elkhart schools is interested in attracting sports tournaments.

OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a question from Mr. K. Janowsky about sponsorships, Ms. D. Lawson said it's something ECCVB does and has budgeted \$100,000. Mr. T. Mark said potential sponsorship recipients are sent a letter. Ms. D. Lawson said ECCVB our standards are more rigorous and dependent on an organization's capacity and reputation.

Ms. D. Lawson said she has an upcoming meeting with Mr. M. Newman of IOTD and Mr. W. Culver, state representative, related to Goshen's film industry. There is an idea to make the

Goshen Theatre possibly a northern office of Indiana Film Office. The meeting with Mr. W. Culver would be to seek an increase in budget to staff a film office in Goshen. This would give Goshen Theatre a strong connection to a wider community.

There was general discussion on change of mindset locally on regionalism.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 8 a.m. Friday, Jan. 12, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. R. Jenkins moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. D. Shoup seconded. ***A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.***

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Mark
Staff Recorder