

MINUTES

ELKHART COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

COMMISSION AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PUBLIC MEETING

Friday, November 9, 2018

8 a.m.

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

PRESENT: Mr. D. Shoup, Commission and Board
Mr. S. Baker, Commission
Mr. K. Janowsky, Commission
Ms. B. Ronzone, 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, Chief Executive Officer
Mr. T. Mark, Staff Recorder
Mr. J. Hunsberger, ECCVB Staff
Ms. J. Logsdon, ECCVB Staff

ABSENT: Mr. A. Patel, Commission
Ms. G. Patel, Commission
Mr. R. Jenkins, Commission
Mr. D. Bearss, Board of Directors
Mr. A. Dawson, Board of Directors

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 a.m.

APPROVE SEPTEMBER MINUTES

Mr. L. King moved to approve the minutes of the regular Sept. 14, 2018, meeting, Mr. K. Janowsky seconded. A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.

Ms. B. Ronzone moved to approve the minutes of the special Sept. 26, 2018, meeting. Mr. K. Janowsky seconded. A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Ms. K. Clarke referred members to the written report submitted in advance of the meeting. She said the balance sheet had \$1.4 million in cash. Accounts receivable had a small amount outstanding due to a group co-op that will be paid by end of year. She said on the income

statement that revenue reached the budgeted amount of \$2.1 million in room tax revenue. The actual amount collected continues to increase, up 9.7 percent over last year. The 2019 budget is set at \$2.4 million in room tax revenue. She said total expenses in 2018 are under budget.

Mr. K. Janowsky moved to accept the financial report. Ms. B. Ronzone seconded. A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.

Ms. D. Lawson said the staff is working on the budget for capital outlays; the total should be about \$300,000. ECCVB staff is also considering exhibits for the new visitor center, looking at “living wall” exhibition. There would be monthly maintenance fee for company that would build and maintain the wall. Mr. Jon Hunsberger is the project manager. This would be paid from the fund separate from lodging tax (the fund that contains revenue from travel guide sales and other non-innkeepers tax revenue).

NOMINATIONS

Mr. D. Shoup presented the proposed slate of officers for the 2019 innkeepers tax commission: Mr. Dan Shoup for president, Ms. Gita Patel for vice president, and Mr. Rick Jenkins for secretary/treasurer. Mr. D. Shoup opened the floor to further nominations. **Ms. B. Ronzone moved to close nominations and accept the slate as presented. Mr. K. Janowsky seconded. A vote was taken and it was approved with all commission members in favor.**

Mr. L. King presented the proposed slate of officers for the 2019 ECCVB board of directors: Mr. Levi King for president, Ms. Ellie Billey for vice president, and Ms. Kim Clarke for secretary/treasurer. Mr. L. King opened the floor to further nominations. **Mr. B. Hoffer moved to accept the slate as presented and close nominations. Ms. E. Billey seconded. A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.**

VISITOR CENTER

Mr. D. Shoup reviewed the current status of the visitor center. He said the commission in its last meeting approved the lease pending legal review. Mr. B. Hoffer went over the lease with ECCVB staff Ms. Diana Lawson, Ms. Cindy Ostrom and Mr. Jon Hunsberger, and they made some suggested changes to Mr. A.J. Patel. The major change is to specify what the property owner is required to deliver, and other changes are pretty straightforward. It is not believed to affect lease cost. The property owner will apply all final finishes, and equipping the space is the ECCVB’s responsibility and cost. Further discussion ensued on construction timeline and lease terms.

BUREAU UPDATE

Mr. J. Hunsberger and Ms. J. Logsdon were introduced to give an overview of the ECCVB’s work with Destination Think! on place DNA and the brand reveal. This was the result of input from residents, stakeholders and industry experts and we have explored this with every logical segment. The presentation was accompanied with a slide presentation.

Mr. J. Hunsberger reviewed and led discussion on the purpose of taglines, defining what a tagline means, and reviewing examples from other cities. Ms. J. Logsdon described the place DNA process and how research was intended to identify the unifying concept around which Elkhart County can be identified. She said the research revealed that craftsmanship is the connecting idea. The brand promise is distilled to craftsmanship and quality. Mr. J. Hunsberger reviewed several examples of taglines proposed by Destination Think!

Ms. D. Lawson said the makers' identity is a comfortable fit with the entire county. She asked board and commission members for opinions on the proposed taglines. There was general agreement on the thumbprint logo. On the taglines, there were favorable reaction to "Make it here" and "Make it yours" as the use of "you" and "yours" invites others to this place. There were also favorable comments in support of "A well-crafted life"; "Heritage, craft and pride"; "Yours to make"; and "A well-crafted place." Ms. D. Lawson said what we're trying to come up with is a broad statement that people can connect with emotionally, whether you live here, are visiting, or looking to invest. In an informal vote on the favorite tagline, "Make it here" received seven votes while "A well-crafted life" received one 1 vote. Ms. D. Lawson said the ECCVB is not moving away from Amish Country. She said that message is as strong as ever through the cultural explorer niche. The ECCVB and Destination Think! will be focusing on messages, audiences, and most effective channels. Mr. K. Janowsky said "Make it yours" sounds like a recruitment pitch, while Mr. S. Baker commented that tagline spoke to him emotionally.

Ms. D. Lawson said 2018 performed exceptionally in all indicators. 2019 research and development will include the second year of work with Destination Think! The ECCVB will have the cultural explorer niche roll-out and campaign development. There is a new website coming in 2019. The ECCVB will be implementing an advocacy initiative focused on hospitality, industry and relationships. The new visitor center will open. We will be continuing the Vibrant Communities initiative, including 365 Vibrant People. We expect continuing success in advertising, marketing and public relations work. 2019 theme is relationships, relationships, relationships.

Ms. D. Lawson invited commission and board members to join ECCVB staff in the annual holiday gathering on Dec. 8, including the Beach Boys concert and a private reception at the Midwest Museum of American Art before the concert.

Mr. K. Janowsky asked if there is data on the economic impact of particular events or venues. Ms. D. Lawson said the ECCVB is asked this frequently, and it would be a matter of committing the resources to study. Ms. D. Lawson said she could check with Indiana University South Bend if it has the capacity to perform such studies.

General discussion ensued on the impact of Notre Dame.

SET NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Friday, Jan. 11, 2019, at 8 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Mark
Staff Recorder