

MINUTES

ELKHART COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

COMMISSION AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PUBLIC MEETING

Friday, March 8, 2019

8 a.m.

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

PRESENT: Mr. D. Shoup, Commission and Board
Mr. S. Baker, Commission
Ms. B. Ronzone, Commission
Ms. E. Billey, Board of Directors
Ms. K. Clarke, Board of Directors
Mr. D. Bearss, Board of Directors
Mr. A. Dawson, Board of Directors
Ms. D. Lawson, Chief Executive Officer
Mr. T. Mark, Staff Recorder
Ms. J. Logsdon, ECCVB staff
Ms. S. Nash, ECCVB staff

ABSENT: Ms. G. Patel, Commission
Mr. K. Janowsky, Commission
Mr. R. Jenkins, Commission
Mr. A. Patel, Commission
Mr. L. King, Board of Directors
Mr. B. Hoffer, Board of Directors

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m.

APPROVE JANUARY MINUTES

Mr. D. Bearss moved to approve the January 2019 minutes as presented. Ms. E. Billey seconded.
A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Ms. K. Clarke referred members to the printed report distributed before the meeting. She said accounts receivable is consistent with prior years. The balance is high at this time because of travel guide invoices. She said the income statement shows that we received the carryover of room tax revenue of \$700,000 and it was deposited in January. There is only one delinquent account for room tax revenue. General discussion ensued on collection of room tax. Ms. K. Clarke said the professional continuing ed will be over budget slightly because of a commitment to attend City Nation Place. The ECCVB is sending 13 people.

Ms. K. Clarke said the Indiana State Board of Accounts is working with county auditors to make sure that everyone is in compliance. It appears we are complying. Some counties handle things differently. Ms. D. Lawson described the landscape as it relates to room tax and the state's effort to standardize the process.

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

BUREAU UPDATE

Ms. D. Lawson highlighted this year's travel guide and the two different covers, Heritage Trail Adventures and Amish Country, which illustrate our niches. She said the ECCVB will be testing this approach to see how it goes. ECCVB staff have noted that Elkhart County has struggled with how people see themselves.

Ms. S. Nash said that a marketing and promotion company, Penrod Hiawatha, approached the ECCVB for use of logos to create merchandise. The most popular items are coffee mugs, key chains, calendars. The company proposed to create this merchandise and offer to partners for sale at their locations. Ms. K. Clarke asked if we could control use and look of logo. Ms. D. Lawson said the ECCVB would need to have a memorandum of understanding with the company. Mr. S. Baker said it's a great idea as long as you get to veto a particular product. Ms. K. Clarke said the proprietor, Guy Thompson, seems trustworthy in her experience.

Mr. D. Bearss moved to empower ECCVB staff to make this decision and protect the brand through out clauses. Ms. B. Ronzone seconded. ***A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.***

Ms. J. Logsdon reviewed the three niches recommended to the ECCVB by Destination Think! Information collected from place identity workshop was distilled into niches. She said a niche is not necessarily small but rather just a group of like-minded people. The three niches are Cultural Explorer, Creatives and Roadtrippers. Cultural Explorer includes Amish Country and artisans who are Amish and otherwise. Creatives works into the hand-crafted, well-crafted messaging. The third niche, Roadtrippers, fits in with our heritage in the RV industry and businesses such as Janus Motorcycles. Ms. J. Logsdon said there are still areas that need development. For instance, Elkhart County doesn't have a signature camping site. The next step is for the ECCVB staff to work with Destination Think on a niche rollout plan. After that is the Experience Alignment step.

Ms. D. Lawson said the response so far to the two travel guide covers has been very good from stakeholders.

Ms. D. Lawson discussed the overall destination DNA through the visual identity. She said the purpose is to be the umbrella for everything. It's not a corporate brand but an identity for an entire destination. She said ECCVB staff came to terms with the idea that the heart thumbprint

logo was too cutesy. After further conversation with stakeholders, we think the identity becomes something like a standard or certification in that you would see it on a stakeholder's door or in the travel guide. The new proposed visual identity was presented showing logo, wordmark and tagline of "A well-crafted place." Mr. D. Shoup asked who would approve who can use this. Ms. J. Logsdon said the ECCVB will own the logo and will have a brand book. Ms. D. Lawson said the ECCVB will manage logo usage. There was general discussion on merits of the logo. There was consensus that it is underwhelming. However, there was understanding that the logo is not the full message, but will be used in support of advertising messages. Ms. D. Lawson said this visual identity will be tested in meetings with stakeholder groups.

Ms. D. Lawson said the ECCVB won for best cooperative campaign (marketing budgets greater than \$200,000) at the Indiana Tourism Awards for the Exit 92, and NITDC also won for best cooperative campaign for Indiana's Cool North. She said Ms. S. Nash did a FAM tour for hotel employees this week. The Vibrant Communities Community Report meeting will be from 4 to 6 p.m. March 21. She said the Vibrant People campaign is going well. Little BIG Idea Grant update.

Mr. T. Mark described a proposed Advocacy campaign reaching out to local elected officials who would be invited to the informal monthly meetings attended by some commission and board members. Proposed corporate key messages were distributed and members were asked for feedback as ECCVB will prepare collateral materials based on the corporate key messages.

Ms. D. Lawson said the ECCVB would not be able to move in to the new Visitor Center until July. The current building is for sale by the owner. ECCVB staff continues to research the proposed "living wall" exhibit at the new Visitor Center. There was discussion of and general consensus to honor the Hoffer family, Harold and Peg and their son, Brian, who have all served the ECCVB board and commission, by naming the boardroom at the new building after them i.e. The Hoffer Boardroom.

Ms. D. Lawson provided an update on legislative efforts to increase Elkhart County's innkeepers tax. It appears to be all about the timing, as our lobbyist said it's a waiting game for the opportunity to insert amendment on room tax increase.

SET NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Friday, May 10, 2019, at 8 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:49 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Mark
Staff Recorder