

MINUTES
ELKHART COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
PUBLIC MEETING OF THE
COMMISSION AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Friday, May 8, 2015
8:00/9:00 a.m.
Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau
219 Caravan Drive
Elkhart, IN

PRESENT: Mr. D. Shoup, Commission
Mr. D. Boecher, Commission
Mr. A. Patel, Commission
Ms. G. Patel, Commission
Mr. D. Bearss, Board of Directors
Ms. E. Billey, Board of Directors
Ms. K. Clarke, Board of Directors
Mr. B. Hoffer, Board of Directors
Mr. L. King, Board of Directors
Mr. J. Siegmann, Board of Directors
Ms. D. Lawson, Executive Director
Ms. J. Hughes, Staff Recorder

ABSENT: Ms. B. Ronzone, Commission
Mr. S. Baker, Commission
Mr. R. Jenkins, Commission

I. Mr. Shoup called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m.

II. **Motion to approve minutes of the March 2015 meeting was made by Mr. Siegmann and seconded by Mr. Patel. A vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.**

III. Ms. Clarke presented the Financial Report for the period ending April 30, 2015. Referring to the Income Statement she reported year-to-date room tax revenues of \$911,000 which reflects the \$600,000 carry-over from 2014. Projections are estimated to be \$150,000 to \$200,000 over last year. She reminded members that \$300,000 was transferred from the bifurcated account last year and that account needs to be built up again. The Travel Guide income totaled \$193,000 with only a couple of accounts remaining outstanding. Expenses are in line at \$620,000.

It was also noted that everyone should have received a copy of the ECCVB's 990.

Mr. King moved to approve the Financial Report as presented. Mr. Siegmann seconded. A vote was taken to approve the Financial Report and passed unanimously.

Mr. Hoffer updated members that he has had discussions with counsel who has spoken with the treasurer relative to our organization receiving information on delinquencies. They are coming to an agreement that would allow the information to be released to us, and the matter should be resolved soon. Having that information enables our organization to avoid confrontations and penalties associated with non-payment like those currently taking place in St. Joseph County.

IV. Bureau Update was presented by Ms. Lawson, and the April Board Report was distributed.

Quilt Garden: We're getting ready for the opening of the 2015 season and always make presentations to the city, town and county councils updating them on what's happening and the impact of the event. The governor's wife is coming to Elkhart County on June 1 as ambassador for the 2016 Indiana Bicentennial. While here she will see a few of the Quilt Gardens – the event is an Indiana Bicentennial Legacy project.

Regional Cities: Indiana legislators have approved funding \$84 million over a two year period for this initiative. Applications are due in June and they are going to fund 2-3 applications statewide. Elkhart County, St. Joseph County and Marshall County will be the region. With Horizon 3.0, Elkhart County is prepared and the region has hired a consultant and we will be meeting regionally.

Indiana Bicentennial: S. Nash from our office and L. Coyne from the county are co-coordinators for our local communities' participation with special Bicentennial events. Of course, there is a financial commitment to put on these events which may be difficult for some of these groups. The ECCVCB would like to have a line item of \$10,000 in 2016 to help communities stage these special activities. It would be a one-time sponsorship capped at \$500 per project and requiring only a simple application.

New website: the ECCVB's new website is complete and looking good.

Budget: The ECCVB's 2016 Budget goes to the county in June, with a request for an increase of \$200,000.

North Pointe: M. Huber reported on new investments in lodging in North Pointe. North Pointe is realizing new sidewalk and street lighting improvements making it safer for visitors on the north side. The Holiday Inn Express is a new hotel proposed in the southwest corner of North Pointe. (The current Holiday Inn Express will be under the La Quinta flag.) The CVB wants to engage owners in the south side neighborhood of North Pointe for improved access and aesthetics.

Hotel investment since 2005 is in excess of \$10 million assessed value added which supports the value of tourism to this area. As an organization does the ECCVB become a part of this investment and factor into this development by providing important visitor services? Conducting a visitor Center analysis would reveal:

- How technology is incorporated to enhance the experience
- How a Visitor Center can support area artisans
- Making sure the Visitor Center is relevant to the community
- A retail component
- Office space
- Dissemination and storage of collateral

When the CBV signed a 5 year lease last year, we had a conversation as to where the organization wanted to be in the future. It is not an inexpensive lease and it is triple net, making it equivalent to a mortgage payment on a nice building.

Of course, we would need the assistance from members who understand property. The CVB must start with goals, benefits, function, and use of space then location options.

Discussion ensued.

Research: The CVB is looking to move the on-line conversion study done annually in cooperation with NITDC to every 3 years to:

- Expand its focus
- Conduct an intercept study
- Find out customer expectations
- Possibly expand to local residents

Regarding economic impact studies, the ECCVB is setting up a schedule to take a 2-3 year approach. Certec is coming this summer to expand on their intercept study.

Several years ago we did a study with stakeholders which changed the framework of the CVB. A second study, a follow up working with non-traditional partners, was recently completed.

Now with our organization's continuing direction in quality-of-place initiatives, we have started thinking about how can we measure quality of place investments and how do they directly benefit the community.

V. Other Business:

Mr. King announced that Beacon Health Systems will be doing a presentation on Blue Zones at The Lerner on May 18, from 11am – 1pm. Blue Zones are places in the world where people live longer and have a high index of well-being.

VI. The question of holding a July meeting was discussed since it is a busy month for vacations and there is usually a light agenda. It was decided to forego the July meeting. The next meeting was set for September 11, 2015.

VII. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Submitted by:

Jackie Hughes
Staff Recorder