

## **MINUTES**

### **ELKHART COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU**

### **PUBLIC MEETING OF THE COMMISSION AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Friday, November 11, 2016**

**8 a.m.**

**Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau**

**219 Caravan Drive**

**Elkhart, IN 46514**

PRESENT: Ms. B. Ronzone, Commission  
Mr. D. Shoup, Commission  
Mr. R. Jenkins, Commission  
Mr. S. Baker, Commission  
Mr. L. King, Board of Directors  
Mr. J. Siegmann, Board of Directors  
Ms. E. Billey, Board of Directors  
Ms. K. Clarke, Board of Directors  
Mr. D. Bearss, Board of Directors  
Mr. B. Hoffer, Board of Directors  
Ms. D. Lawson, Executive Director  
Mr. T. Mark, Staff Recorder

ABSENT: Mr. A. Patel, Commission  
Ms. G. Patel, Commission  
Mr. K. Janowsky, Commission

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 8:13 a.m. by Ms. B. Ronzone. There was not yet a quorum present for the commission.

## **APPROVE SEPTEMBER MINUTES**

**Mr. L. King moved to approve the minutes of the Sept. 9, 2016, meeting. Ms. E. Billey seconded. A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.**

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Ms. K. Clarke reported that there is \$480,000 available in our accounts. She said that according to Ms. Cindy Ostrom, director of finance and administration for the Elkhart County Convention and Visitors Bureau, there is sufficient funds in the ECCVB accounts to meet budget demands for the remainder of the year. Ms. K. Clarke said the ECCVB is still trying to collect payment from the Old Bag Factory, but it is not a large amount. However, continued non-payment may

result in the Old Bag Factory not having a Quilt Garden site nor being featured in 2017 travel guide marketing materials.

Mr. R. Jenkins arrived at 8:15 a.m. There is now a quorum present for the commission.

Ms. D. Lawson reiterated the ECCVB's position with respect to the Old Bag Factory and consequences for continued non-payment. She noted that the ECCVB's investment in plants for one Quilt Gardens site is \$1,000. Ms. D. Lawson said the underlying issue is that Old Bag Factory may have serious problems if they can't make a \$1,300 payment. She said we have responsibility to visitors and other partners on Quilt Gardens.

Ms. B. Ronzone would send a terrible message if visitors showed up at a business that is closed.

General discussion ensued about the financial status of destination marketing organizations in northern Indiana.

Mr. D. Bearss said an office's financial position varies depending on structure. He said the concept of keeping financial reserves is pretty standard across industry.

Ms. K. Clarke noted that the ECCVB received \$1.7 million in revenue for the year 2017, and will not receive any more until January 2017. She said about \$600,000 in excess innkeepers tax is being held by Elkhart County. She said there were no known outstanding collections on innkeepers tax.

Ms. D. Lawson said the ECCVB expects to continue its partnerships such as ones with the Community Foundation of Elkhart County and the city of Elkhart. For 2016, the ECCVB had about \$350,000 invested in our organizations by other organizations to manage projects. Ms. D. Lawson said the city of Elkhart would give us three more marketing projects if we were open to them and possessed the capacity.

**Mr. L. King moved to accept the financial report. Mr. B. Hoffer seconded. A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.**

## **NOMINATIONS**

Ms. B. Ronzone presented the slate of 2017 officers for the commission. They are Ms. B. Ronzone for president, Mr. D. Shoup for vice president and Mr. R. Jenkins for secretary/treasurer. The floor was opened for other nominations but none were offered. Ms. B. Ronzone said a vote on the slate of officers will take place at the next meeting on January 13, 2017.

Mr. L. King presented the slate of 2017 officers for the board of directors. They are Mr. L. King for president, Ms. E. Billey for vice president and Ms. K. Clarke for secretary/treasurer. The

floor was opened for other nominations but none were offered. Mr. L. King said a vote on the slate of officers will take place at the next meeting on January 13, 2017.

Mr. L. King said that board member Mr. J. Siegmann has asked to retire from the board. Mr. J. Siegmann said it's been a great experience on the board and that, while continuity is good, it's time for a new person to step in.

Mr. L. King said a candidate for the board position who has an expressed an interest is Mr. Arvis Dawson. Mr. L. King asked if there are any other nominations to consider. There were none.

Ms. D. Lawson gave background information on Mr. A. Dawson: He is a retired schoolteacher who served a number of years on the Elkhart City Council, then worked in Elkhart Mayor Dick Moore's administration. Mr. A. Dawson is a "problem-solver." His ties to the area include being a Goshen College graduate. Mr. A. Dawson also has a good relationship with current mayor of Elkhart, Mr. Tim Neese. General discussion ensued about the process of government appointments.

Mr. S. Baker moved to close nominations. Mr. J. Siegmann seconded. Nominations for the board position were closed.

Ms. D. Lawson noted that it is the commission's duty to appoint the successor to the board position. That action can take place in the January meeting. She said the next step is for her, Mr. L. King and Ms. B. Ronzone to meet with Mr. A. Dawson and confirm his interest in the board opening. Mr. B. Hoffer confirmed that the statutory procedure is for the commission to vote on the board appointment in January.

## **BUREAU UPDATE**

Ms. D. Lawson discussed the plans for the Seward Johnson exhibit throughout Elkhart County. Ms. D. Lawson said the proposal is to have 53 Seward Johnson sculptures, one at each Quilt Garden and others throughout the county's downtowns. The ECCVB has partnered with the Midwest Museum of American Art to help curate and promote. One of the hopes is that this would help boost the membership base and visits to the Midwest Museum of American Art. The exhibition would coincide with the four months of the Quilt Gardens display. The board and commission viewed a brief video of a 25-foot tall monumental sculpture of Abraham Lincoln being installed in downtown Chicago. General discussion ensued on Seward Johnson sculptures, including marketing and sponsorship opportunities. Ms. D. Lawson said there has never been a Seward Johnson exhibition in the world of this size. The ECCVB opted not to pursue sponsorships so as not to compete against causes and non-profit fundraisers. Paper copies with the exhibition's mission statement and proof points, as well as a proposal on specific locations of each sculpture, were distributed. The exhibition includes a 25-foot monumental sculpture, an interpretation of the famous Grant Wood painting, American Gothic. Ms. D. Lawson said this is our statement that Elkhart County celebrates culture and welcomes the arts. This will build community pride and add to quality of place. Ms. D. Lawson said it is possible to obtain more

sculptures should businesses express an interest in sponsoring a sculpture. Ms. D. Lawson said 90 percent to 95 percent of the costs of mounting this exhibition has been confirmed. There is some additional research on costs such as that of renting a crane. The range of costs is \$130,000 to \$170,000. The ECCVB has \$100,000 allocated in this 2017 budget for this project. The remainder would come from remaining monies in the Live Work Play capacity grant program that were budgeted for 2016. Some projects are moving more slowly than anticipated, so a portion of those funds have not been expended. There is \$70,000 remaining in those partnership programs that can be re-directed to Seward Johnson exhibition. Ms. D. Lawson said \$60,000 is needed to make the down payment and the ECCVB would like to do that as soon as possible. She said Seward Johnson will handle delivery and set-up of monumental. The community assumes the responsibility of installing the life-size sculptures.

**For the board, Mr. L. King moved to proceed with the plan for the Seward Johnson exhibition as proposed. Ms. E. Billey seconded. For the commission, Mr. R. Jenkins moved to proceed with the Seward Johnson exhibition. Mr. D. Shoup seconded. A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.**

Ms. D. Lawson said the ECCVB will send out key messages to the board and commission to begin talking about this project, after there have been conversations informing the mayors and elected officials in each city and town.

Ms. D. Lawson brought forward the topic of pursuing enabling legislation to increase in the innkeepers tax for discussion. She said noted there has been some community discussion about a potential increase in the food and beverage tax. Some of that buzz has indicated that monies would be used to support the Vibrant Communities initiative. Ms. D. Lawson said it is not the ECCVB's intent to have Vibrant Communities to be tied to a tax increase. She recommended that the ECCVB shelve efforts in 2017 to seek the increase, and continue laying the groundwork for possibly 2018. She said the ECCVB has taken a neutral position on a food and beverage tax.

**Mr. B. Hoffer moved to affirm action not to seek an increase in innkeepers tax in 2017. Mr. J. Siegmann seconded. A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.**

Ms. D. Lawson said she and Mr. M. Huber received invitation to make a presentation to the Slovenia tourism board on innovation in tourism. This is because of a business relationship formed on another project and she and Mr. M. Huber were sought out as experts on how to get communities involved in tourism.

**Mr. R. Jenkins moved to decline the invitation. Mr. J. Siegmann seconded. A vote was taken and it was approved with all in favor.**

Ms. D. Lawson said she has been asked by the Regional Development Authority to co-chair with Rob DeCleene a committee on talent attraction and retention committee.

Ms. D. Lawson said the next phase of Vibrant Communities will be starting in January.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Ms. B. Ronzone opened the floor for comments from the public. There was no one from the public present.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be at 8 a.m. Friday, Jan. 13, 2017.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:39 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Mark  
Staff Recorder