

## Minutes

### Destination El Paso Advisory Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 17, 2021 4:00 p.m.

### Destination El Paso Virtual Meeting

#### Board Members Present

Johnny Escalante  
Katherine Brennand  
Patrice Hills  
Katie Scott  
Gina Roe Davis

#### Board Members Absent

Gracie Viramontes  
Elvira Galvan Galindo  
Monica Lombrana

#### Destination EP Staff

Bryan Crowe  
Brooke Underwood  
Veronica Castro  
Amanda Fernandez

#### I. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m.

#### II. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes by Katherine Brennand.
- Seconded by Patrice Hills.

#### III. General Manager's Update: Bryan Crowe

- Bryan introduced Jose Garcia who will be the new President and CEO for Destination El Paso. Jose will officially take over on Dec. 15, 2021. Jose briefly talked about his background and is excited to be coming to El Paso.
- We have been hosting the City Employee Thanksgiving luncheon and will be kicking off WinterFest with a press conference on Thursday, so it is nice to have Jose here to see our operations.
- Bryan shared data with the board regarding hotel occupancy. We are at 84.3% for the week of November 7, 2021, with revenue at \$5.851M. The occupancy continues to be strong, and we have seen an uptake in hotel occupancy which may be due to the opening of the U.S./Mexico border.
- El Paso's hotel occupancy is currently at 76% which is higher than the state and national average which is just over 55%.

#### IV. Department Updates

- **Financials: Bryan Crowe**
- Financial Narrative for September 2021 which is the first month of our Fiscal Year.
- Total revenue for the month of September is at \$579,943 bringing total YTD revenue to \$579,943.
- Total expenses for El Paso Live for the month of September 2021 were \$404,645 bringing YTD expenses to \$404,645.
- Total expenses for Visit El Paso for the month of September 2021 were \$222,388 bringing YTD expenses to \$222,388.
- Total expenses for Water Parks for the month of September 2021 were \$238,902 bringing YTD expenses to \$238,902.
- YTD we are experiencing a positive variance of \$119,001.
- YTD after the influx of City of El Paso funding there is an Adjusted Net profit of \$407,158.
- **Tourism Development: Veronica Castro**
- The tourism team has been very busy with attending several events in the community and traveling to events and conferences. We attended the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta with Team Texas. Several people are excited about getting back to traveling and asked for information on visiting El Paso.
- Veronica attended the Gastronomica in Puerto Vallarta and took Chef Oscar Herrera who served a six-course meal to give them a taste of the border. We also attended other events in conjunction with tradeshow to talk about all the things to do in El Paso.

- We did a partnership with TX Monthly and invited them to come and see the new things happening in downtown El Paso. We showcased the new hotels and restaurants in downtown. We spent about \$700 in bringing in the travel writer and the earned media from the article was \$87,000.
- We are excited to welcome back our visitors from Mexico. We built a campaign around the border reopening. We have a landing page on the website, a billboard was placed, a 10 second ad is running in Chihuahua and digital ads running on social media. We also wanted to educate our friends from Mexico on what to expect with hotel occupancy being high and information regarding COVID protocols and what documentation they would need to present when entering the U.S. in regard to vaccinations.
- Veronica was in Chihuahua when the border opened and did several television, radio and print interviews about our Welcome Back campaign.
- We are running ads in the US that focus on outdoor adventures.
- **Convention Development: Brooke Underwood**
- The team has been traveling a lot in the month of October. Brooke and Ray have been traveling to conventions and tradeshow.
  - Ray attended TACVB in Corpus Christi, TX, Oct. 6-8. This is a sales blitz and there are educational sessions. Ray had eight appointments.
  - Ray also attended Smart Meetings in Palm Beach, FL, Oct. 17-20. Ray had 25 appointments and came back with 4 RFPs.
  - Veronica and I traveled to Washington, D.C. Oct. 10-13 to bid on the Association of the United States Army. We are hoping they will select El Paso to host the Sgt. Majors Summer Meeting in June 2022.
  - Ray attended Connect Texas in Round Rock, TX, Oct. 26-28 and had 33 appointments and came back with one RFP. We were to host Connect Texas in 2020 and due to COVID it was postponed to 2022.
  - Brooke attended Sports ETA Symposium in Birmingham, AL, Oct. 25-28. She had 24 appointments and came back with two RFPs. USA Boxing has given a verbal definite to be in El Paso in 2023.
- We have a lot more travel coming in the next few months, and we always welcome hotel partners to attend the shows and conventions with us. Ray just came back from attending IMEX and will be attending three more tradeshow in November and December.
- Ray has recently been promoted to the Sr. Sales Manager and he is very enthusiastic and eager to be out selling El Paso.
- **Venue and Event Management: Bryan Crowe**
- El Paso Live team has been very active with several shows in all of our venues. We had two expos, one conference, two weddings, three events and seventeen shows in the month of October.
- The most popular shows with sold-out or close to sell out shows were George Lopez, Dwight Yoakum, The Fab Four and Mariachi Vargas.
- We welcomed back Broadway with a special Broadway subscriber night. Subscribers had the opportunity to renew their subscription and learn about the new season. Some of the shows that will be part of the season are Simon and Garfunkel, Fiddler on the Roof, Anastasia, Jersey Boys, and Rain. Stomp will be our first show Dec. 11 and 12.
- **El Paso Water Parks: Bryan Crowe**
- The managerial team from the water parks attended the World Waterpark Association Conference in San Antonio. They were able to attend educational sessions.
- The water parks were featured in the World Waterpark Association Magazine. The magazine highlighted El Paso's ability to open four waterparks in record time with a five-page feature article.

- Upon the return from the conference the team had a 3-day work session planning for the 2022 season. We are excited to plan for a full season of water parks, this year we were not open for a complete season. We have a lot planned for each water park.
- Katherine asked how the water parks work in the off season and is there limited staff in the off season. Bryan answered that the parks officially closed the end of September and staff starts inventory, cleaning the parks, storing items, and winterizing the parks. The water parks still need to be maintained throughout the off season. Bryan also mentioned that the managerial team will step in and help with WinterFest operations at the rink. Katherine asked if we have given any thought on how to have revenue come in during the off season. Bryan answered that the facilities are not able to be open during the off season and some of the water parks do have ancillary space that may be able to be used. We are looking at a target date of opening in May and running through Labor Day weekend. We are using this time to plan special events, marketing campaigns and gearing up to run a complete full season at each water park.
- Veronica invited the board to attend a ribbon cutting ceremony for the relocation of the Visitor Information site inside the airport. The site will also have a retail shop which will feature local artists.

**\*Adjourn 4:45pm**

**\*The next meeting will be on Thursday, December 6, 2021 at 4:00 PM via Zoom.**