

## Minutes

### Destination El Paso Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, December 10, 2020 4:00 p.m.

### Destination El Paso Virtual Meeting

#### Board Members Present

Katherine Brennand  
Gracie Viramontes  
Elvira Galvan Galindo  
Patrice Hills  
Gina Roe Davis  
Katie Scott  
Monica Lombrana  
Johnny Escalante

#### Board Members Absent

Wolfgang Jonas

#### Destination EP Staff

Bryan Crowe  
Brooke Underwood  
Veronica Castro  
Trudy Sweeten  
Anthony Mancuso  
Amanda Fernandez

#### I. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m.

#### II. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes by Gina Roe Davis.
- Seconded by Katherine Brennand.

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

- I would like to introduce two new board members, Monica Lombrana and Johnny Escalante. Monica recently retired from the City with over 26 years of service. She was the chief Operations and Transportation Officer. Johnny is the owner of several bars such as Later, Later, Lost & Found and Blackbird. He is also the owner of a workspace in downtown called One:One.
- Brooke Underwood introduced Anthony Mancuso who is the new Director of Convention Sales Development. Anthony is very excited to join the team and has had great introductions with several hoteliers.
- Bryan added that he is glad to have Anthony onboard with all the new downtown inventory, he comes to us with great experience and we look forward to him booking several conventions and meetings.
- Bryan shared some data with the board regarding hotel occupancy. We continue to see an increase in hotel occupancy week to week. This is due to out-of-town market medical staff who have been brought in to assist local hospitals and the ACS with the rise in COVID-19 cases. We are at 63.2% as of November 28 and have stayed consistent around 50% occupancy range.
- Brooke discussed current traveler sentiments regarding traveling during the pandemic. We subscribe to Destination Analyst which sends us a weekly report. This week's report showed that travelers are excited about new travel experiences and destinations to visit. The average traveler's priorities are to travel to spend time with loved ones and to get away from crowds. There was also a report on employed Americans who are allowed to work remotely and 36.4% are likely to take a workcation and 29.4% of Americans who travel with children would take a schoolcation.
- Bryan mentioned that these reports help us with our marketing efforts and how we mold our messaging. Also, more companies are now looking at other locations to work from.

#### IV. Department Updates

- **Financials: Bryan Crowe**
- Financial Narrative for October 2020.
- Total revenue for the month of October 2020 was \$58,410 bringing total YTD revenue to \$105,051.

- Total expenses for El Paso Live for the month of October 2020 were \$221,701 bringing YTD expenses to \$412,292.
- Total expenses for Visit El Paso for the month of October 2020 were \$218,066 bringing YTD expenses to \$369,199.
- YTD we are experiencing a positive variance of \$58,559.
- YTD after the influx of City of El Paso funding there is an Adjusted Net profit of \$100,713.
- Our normal revenue per month is between \$400,000-\$900,000. Some of our revenue is coming from daily and monthly parking.
- **Tourism Development: Veronica Castro**
- We have paused our leisure campaigns, but we are still advertising with meetings and conventions. We are looking at spring 2021 to start again with leisure campaigns.
- We have partnered with the City and County to bring a TV program La Frontera with Pati Jinich to El Paso in April or May to film a special on the border segment for her cooking show. This is a \$300,000 project and El Paso will contribute \$150,000 and the City of Juarez will contribute the other \$150,000. This is a great way for us to feature our city, culture, and heritage.
- The Mexico/U.S. border is still closed but we are working with the City of El Paso Economic Development department on initiatives to promote El Paso and Juarez. The Sister Cities agreement is scheduled to be signed in January 2021. Once the agreement has been signed, we will begin focusing on tourism, culture, economic development, border relations, and education.
- **Convention Development: Anthony Mancuso**
- Ray Valles traveled to Grapevine, TX to attend MPI World Education Conference as well as SMART Meetings in Nashville, TN. Between both conferences he had 63 total one-on-one and virtual meetings with top meeting planners.
- Ray also attended the Esports Travel Summit and the U.S. Sports Congress. He conducted 12 appointments with esports event producers and met in person with qualified events rights holder and tournament planners over 3 days at the U.S. Sports Congress.
- I attended the HPN Global conference which is a 3<sup>rd</sup> party meeting planning company, hosted at least 50 of their sales associates in person and over 125 attended virtually. I made some great connections, and they are looking at El Paso for future meetings.
- I also virtually attended Destination Texas. These meeting planners are specifically looking at Texas as a convention destination. I participated in twelve one-on-one pre-scheduled digital appointments.
- Ray and I plan to attend as many conferences as possible, if El Paso is not out there on meeting planner's radar and we are not making connections then people will forget about you.
- I am currently working on a Convention Recruitment and Retention Incentive Plan. The plan potentially will include sponsored or discounted rental in the Convention Center, complimentary welcome reception, sponsored Wi-Fi, flexible cancellation dates, lowered or waived attrition to name a few.
- **Venue and Event Management: Trudy Sweeten**
- The Convention Center continues to serve as an Alternate Care Site (ACS). We are currently setup for 100 patients and to date there have been 219 admissions, 166 patients discharged and 53 patients in-house.
- There are 150 hospital employees working each day and we were able to call back 10 employees to help with daily operations.
- The Convention Center continues to serve as an Infusion Center. We are currently built out for 20 beds and to date we have seen 106 patients.
- WinterFest began on December 5 and run until Jan. 3, 2021. We had about 7 hours of virtual programming on December 5 and we will have plenty of virtual programming scheduled along with other City departments throughout the month of December.

- Arts Festival Plaza has been decorated with the El Paso Electric Holiday Tree, the EP Letters wrapped in WinterFest graphics and snowflake lights are hanging above AFP.
- We have partnered with El Paso Electric to bring a live theatre experience to El Pasoans from the comfort of their own home. Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol is now available to stream via smartphone, tablet, laptop, desktop computer or on a smart tv.

**Elect Chair**

- Gracie Viramontes was nominated by Elvira Galindo to serve as the board's Chair. Discussion ensued and a motion to approve the appointment of Gracie was submitted by Monica Lombrana and seconded by Gina Roe Davis. Gracie Viramontes was elected as the Chair of the Greater El Paso Civic, Convention and Tourism Advisory Board.

**\*Adjourn 4:55 pm**

**\*The next meeting will be on Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 4:00 PM via Zoom.**