

## Minutes

### Destination El Paso Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, February 10, 2022 4:00 p.m.

### Destination El Paso Virtual Meeting

#### Board Members Present

Gracie Viramontes  
Patrice Hills  
Katherine Brennand  
Johnny Escalante  
Gina Roe Davis

#### Board Members Absent

Elvira Galvan Galindo  
Katie Scott

#### Destination EP Staff

Jose Garcia  
Brooke Underwood  
Veronica Castro  
Amanda Fernandez

#### I. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

#### II. Approval of Minutes

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

#### III. General Manager's Update: Jose Garcia

#### IV. Jose shared data with the board regarding hotel occupancy. We are at 67.7% for the week of January 30-February 5, 2022, with revenue at \$4.284M. We are starting to trend in the right direction, and we are hoping for a strong February. Our occupancy is still strong compared to other cities within Texas. Katherine Brennand asked why our occupancy numbers are higher than other cities and what drives that. Jose responded that we have a lot of Federal contracts and government travel in El Paso. Jose also mentioned with the Mexican border reopening we have seen travel from Mexico increase.

#### V. Department Updates

- **Financials: Jose Garcia**
- Financial Narrative for December 2021.
- Total revenue for the month of December 2021 is at \$403,745 which our YTD budget is under at \$111,469.
- Total expenses for El Paso Live for the month of December 2021 were \$556,351 bringing YTD expenses under budget at \$130,795.
- Total expenses for Visit El Paso for the month of December 2021 were \$334,928 bringing YTD expenses under budget at \$245,367.
- Total expenses for Water Parks for the month of December 2021 were \$171,523 bringing YTD expenses over budget at \$5,892.
- YTD we are experiencing a positive variance of \$258,801.
- YTD after the influx of City of El Paso funding there is an Adjusted Net profit of \$938,057.
- Visit El Paso is under budget due to open positions, El Paso Live is under budget due to a slightly slow December and open positions. Waterparks is slightly over budget due to it not being operational and staffing continues.
- **Tourism Development: Veronica Castro**
- Nora Ochoa attended Marketplace in Grapevine, TX, Jan. 8-11 with Team Texas. There were over 1,400 attendees and she had one-on-one appointments with North American bus companies. We handed out individually wrapped churros at the booth.
- We continue bringing travel writers to El Paso. We hosted 2 individuals in the month of January. El Paso was featured in Texas Monthly, *Where to Eat Now El Paso- Mi Pueblo Nuevo*. A travel writer stopped in El Paso to research for American Craftmanship for Yahoo! News.
- We also continue to run ads in Mexico with a focus in Chihuahua and Torreon encouraging them to come to El Paso for shopping and to receive the vaccination. We are planning on

extending our advertising efforts to Queretaro for holy week to promote visiting El Paso for shopping and inform them of the opportunities available to get vaccinated and vaccinate their kids.

- **Convention Development: Brooke Underwood**
- The team continues to travel in the month of January.
  - Ray attended Southwest Showcase in Austin, TX, January 26. He met with over 110 meeting planners and decision makers. We hosted a churro welcome which was a huge hit at the booth. The Director of Sales from Hotel Paso del Norte joined Ray for this tradeshow.
- Ray was in El Paso for a site visit with the meeting planner for Texas Society of Architects.
- We will be traveling to Houston for the Texas Travel Alliance Unity Dinner in February. We have bid on this event to bring to El Paso and have been unsuccessful, but we hope to continue trying to bid for it. We will have the airport and hoteliers traveling with us to this event. We will be attending education sessions and the unity dinner encourages us to invite Representative so they can hear how important the travel industry is and continue funding for the industry.
- We have been short listed to host the Texas Democratic Convention and they will be here the first week of March for a site visit.
- **Venue and Event Management: Jose Garcia**
- El Paso Live team has been very active with several shows in all of our venues. We had two expos in the Convention Center with El Paso Realtors and Elegant Penguin Bridal Expo.
- We had a sold out show in the Abraham Chavez Theatre with Tom Segura.
- Broadway was in the Plaza Theatre with a two-night showing of The Simon and Garfunkel Story with an attendance of 1,969 over both days.
- **El Paso Water Parks: Jose Garcia**
- We have added eight new seasonal positions in January and our goal is to add 399 seasonal part time employees by April.
- We are focused on recruitment through digital platforms and partnerships with local high schools.
- We continue to also focus on selling season passes for all water parks.
- Katherine Brennand asked why a city attorney is now present at our monthly meetings. Danielle Escontrias who is with the City Attorney's office responded that they are present to be able to answer any questions that may come up. A city attorney is always present at all board meetings.

**\*Adjourn 4:33pm**

**\*The next meeting will be on Thursday, March 10 at 4:00 PM via Zoom.**