

Minutes

Destination El Paso Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, February 11, 2021 4:00 p.m.

Destination El Paso Virtual Meeting

Board Members Present

Katherine Brennand
Gracie Viramontes
Wolfgang Jonas
Patrice Hills
Johnny Escalante
Gina Roe Davis
Monica Lombrana

Board Members Absent

Katie Scott
Elvira Galvan Galindo

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 4:03 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes by Monica Lombrana.
- Seconded by Katherine Brennand.

III. General Manager's Update: Bryan Crowe

- Bryan shared some data with the board regarding hotel occupancy. We are not far behind from where we were last year, and we are recovering. We are at 63.4% as of February 6, 2021. This week's occupancy remained relatively flat at -.47% than the same period one year ago. We normalized in 2020 not including the increase in supply.

IV. Department Updates

- **Financials: Bryan Crowe**
- Financial Narrative for December 2020.
- Total revenue for the month of December 2020 was \$372,122 bringing total YTD revenue to \$814,398.
- Total expenses for El Paso Live for the month of December 2020 were \$302,155 bringing YTD expenses to \$956,505.
- Total expenses for Visit El Paso for the month of December 2020 were \$190,403 bringing YTD expenses to \$559,599.
- YTD we are experiencing a positive variance of \$834,538.
- YTD after the influx of City of El Paso funding there is an Adjusted Net profit of \$624,141.
- The Alternate Care Site is boosting our revenue as we budgeted for no facility revenue for the first 2 quarters of the fiscal year. ACS revenue has us ahead of our projected budget.
- **Tourism Development: Veronica Castro**
- El Paso was featured in Bankrate.com as one of the *Best Places to Live When You Can Work From Anywhere*. We were ranked number 4 based on 5 criteria.
 - Affordability: 10 out of 10
 - Wellness: 9 out of 10
 - Safety: 8 out of 10
 - Connectivity: 8 out of 10
 - Accessibility: 4 out of 10
- We ran a social media campaign to showcase the article. We included a link that would direct people directly to the article. We are working with the City's Economic Development department to contact people who have and who are looking at relocating to El Paso. We will also invite people to participate in our virtual familiarization tours.
- TX Monthly ran an article *The Ultimate Texas Tacopedia* and featured different restaurants in El Paso including a special feature on Elemi.

- We continue to advertise in TX Meetings, TX Parks and Wildlife and we ran a digital banner with TSAE.
- Katherine Brennand asked if connectivity in the Bankrate.com article meant air travel. Veronica explained that connectivity referred to internet service and broadband data. Accessibility has to do with flight service in and out of El Paso.
- **Convention Development: Anthony Mancuso**
- We attended the Texas Association of Convention and Business virtual 2021 conference at the end of January. The virtual show encompassed two action-packed days of thought provoking and critical conversations, inspirational ideas, and networking opportunities.
- The team is planning a State of the Industry meeting on February 16 to update the hotel community on the road ahead for El Paso, as well as hosting a Virtual FAM with Connect Meetings on February 25, 2021. The Virtual FAM will bring 25 vetted meeting planners together virtually to learn about El Paso as a meeting destination, to engage these planners with our hotel community, and to re-introduce El Paso as a premier destination for their programs. We will be sending small goodie boxes to each attendee.
- We have recently partnered with Helms Briscoe. Helms Briscoe is a third-party meeting planner, and the partnership program allows CVB/DMOs and national tourism entities to increase the exposure of their destination and services to HelmsBriscoe's worldwide network.
- Our travel schedule is strong for this year due to the postponement of several shows in 2020 to 2021. We will be traveling each month beginning in April through December of 2021 and we always encourage hotels to join us and share appointments.
- **Venue and Event Management: Trudy Sweeten**
- The contract for the Alternate Care Site inside the Convention Center has expired. The building was utilized from October 25, 2020-January 31, 2021 and admitted a total of 298 patients.
- Sullivan Land Service (SLS) continues to move out of the Convention Center, and we have begun cleaning, disinfecting, and repairing the center.
- We are preparing the Convention Center to become a walk-in vaccine site by Feb. 16, 2021. We will have staff to help with parking, maintenance, security, engineering, and event staff to help with directions once inside the building.
- We will be replacing the existing marquee with two new 12'x16' displays and adding a third 10'x20' display. The new marquee will feature a full color picture and video display and will be used as a directory and for sponsor logos.
- Gina Roe Davis asked when we will be able to have gatherings of 10 or more people. Bryan mentioned that we heard from one of our partners that there is a scheduled meeting with Dr. Ocaranza and Dr. Alozie to discuss the future of events in El Paso on February 26. We are looking at hosting events late summer or early fall. Baseball will begin in April and I think that will set the precedent for future events.
- Veronica mentioned that we have wrapped the EP letters in honor of Black History Month, and they will be on display at San Jacinto Plaza. We have also scheduled social media posts honoring local individuals that have impacted the African American movement in our city.

***Adjourn 4:30 pm**

***The next meeting will be on Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 4:00 PM via Zoom.**