

Minutes

Destination El Paso Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, April 14, 2022 4:00 p.m.

Destination El Paso In Person Meeting

Board Members Present

Katherine Brennand
Johnny Escalante (call)
Deborah Zuloaga
Katie Scott
Danny Padilla

Board Members Absent

Patrice Hills
Gracie Viramontes
Gina Roe-Davis

Destination EP Staff

Jose Garcia
Brooke Underwood
Veronica Castro
Diana Thornton

City Attorney

Karla Munoz

I. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:12 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 72.1% for the week of April 3-April 9, 2022, with revenue at \$4.959M. Our occupancy is still strong compared to other cities within Texas. Deb Zuloaga asked for a definition of ADR (Average Daily Rate).

Jose asked Brooke to share the news of the passing of Elvira Galindo.

V. Department Updates

• Financials: Jose Garcia

- Financial Narrative for February 2022.
- Total revenue for the month of February 2022 was at \$665,728 which our YTD budget is under at \$55,021.
- Total expenses for El Paso Live for the month of February 2022 were \$491,956 bringing YTD expenses under budget at \$323,614.
- Total expenses for Visit El Paso for the month of February 2022 were \$248,649 bringing YTD expenses under budget at \$242,649.
- Total expenses for Water Parks for the month of February 2022 were \$231,238 bringing YTD expenses under budget at \$21,569.
- YTD we are experiencing a positive variance of \$532,543.
- YTD after the influx of City of El Paso funding there is an Adjusted Net profit of \$1,541,437.
- February has strong revenue and is pacing at 52% of budget. Jose shared that ASM has a new contract with Ticketmaster and royalties will now go back to the facilities. Also shared that marketing spend is on pace and El Paso Water Parks is into their full first year of a budget and with onboarding they are still underbudget. Katherine Brennand asked how many marketing divisions there are and Jose/Veronica explained the three different divisions. Katherine asked what the overall DEP budget is. Veronica explained for Visit El Paso that 2019 was \$1.5 million and \$1 million for 2022. Jose explained how budget was different for El Paso Live and Water Parks due to pass through expenses to promoters for signs, spots, advertising, etc. Katherine asked EP compares to other cities and Brooke referenced that Grapevine was between \$15-20 million vs EP. Deb asked for an explanation on how HOT funds were distributed. Brooke offered a full explanation.

- **Tourism Development: Veronica Castro**

- Nora Ochoa attended Texas Travel Expo in Grapevine, TX, March 30-31. Hosted 30 one-on-one appointments and explained how this show is critical to keeping Travel Information Centers (TICs) all over Texas updated with the latest information from El Paso and the region.
- The team hosted the International Food Blogger's Conference from March 17-21, 2022. Bloggers and influencers from all around the country were able to experience El Paso, Juarez, and Las Cruces over the four-day period. Local restaurants had the opportunity to showcase their cuisine during the "Taste of El Paso" event hosted by Visit El Paso, this event took place in the Mt Franklin Lobby, and it was a huge success. Participants stayed in downtown El Paso over the duration of the event and expressed a positive experience with the accommodations and services provided by Visit El Paso. A significant amount of digital/social media coverage of El Paso can be attributed to blogs, TikTok's, Instagram posts, and YouTube videos. The department anticipates more content to come from this event in the next six months. Deb asked for an explanation of Earned Media.
- The Mexico campaign was revealed with new look, new sound bites for radio and new billboards. Danny Padilla asked when the new campaign started running and Veronica explained it began when the border reopened.
- Invites were verbally extended for National Travel & Tourism Week Cinco de Mayo dinner as well as an explanation of what the week is geared towards and what events would be happening. Deb asked who the target audience was and Katherine suggested charging for the tours that week. Deb also asked what marketing would be done for the events. Danny Padilla commended the department's efforts in marketing in Mexico.

- **Convention Development: Brooke Underwood**

- Raymond Valles and Leanne Hicks traveled to Las Vegas to attend the Independent Planners Education Conference (IPEC) on March 1-3, 2022. These meeting planners were specifically interested in looking for destinations that can provide a full downtown experience. Many of these groups were also focused on convention venues and cities that are putting a visible emphasis on sustainability. Raymond and Leanne partnered up with other Texas Bureaus to host a meet & greet reception for meeting planners. This allowed them the opportunity to connect with approximately 15 additional planners outside of their scheduled appointments to highlight the renaissance that downtown El Paso has undergone. Their highlights included the addition of the two convention hotels, Hotel Paso del Norte and The Plaza Pioneer El Paso Hotel.
- Brooke shared that the 2024 Texas Democratic Party's Presidential State Convention will take place in El Paso. The process to secure the convention began more than a year ago and was secured on Saturday, March 26, 2022. A delegation made up of members of the El Paso County Democratic Party and Visit El Paso's Convention Development team traveled to Houston, TX compete against San Antonio. The team demonstrated why El Paso was the only choice for the event and by a supermajority of 61 votes, out of the committee of 84 individuals, El Paso was awarded this prestigious convention. This convention would be the first-of-its-kind on the US-Texas border in over 20 years. The board congratulated the team on the win.
- National Horseshoe Pitchers Association was in town for a site visit. This relationship first began when bowling was in El Paso in 2015 and the team has been invited to submit a proposal and present at the end of 2022 for a bid for the 2024 World Tournament. This event is held over 16 days and would

contribute and estimated 6500 in room nights and an estimated \$19 million in economic impact.

- **Venue and Event Management: Jose Garcia**
 - El Paso Live team has been very active with several shows in all of our venues including almost sold out shows of Anastasia, Chicago and Whiskey Myers.
- **El Paso Water Parks: Jose Garcia**
 - CPR/Lifeguard training has begun for all returning and new employees.
 - Each park will hire approximately 100 employees.
 - Staggered openings of the parks will begin on May 7th with Chapoteo.
 - Deb expressed her approval of the Water Parks vs pools because of their inclusivity.
- **Miscellaneous**
 - Proposed date change for monthly meetings from 2nd Thursday of the month to the 4th Thursday of the month. Katherine Brennand made the motion, 2nd from Katie Scott. Voted all in favor.

***Adjourn 5:29pm**

***The next meeting will be on Thursday, May 26 at 4:00 PM in person**