

Minutes

Destination El Paso Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, April 8, 2021 4:00 p.m.

Destination El Paso Virtual Meeting

Board Members Present

Katherine Brennand
Patrice Hills
Johnny Escalante
Gina Roe Davis
Elvira Galvan Galindo
Wolfgang Jonas
Monica Lombrana

Board Members Absent

Katie Scott
Gracie Viramontes

Destination EP Staff

Bryan Crowe
Brooke Underwood
Veronica Castro
Anthony Mancuso
Amanda Fernandez

I. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes by Patrice Hills.
- Seconded by Gina Roe Davis.

III. General Manager's Update: Bryan Crowe

- Bryan mentioned that we have added a third division to Destination El Paso, El Paso Waterparks. We will manage all 4 new waterparks which will open this summer. Camp Cohen will be the first waterpark to open Memorial weekend. We are currently hiring lifeguards, guest services and park services. All lifeguards will be trained by Ellis and Associates.
- Bryan shared that we recently updated city council regarding the waterparks and upcoming summer events. Cool Canyon Nights and Viva! El Paso will be back at McKelligon Canyon beginning in June and will run until August.
- Bryan introduced and welcomed Ben Fyffe, Director of Parks & Rec. and MCAD who will serve as City staff liaison. He also introduced Karla Munoz, City Attorney, who will serve as a liaison from the City Attorney's office.
- Bryan shared some data with the board regarding hotel occupancy. We are seeing continued recovery in occupancy and have the strongest occupancy level in the state of Texas. We are at 75% as of April 3, 2021. This week's occupancy is up 2.60% from week's prior average of 73.1%.
- We are on the road to recovery and have seen an increase in hotel occupancy due to various initiatives we placed to encourage travel to El Paso and staycations. El Paso was listed as a top city to temporarily work from, and we ran a campaign centered around the article.
- We were second to Beaumont with 55% for hotel occupancy in the state of Texas. The reason was due to contractors staying in Beaumont for coastal repairs. We are well ahead of U.S. and State average for hotel occupancy and our rates are the lowest in the U.S. and State.

IV. Department Updates

- **Financials: Bryan Crowe**
- Financial Narrative for February 2021.
- Total revenue for the month of February was \$338,520 bringing total YTD revenue to \$1,661,833.
- Total expenses for El Paso Live for the month of February 2021 were \$265,742 bringing YTD expenses to \$1,491,289.

- Total expenses for Visit El Paso for the month of February 2021 were \$184,880 bringing YTD expenses to \$1,149,429.
- YTD we are experiencing a positive variance of \$1,119,217.
- YTD after the influx of City of El Paso funding there is an Adjusted Net profit of \$1,352,573.
- We are in month 6 of our fiscal year and we are pacing ahead of budget. The reason for that is when we budgeted for FY 20/21, we anticipated the facilities would remain closed. We had revenue coming in from the Alternate Care Site and now operating as a vaccination site and therefore we are ahead of budget.
- **Tourism Development: Veronica Castro**
- Travel writers are back to traveling and promoting the outdoors and road trippers. Some that we have hosted are Delicious Destination which aired on March 6, Mama Contemporanea which is a lifestyle publication, Global Debauchery, and Michigan's Big Show which is a syndicated radio show.
- National Travel and Tourism Week will take place May 2-8. We will be hosting several virtual events and have a State of the Industry. We will be conducting a social media photo contest. A new event that we are adding this year is a community clean up.
- We will have new artwork for our Deming billboard and our advertising will be focused on outdoor activities.
- **Convention Development: Anthony Mancuso**
- We are a sports market right now with people feeling safe attending outdoor events.
- We submitted 8 leads for USA Artistic Swimming for 2022-2024. This event would potentially be held at the Eastside Natatorium with approximately 300-3,000 attendees per event and an economic impact of over \$6.5 million.
- We also submitted 3 leads for Kick It 3v3 a soccer tournament with approximately 700 attendees for each of the 3 programs and total potential room nights of 3,000.
- We recently filmed a 30 second advertising spot highlighting the state-of-the-art protocols we have employed to keep attendees safe during the global pandemic.
- We hope to ease the minds of travelers regarding safety as we welcome attendees back to our city in a post-pandemic world.
- The team will be traveling in April to various conferences. We will be attending the Independent Planner Education Conference in Louisville and TTIA Unity Week in Austin. We always encourage hoteliers to participate on some of these conferences.
- **Venue and Event Management: Bryan Crowe on behalf of Trudy Sweeten**
- We are now GBAC STAR accredited which will help in attracting meeting planners to host their meetings in our facilities. This accreditation sets El Paso apart from other cities and will keep planners, attendees, staff, and visitors safe. GBAC STAR accreditation means that a facility has established and maintained a cleaning, disinfection, and infectious disease pre-vention program, proper cleaning protocols, disinfection techniques and work practices are in place to combat biohazards and infectious disease.
- The Convention Center continues to serve as a mass vaccination site. We are now accepting registered El Pasoans 16 years of age and over. We are also accepting walk ins 80 years of age and over who will be registered onsite and receive the vaccine. We are the 2nd most effective site in the country and El Paso has a 97% vaccination rate in terms of doses administered from doses allocated. The total estimated time a person will spend getting their vaccine is 25 minutes.
- **Questions and Answers**
- Katherine Brennan congratulated the team on becoming GBAC certified and asked Veronica about the NTTW social media photo contest guidelines. Veronica responded that the contest is to encourage the community to take photos of the city and the winner will receive a prize and will be asked to sign a contract to allow us to use their photos to promote the city.

- Gina Roe Davis asked when we will re-open our facilities for events. Bryan responded that we have permission from the City to host 3 TX Tech graduations in the Plaza Theatre with limited capacity and pod seating beginning of May. Each event must present a COVID plan which will be present to the City for permission. We are anticipating running at full capacity in the fall (early Sept.).

***Adjourn 4:45 pm**

***The next meeting will be on Thursday, May 13, 2021 at 4:00 PM via Zoom.**