

## Minutes

### Destination El Paso Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, May 26, 2022 4:00 p.m.

### Destination El Paso

Board Members Present	Board Members Absent	Destination EP Staff	City of El Paso
Patrice Hills	Katherine Brennand	Jose Garcia	Karla Munoz
Johnny Escalante		Brooke Underwood	Jessica Cordova
Deborah Zuloaga		Veronica Castro	
Katie Scott		Diana Thornton	
Danny Padilla			
Gina Roe-Davis			
Gracie Viramontes			

#### 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 Gracie Viramontes
- Seconded by Katie Scott

#### III. President/CEO Update: Jose Garcia

- #### IV.
- Jose shared data with the board regarding hotel occupancy. We are at 72.4% for the week of May 15-21, 2022, with revenue at \$4.9689M. Our occupancy is still strong compared to other cities within Texas. Deb Zuloaga asked if there was advocacy for occupancy which is the on the state level. Danny Padilla mentioned the need for an increase in per diem. Gracie Viramontes asked who helps on the state level to do so. Jose responses that there was a need to find the right channels with the state. Veronica Castro included that per diem in New Mexico is \$150, Albuquerque being \$175.

#### V. Department Updates

- **Financials: Jose Garcia**
  - Financial Narrative for March 2022.
  - Total revenue for the month of March 2022 was at \$637,858 with our YTD budget over by \$130,961.
  - Total expenses for El Paso Live for the month of March 2022 were \$559,134 bringing YTD expenses under budget at \$346,523.
  - Total expenses for Visit El Paso for the month of March 2022 were \$283,986 bringing YTD expenses under budget by \$230,072.
  - Total expenses for Water Parks for the month of March 2022 were \$206,455 bringing YTD expenses over budget \$8,471.
  - YTD we are experiencing a positive variance of \$699,085.
  - YTD after the influx of City of El Paso funding there is an Adjusted Net profit of \$1,822.732.
  - May has strong revenue and is still on pace. Visit El Paso continues to be under budget which can be attributed to open positions in the sales department. El Paso lives also has open positions as well as a flex in event schedules which positions them under budget as well. The start of Q4 will move forward with additional advertising.

- **Tourism Development: Veronica Castro**
  - Nora Ochoa traveled to Denver, CO April 30 and May 1 for the Denver Travel and Adventure Show. Visit El Paso hosted a booth along with Team Texas where El Paso was promoted to all attendees of the consumer tradeshow.
  - The Visit El Paso tourism department traveled to Queretaro, Leon, and Guadalajara for a Mexico Sales Mission from April 25-29. Jose Garcia, Veronica Castro, and local hotel partners met with over 300 travel agents and agencies to promote leisure travel to El Paso and the region. Visit El Paso hosted luncheons and dinners with panels discussing ways to increase road and air travel to the Juarez/El Paso area through key partnerships with Mexican airlines and tour companies. Each guest received Visit El Paso collateral with information on things to do, traveling to El Paso, and best practices when crossing into the city.
  - Veronica announced that 10 women executives from Mexico have been invited to attend the El Paso Hispanic Chamber event on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. The group of women will also meet with City and County Economic Development teams prior to the event. Johnny Escalante offered to help with sponsorship for this event if needed.
- **Advertising: Veronica Castro/Rene Wong**
  - Introduction of Rene Wong, new Director of Marketing & Communications. Rene will take over reporting at the June meeting. Veronica covered leisure and convention development/sports. Gracie asked when in Mexico, what is the perception of El Paso? Veronica said most people don't know where El Paso is located along with things to do. The team is working with a DMC in Juarez to put together packages for flight, hotel, shopping for potential visitors from Mexico. Two FAMs are in the works, potentially in August or September and will target travel agents and media. Johnny Escalante asked about Mexico travel internationally. Currently, someone must be a level one to fly into the US. US will have to lift that status to increase travel into the US.
  - Karla Munoz mentioned that Cool Canyon Nights is not on the Visit El Paso App.
- **Convention Development: Brooke Underwood**
  - Valerie Garcia and Leanne Hicks traveled to Las Vegas, Nevada, April 11-14, to attend CVENT CONNECT Conference. This conference brings together industry and meeting planner professionals to assist in building relationships to gain future meeting/convention business. With a lower ROI from this particular show, it's possible it will be tabled for the next FY until further research can be done.
  - Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers conducted a site visit on April 19 that included Jamie Hansard, Past Board President, Lori Zerr, Treasurer, and Georgina Antillon, Director. They have selected El Paso for the 2025 Annual Conference.
  - The Texas Association of Public Retirement Systems (TEXPERS) also conducted a site visit that included Art Alfaro, President, Allen Jones, Director of Communications & Events, and Mark de la Paz, Meeting Planner. The Texas Association of Public Retirement Systems Summer Education Forum will be held in El Paso in August 2022.
  - Brooke went over the travel schedule along with information on the upcoming shows, HelmsBriscoe and Meeting Planners International.
  - Brooke introduced the new team members: Coles Weber, Sports Sales Manager and Gisela Ramirez, Catering Sales Manager. She also mentioned that the Facility Sales Manager and Self-contained sales manager positions are still open.

- **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 Star City Tattoo Expo, El Paso Comic Con and Earth, Wind & Fire. Attendance across all events continues to hold steady.
- **El Paso Water Parks: Jose Garcia**
  - Sales Efforts continue to be successful. Lifeguards are being onboarded at each park with trainings and certifications. Each weekend in May had soft openings before opening weekend of all four parks Memorial Day weekend. Gina Roe-Davis asked about a park buyout and asked if the water parks were open to doing events at the parks.

**\*Adjourn 5:19pm**

**\*The next meeting will be on Thursday, June 23 at 4:00 PM in person**