

Minutes

Destination El Paso Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, June 10, 2021 4:00 p.m.

Destination El Paso Virtual Meeting

Board Members Present

Gracie Viramontes
Katherine Brennand
Patrice Hills
Katie Scott
Monica Lombrana
Elvira Galvan Galindo

Board Members Absent

Johnny Escalante
Gina Roe Davis

Destination EP Staff

Bryan Crowe
Brooke Underwood
Veronica Castro
Amanda Fernandez

I. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:08 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

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

III. General Manager's Update: Bryan Crowe

- Bryan shared data with the board regarding hotel occupancy. We have the strongest hotel occupancy in the state. We are at 81% for the week of May 30, 2021, with revenue at \$4.932M.
- El Paso leads the state in hotel occupancy with an average of 70.3% and leading the national average.
- We will continue to see a positive impact on hotel occupancy once the border reopens.
- Monica Lombrana asked how much of an impact on hotel occupancy is coming from traveling nurses. Bryan answered that the nurses shifted out in March but there has been an increase in government related travel and interstate travel.

IV. Department Updates

- **Financials: Bryan Crowe**
- Financial Narrative for April 2021.
- Total revenue for the month of April was \$283,204 bringing total YTD revenue to \$2,140,982.
- Total expenses for El Paso Live for the month of April 2021 were \$486,318 bringing YTD expenses to \$2,255,980.
- Total expenses for Visit El Paso for the month of April 2021 were \$241,124 bringing YTD expenses to \$1,564,820.
- YTD we are experiencing a positive variance of \$1,567,793.
- YTD after the influx of City of El Paso funding there is an Adjusted Net profit of \$1,428,782.
- We are still 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. We will be amending the budget due to operating expenses.
- **Tourism Development: Veronica Castro**
- The New York Times ran an article on El Paso murals and the editorial value for this article was \$1,174,750.
- El Paso was named #10 on the Orchard Top 15 Under-the-Radar Cities in Texas. Orchard analyzed home sale data and quality of life factors across Texas to come up with the state's best under-the-radar cities to live in. Our total score was 85.5, price per sq. ft. is \$120 and our public-school rating is 3.01 based on a 4-pt. scale.

- We recently unveiled the EP Letters for Pride Month, and they are on display at San Jacinto Plaza through the end of June. We will be participating in the Pride Parade in August.
- Monica Lombrana asked if the airport wrapped their letters for Pride Month and expressed, they would generate a lot of traffic at the airport. Veronica will talk to the airport in partnering with them on upcoming holidays or events when the letters will be wrapped. Gracie asked what other holidays we wrap the letters for. Veronica responded that we have wrapped them for Black History Month, Pride Month, Winter Fest, Hispanic Heritage Month, and we will continue to look at other holidays. Katie asked if there was a hashtag on the letters or near the letters so people will know where to tag their pictures. Veronica will look at adding the hashtag to the letters for future use.
- Texas Bucket List visited El Paso May 19-22 and the article will run in August.
- La Frontera was also here in El Paso May 24-28 filming their show which will air in October. The crew stayed at the Plaza Hotel, which generated room nights.
- Yolo Texas filmed in late April and conducted an interview with Brooke Underwood, the segment aired on June 5 and another segment will air in August.
- Our May advertising focuses on experiencing the outdoors and has shown to be very successful.
- We started running ads in Chihuahua focused on a message saying we miss them, and our doors are open when they can return to visiting El Paso. Gracie asked if we have an outreach strategic plan for Mexico. Veronica responded that we do, and we are working closely with our Juarez ad agency.
- **Convention Development: Brooke Underwood on behalf of Anthony Mancuso**
- Anthony attended Prevue Meetings and Incentives in Plano, TX May 10-11. He had appointments with 30 meeting planners.
- Ray attended Smart Meetings in Ft. Worth and had 25 in-person meetings and came back with 3 RFP's for 2022, 2023 and 2024.
- El Paso won the Neighborhoods USA National Convention for 2023. The convention will have 800 in attendance, 900 room nights and an economic impact of \$650,000.
- The team will conduct a bid presentation in Rockwall, TX for the 2023 Texas State Association of Firefighters Convention. This will convention is a 6-day convention with 400 in attendance, over 2,000 in room nights and an economic impact of \$500,000. This convention has not been in El Paso in 20 years.
- We kicked off a new summer incentive program. We are encouraging meeting planners to book a new conventions or meetings by December they will receive gift cards. The promotion runs June 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.
- The team will be traveling the next few months to various conferences, and we always encourage hotels to participate.
- **Venue and Event Management: Bryan Crowe**
- The Convention Center continues to serve as a mass vaccination site. We are accepting walk ins for ages 18 and over for Dose 1 and 2, both Moderna and Pfizer. We are also now accepting walk ins for ages 12-17 for Dose 1 (Pfizer). Hours of operation are Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-7 p.m. and Sat. 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
- We hosted our first indoor events since the closure of our venues in Spring 2020. There were four graduations held at the Plaza Theatre and conducted with limited capacity and pod seating. TX Tech Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, May 7, TX Tech Gayle Grieve Hunt School of Nursing, May 8, TX Tech Paul Foster School of Medicine, May 21, and Clint ISD, CECA Graduation, May 22.
- We opened our first of four water parks, Camp Cohen on Saturday, May 29 with an overall weekend attendance of 4,630 and sold 460 season passes. We had a very successful weekend and look forward to opening the other 3 water parks in the upcoming weeks.
- **Questions and Answers**

- Katherine Brennand and Monica Lombrana congratulated the team on winning the Neighborhoods USA National Convention.
- Katherine Brennand congratulated Veronica on her advertising and Anthony on his new incentive plan.

***Adjourn 4:45 pm**

***The next meeting will be on Thursday, July 8, 2021 at 4:00 PM via Zoom.**