

Minutes

Destination El Paso Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, August 15, 2019 4:00 p.m.

Destination El Paso Boardroom

Board Members Present

Katherine Brennand
Ismael Legarreta
Kerry Doyle
Elvira Galindo
Gracie Viramontes
Bernie Olivas

Board Members Absent

Krista Snow
Katie Scott
Rose Lucero

Destination EP Staff

Bryan Crowe
Brooke Underwood
Trudy Sweeten
Veronica Castro
Pavlova Sheffield

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 Bernie Olivas
- Seconded by Katherine Brennand

III. General Manager's Update: Bryan Crowe

- As you may know our venue was activated to support our community after the August 3rd event. I would like to thank Trudy and her team for doing a great job in making this happen. In a moment, Trudy will brief you on how this impacted our operations and how our team worked to serve the community without affecting our events.
- Dick Behrenhausen asked how this event has impacted future events. Brooke answered that we have received great support from planners. Bryan added that this act does not represent the community and the safety of the City and we are doing our best to communicate this. We want to use our national voice and influence to strengthen the message of who we are
- Today Brooke and I attended a meeting with the City Manager, some Hotel owners and General Managers, in which we talked about new improvements and our plan to grow conventions in order to match these with the new inventory in Downtown.
- In response to their concerns, we presented to them some indicators in which you can see that we are on the lead in state averages in terms of occupancy. On the same note, you can appreciate that there has been a progressive increase in occupancy and that demand keeps consistently increasing as well.
- Brooke mentioned that there has been a great increase in leads since they announced the opening of hotels.
- One of the problems why we don't get as many conventions is our location, but that usually gets compensated by the prices and low costs that we have compared to other cities.

IV. Department Updates

- **Financials: Bryan Crowe**
- Total revenue for the month of June 2019 was \$649,974 bringing total YTD revenue to \$6,373,641
- Total expenses for El Paso Live for the month of June 2019 were \$679,948 bringing YTD expenses to \$7,247,040.
- Total expenses for Visit El Paso for the month of June 2019 were \$305,048 bringing YTD expenses to \$3,182,131.
- YTD we are experiencing a negative variance of \$15,787.
- YTD after the influx of City of El Paso funding there is an Adjusted Net profit of \$617,179.

V. Tourism Development: Brooke Underwood on behalf of Veronica Castro

- The information kiosk in Chihuahua opened July 22nd. We will have a ribbon cutting closer to October.
- Our staff in Chihuahua was trained in El Paso for a week and will be able to sell tickets for the events in our venues, as well as booking hotels for visitors.

- We closed the visitor center in Chihuahua for 1 week after the events of August 3rd in El Paso. We had a message posted in the Kiosk's screens.
- We've been taking surveys about the activities of tourists when they come to El Paso and the trend has usually been shopping. Therefore, we are trying to introduce visitors to different attractions.
- Katherine Brennand asked what type of handouts we have at the kiosk. Veronica answered that we have visitors guides in Spanish and some brochures from the museums. Bryan added that we also have the app.
- We have the recap report for SXSW 2019 and will have a presentation on August 26th with Economic Development.
- We've found that there is a very good opportunity in several cities in Mexico (Torreón, León, Mexico City, Guadalajara, Querétaro) to focus our marketing and we will possibly allocate money to advertising in those cities.
- Three members of our staff are attending this year's Texas Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus Annual Conference in Denton, TX. We received several awards this year. First place for our promotional video as well as for convention promotion, and second place for our tourism promotion.

VI. Convention Development: Brooke Underwood

- Ernie Hernandez, our Sales Manager, traveled to Houston to encourage attendees to come to El Paso for the 2020 US/Mexico Sister Cities Mayors Summit. Event that will bring approximately 250 attendees and contribute over 400 room nights.
- I traveled to St. Louis to attend the Destinations International Annual Convention. While attending the conference for networking opportunities, I also took some courses for my CDME certification and received the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program - certification award for Destination El Paso.
- Three of our sales managers will be attending Connect Marketplace in Louisville, KY on August 26-28. This is an appointment based national trade show that is a big lead generator.
- Dick Behrenhausen asked about our efforts towards the military sector. Brooke answered that one of our Sales Managers, Cathy Stevens is dedicated to this category.
- Bernie Olivas helped us securing the Football Bowl Association Annual Meeting for 2024. This meeting will bring around 600 people.
- Gracie Viramontes mentioned 3 possible leads.
- In sports development, we have 2 notable leads: USA Boxing Western Elite Qualifier & Regional Open and USA Weightlifting American Open Finals.
- Although the current number of Definites and Definite Room Nights falls short of goal, we currently have 32 pieces of potential business pending decision that represent a total of 17,960 room nights.

VII. Venue and Event Management: Trudy Sweeten

- Trudy provided a timeline of events within our venues after the events on August 3rd.
- On August 5th we were notified that the City was opening the Family Assistance Center the next day in the Convention Center and was operating from August 6th to August 13th.
- For the Community Memorial Service, we opened the Abraham Chavez Theatre and one of the Halls in the Convention Center as overflow. We had 28 volunteers from the City and 12 from Destination El Paso.
- We hosted the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses twice in August.
- The Bridal Show was postponed due to the incident in August 3rd and we are now looking at dates in September.
- Car show took place on the established date. We could accommodate both the show and the Family Assistance Center.
 - Upcoming events: Live Fit – August 17th
- Discussion ensued regarding HVS Study.

***Adjourn 5:19 pm**

***The next meeting will be on Thursday, September 12, 2019 at 4:00 PM at the Destination El Paso Board Room**