

Minutes

Destination El Paso Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, September 9, 2021 4:00 p.m.

Destination El Paso Virtual Meeting

Board Members Present

Johnny Escalante
Katherine Brennand
Patrice Hills
Katie Scott
Monica Lombrana

Board Members Absent

Gracie Viramontes
Elvira Galvan Galindo
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 4:04 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes by Patrice Hills.
- Seconded by Monica Lombrana.

III. General Manager's Update: Bryan Crowe

- Bryan shared data with the board regarding hotel occupancy. We are at 80.0% for the week of August 29-September 4, 2021, with revenue at \$5.160M. We have a healthy occupancy and strong recovery. El Paso is still leading in the state of Texas and ahead of the national average through the end of July. Our state average is 59.2% and we were at 75.1%. We also have the lowest ADR in the state and that has a lot to do with government use of the hotels and a lot of the limited-service properties are rate chasing. We try to encourage them to not do rate chasing.

IV. Department Updates

- **Financials: Bryan Crowe**
- Financial Narrative for July 2021.
- Overall, we are in a great position with total revenue for the month of July at \$1,095,630 and about \$800,000 of that is from Water Parks, bringing total YTD revenue to \$4,650,517. When we first created our budget water park operations were not projected as we did not know at the time that we would be managing the water parks. We are over budget by \$1,678,017 in revenue.
- Total expenses for El Paso Live for the month of July 2021 were \$1,262,980 bringing YTD expenses to \$4,860,883. Water Park operation expenses were not projected when creating the budget therefore we are over budget by \$887,501 in expenses.
- Total expenses for Visit El Paso for the month of July 2021 were \$250,474 bringing YTD expenses to \$2,295,612.
- YTD we are experiencing a positive variance of \$1,262,525.
- YTD after the influx of City of El Paso funding there is an Adjusted Net profit of \$1,379,785.
- We are still pacing ahead of budget. We are starting to see the impact from the water parks.
- Katherine Brennand asked for an explanation on the total expenses for El Paso Live regarding the water parks expenses. Bryan clarified that the revenue and expenses reported do reflect the Water Park division and since we did not budget for them that is why we are over budget in both revenue and expenses on the El Paso Live side.
- **Tourism Development: Veronica Castro**
- Veronica introduced Emi Diaz as the new Marketing Manager for Visit El Paso. Emi comes to us with extensive experience, she has 15 years of marketing experience. We are excited to have her onboard.
- We celebrated the Pride Parade in August with Amigo Man's participation, and we look forward to participating with them in the future with their events.

- We continue to focus our ads on outdoor and leisure, we also pushed conventions and sports marketing for the month of August.
- Brooke and I will be traveling to D.C. next month for the AUSA bid and hopefully we will come back with some good news.
- **Convention Development: Anthony Mancuso**
- The team has been traveling a lot in the month of August, between Ray and myself we have been to several conventions and have had great appointments.
 - Southwest Showcase was on Aug. 13 in Round Rock, TX. We exhibited and met over 60 meeting planners and received one RFP in hand totaling 427 room nights.
 - Smart Meetings 3-day Summit in San Diego, CA, Aug. 8-10. There were education sessions and appointments with meeting planners. We received three potential leads totaling 500 room nights.
 - Connect Marketplace in Tampa, FL, Aug. 30-Sept. 2. The three-day event comprised over 80 appointments with qualified buyers. The markets included were Associations, Sports, and Corporate. We received 10 RFPs for future years.
- We have a lot more travel coming in the next few months, and we always welcome hotel partners to attend the shows and conventions with us.
- Katherine asked what IMEX was. Anthony answered that it is one of the largest shows that connects suppliers and meeting planners. Brooke mentioned that we usually co-op with ASM or the State of Texas and is a strong meetings convention. The TX footprint includes about 10 destinations and we have been part of the booth for the past years.
- **Venue and Event Management: Bryan Crowe**
- The vaccination center has moved to the old Chamber of Commerce offices, and this happened on Monday, Aug. 23. This has allowed us to get the venue ready for upcoming events that will be hosted inside the Convention Center.
- We hosted an event for Viva Auto Group on Friday, August 20 at the Plaza Theatre and Convention Center Plaza with an attendance of 388. This event was supposed to occur at McKelligon Canyon but due to the conditions of the canyon it was moved.
- The Michelob Ultra Tour was also relocated from McKelligon Canyon to Arts Festival Plaza. This was a private event for local influencers and bloggers with a small concert.
- We hosted our first event on Friday, Aug. 27 with the new mask mandate inside the Plaza Theatre. The event was an almost sold-out show, and we had no issues from patrons. We are requiring masks in all our facilities since they are city owned.
- **El Paso Water Parks: Bryan Crowe**
- We have completed the final round of the unannounced Ellis and Associates Audits. The audit focuses on three sections. All the parks received Meets or Exceeds which is great given the amount of time we were given to open these parks. Camp Cohen is doing very well and, in the running, to be named one of the top water parks in the world for park safety.
- We had an adjusted schedule for the month of August with one park operating each day of the week and all four parks operating Fridays 4-8pm, Saturdays and Sundays 11am-6pm. Beginning in September all four parks will only operate on Saturdays and Sundays 11am-6pm and the last day of operation will be on Sunday, September 26.
- Katherine asked what the attendance was for the water parks. Bryan answered that the average weekend attendance is 300-400 per park. Weekday attendance dropped once school started. In the off season we will evaluate scheduling and hours of operation. We will also have a longer season next year with opening earlier than Memorial Day Weekend and all four facilities will open at the same time.

***Adjourn 4:31 pm**

***The next meeting will be on Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 4:00 PM via Zoom.**