City of Sandy Springs, Georgia
Hospitality Board Minutes

Regular Meeting
May 29, 2025
8:00 A.M.

(City Hall) 3rd Floor
Meeting Room A

Member(s) Present: Mayor Rusty Paul, Chairman
Tom Mahaffey, Vice Chairman
Pam Rosenthal, Secretary/Treasurer
Eugene Jordan, Board Member
Ann Delmas, Board Member

Staff Present: Adam Berrios, Executive Director-Visit Sandy Springs
Samantha Marks, Director of Marketing & Communications-Visit Sandy Springs
Mitchell Gunn, Content & Communication Manager-Visit Sandy Springs
Ericka Goggins, Office Manager-Visit Sandy Springs
Toni Carlisle, CFO-City of Sandy Springs
Chris Burnett-Director of Economic Development
Bill Haggett-Executive Director of Performing Arts Center
Caroline Galvin-Executive Project Manager

Others Present: Deveney Whitley, General Manager, WaterWalk Atlanta-Perimeter Center Extended Stay Suites

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 A.M. by Chairman Paul.

Chairman Paul asked for a motion to approve the May 29, 2025, Hospitality Board meeting agenda. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Mahaffey and seconded by Mr. Jordan. The meeting agenda was unanimously approved by Board members present.

Chairman Paul asked for a motion to approve the April 17, 2025, Hospitality Board meeting minutes. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Mahaffey and seconded by Mr. Jordan. The meeting agenda was unanimously approved by the Board members present.

I. **Finance**
Toni Carlisle

Financials were presented for March 2025 and April 2025 highlighting the bank balance and the Georgia Fund Investment interest rate. Details were released about operational expenditures, including professional services and technical services modifications.

Ms. Carlise presented the proposed budget for FY 2026 which included a 5% cost of living adjustment as well as budgets for salaries and benefits.

Highlighted financial reports were included in the board packets.

Chaiman Paul asked for a motion to approve the FY 2026 hospitality budget. A motion to approve was made by Ms. Rosenthal and seconded by Ms. Delmas. The FY 2026 budget was unanimously approved by Board members present.

II. **Sandy Springs Hospitality & Tourism Reports**
Adam Berrios

Executive Report

Mr. Berrios shared that the first draft of the business plan had been shared with Chairman Paul and would be finalized by the beginning of the next fiscal year-July 1, 2025. In addition, Visit Sandy Springs would begin interviews for the Database & Website Manager position.

Mr. Berrios stated that the Destination Services Manager position had been approved and posted with Human Resources. Ms. Rosenthal requested the job posting be shared with the board.

Mr. Berrios announced a creative brief with a new website vendor, Tempest, would be taking place. The tour would allow the vendor to immerse themselves in our destination to redevelop and optimize our website.

It was shared that Samantha Marks celebrated 10 years with Visit Sandy Springs. In addition, Craig Hurlbut would be retiring from Visit Sandy Springs at the end of the fiscal year.

The STR report updates and metrics were shared with the Board members.

Mr. Whitley, GM for Waterwalk Atlanta-Perimeter Center Extended Stay Suites stated that his hotel lost significant projected revenue due to federal job cuts.

Ms. Rosenthal stated that she was excited about the trajectory of the organization. In addition, she encouraged Visit Sandy Springs to leverage the board as a resource for guidance and brainstorming opportunities.

III. Marketing and Communications
Samantha Marks

Ms. Marks announced that Visit Sandy Springs would be transitioning from Simpleview to Tempest to for both customer relationship management (CRM) software and website development services. She stated Tempest will help to redevelop the front and back end of the website.

Mr. Berrios discussed the importance of migrating CRM vendors to maximize the organization's value.

Carvertise initiatives were shown via sizzle reel while Ms. Marks also highlighted the brand activation would also be taking place during the FIFA Club World Cup games taking place in Atlanta in the coming weeks.

Ms. Marks also discussed the fact Visit Sandy Springs was engaging with Access Atlanta to highlight Restaurant Row.

Ms. Marks also announced that a top accessible travel influencer, Cory Lee, was coming into market to highlight Sandy Springs's accessible travel assets.

Mr. Whitley suggested that Visit Sandy Springs engage the hotel community to create a fun run/walk concept.

IV. Social Media
Mitchell Gunn

Mr. Gunn showcased a Sandy Springs March Madness Instagram Post regarding – highlighting 16 Iconic locations in Sandy Springs as 1500 votes were cast.
A Lantern Parade reel was shown with our new camera equipment.

V. Sales
Myriam Hysa

Mr. Berrios spoke on behalf of Ms. Hysa, who was absent due to her attendance at a conference.

Mr. Berrios discussed Visit Sandy Springs attendance at the Georgia Association of Convention and Visitor Bureau's Day at the Capitol. Mr. Berrios mentioned the impact of tourism being valued at over $5 billion dollars while employing more than 400k people in the state of Georgia. It was held at the Georgia state capital with legislators and representatives.

Mr. Berrios also discussed a recent media visit with a journalist from USA Today highlighting Morgan Overlook Falls Park and its accessible recreation programming. Mr. Berrios stated the article was to be published in the September 2025 issue.

Mr. Berrios also discussed the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau Annual Meeting that he and Ms. Hysa attended.

Discussion

Mr. Mahaffey suggested live cameras being installed to showcase local events in the City of Sandy Springs to drive visitors. Chairman Paul discussed looking into the effort.

Mr. Berrios discussed the collective efforts of Visit Sandy Springs and the Sandy Springs Performing Arts Center to develop relationships with the Atlanta Consular Corps. Mr. Berrios stated that a quarterly meeting hosted in Sandy Springs was being pitched to the Atlanta Consular Corps.

Chairman Paul discussed his desire to increase international visitation to Sandy Springs, and agreed relationships with consulates were key.

Ms. Rosenthal asked about Visit Sandy Springs's efforts on targeting visitors coming into the area for the MLB All-Star Game.

Mr. Whitley suggested Visit Sandy Springs collaborate further with hotel properties to drive business through targeted marketing efforts.

Chairman Paul asked for a motion to adjourn the Board Meeting. Mr. Jordan made the motion to adjourn the meeting, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Delmas. The motion was passed unanimously. Chairman Paul adjourned the Board Meeting at 9:23 AM.

Next Meeting: July 31, 2025

Faithfully submitted:

Chairman Russell K. Paul

ATTEST:

Adam Berrios, Executive Director-Visit Sandy Springs