City of Sandy Springs, Georgia
Hospitality Board Minutes

Regular Meeting
Thursday July 31, 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
John Visconti, Board Member
Ann Delmas, Board Member
Eugene Jordan, Board Member
Amanda Singer, Board Member
Deveney Whitley, Board Member
Jackie Merkel, 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
Myriam Hysa, Director of Sales-Visit Sandy Springs
Cierra Duval, Database and Website Manager
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: Sean Appel, Sales Coordinator, Home 2 Suites-Elizabeth Alexander, Regional Director of Sales, Home 2 Suites-Diamond Rhodes, Director of Sales, Homewood Suites-Brice Pierre, Sales Manager, Hampton Inn - Trina Kinjo Hampton/Fairfield, Area Director of Sales

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

Chairman Paul asked for a motion to approve the July 31, 2025 Hospitality Board Meeting agenda. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Mahaffey and seconded by Ms. Delmas. The meeting agenda was unanimously approved by Board members present.

Chairman Paul asked for a motion to approve the May 31, 2025, Hospitality Board Meeting minutes. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Ms. Delmas and seconded by Mr. Jordan. The meeting agenda was unanimously approved by the board members present.

The board and Visit Sandy Springs employees introduced themselves and welcomed the newest board members, Mr. Deveney Whitley and Jackie Merkel.

I. Finance
Toni Carlisle

Financials were presented for May 2025 and June 2025. This included a primary review of June's 2025 revenues and expenses.

Chairman Paul detailed the portfolio of hotels and short-term rentals that the city collects hotel/motel taxes from.

Mr. Whitley inquired about the city's process for tracking and enforcing payments of the Hotel/Motel tax, while noting there is constant shift in ownership and management within the hotel community.

Ms. Carlisle explained the city's procedure for holding the hotel community accountable for remitting tax payments, while noting that the Finance Department works closely with Visit Sandy Springs and the Community Development Department to acquire new ownership information. Chairman Paul confirmed the city's commitment to monitoring tax remittance from the hotels.

This concluded Ms. Carlisle financial presentation.

II. Sandy Springs Hospitality & Tourism Reports
Adam Berrios

Executive Report

Mr. Berrios welcomed the new board members and thanked the hotels for attending the board meeting.

Mr. Berrios presented the new Visit Sandy Springs 2026 Fiscal Yr Business Plan. He noted the time commitment and effort level from the Visit Sandy Springs team to create the plan. He encouraged the board to review the document and present any questions back to the staff.

He noted objectives, strategies and tactics for each core focus within the plan, while discussing the importance of the organization establishing measurable objectives and KPIs. Mr. Berrios also stated that Visit Sandy Springs was committed to becoming a more data-driven decision-making organization.

Mr. Berrios provided copies of the business plan to attendees and discussed the plan for distribution within the community.

Mr. Berrios also reported on the organization's plan to track and measure progress of the plan and discussed future reporting mechanisms.

Chairman Paul congratulated the team on their work in completing the business plan. In addition, Chairman Paul suggested that business plans can be distributed during City Green and community events.

Mr. Berrios discussed the impact of artificial intelligence on website traffic while detailing how imperative it is to write and develop future content for artificial intelligence agents.

Mr. Whitley agreed that changing metrics and evolving technology do in fact impact web traffic, which in turn can affect revenue.

Mr. Berrios introduced Cierra Duval as the new Website and Database Manager to Visit Sandy Springs.

Mr. Berrios presented the STR reports.

Mr. Visconti noted that this quarter is beginning to stabilize while noting that the Westin had greatly benefited from large-scale events in Atlanta.

Marketing and Communications
Samantha Marks

Ms. Marks highlighted the organization's latest accessible travel efforts. She discussed the collaboration with Cory Lee, an accessible travel influencer, and detailed his trip to Sandy Springs. Ms. Marks also discussed the social media performance metrics from the visit, which exceeded 287,000 views.

She noted the board report showed that Visit Sandy Springs continues to work with Ravenel for digital media placements. In addition, she highlighted public relations efforts from TKPR.

Ms. Marks announced that an RFP had been distributed for the organization to partner with a full-service agency.

Social Media
Mitchell Gunn

Mr. Gunn noted that he designed the business plan and detailed his creative strategy.

Mr. Gunn highlighted Visit Sandy Springs' continuing effort to align with the business plan by implementing a comprehensive content calendar.

Mr. Visconti thanked Mr. Gunn for his lifestyle photos which appeal to customers.

Mr. Gunn extended an invitation to the hotels to reach out to him for any social media content promotion.

Sales
Myriam Hysa

Ms. Hysa noted she attended the Georgia Society of Association Executive (GSAE) Annual Meeting in Savannah with over 300 attendees.

Ms. Hysa discussed the partnership between the Sandy Springs Performing Arts Center and Visit Sandy Springs for the Georgia Business Travel Association (GBTA).

Mrs. Hysa presented Visit Sandy Springs historical sales data. She detailed the number of leads and room nights booked since 2007. She also discussed market segmentation and explained what insights the data gave the organization and how that would fit within the new business plan.

III. **Discussion**

Ms. Merkel inquired how Visit Sandy Springs could better support local city events and possibly help to create new ones.

Mr. Whitely commended the Visit Sandy Springs team for their initiative and noted the visible transformation of the organization.

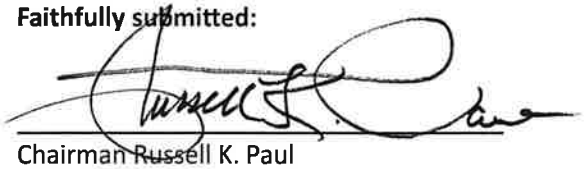
Chairman Paul highlighted how the City of Sandy Springs is preparing for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. He discussed how Visit Sandy Springs had coordinated a meeting with the Atlanta Consular Corps in September to familiarize them with what Sandy Springs has to offer.

Mr. Berrios noted that Visit Sandy Springs is creating a website landing page to promote the World Cup and any local events surrounding the tournament.

Chairman Paul asked for a motion to adjourn the board meeting. Mr. Mahaffey made the motion to adjourn the meeting, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Jordan. The motion was passed unanimously. Chairman Paul adjourned the board meeting at 9:47 AM.

Next Meeting: October 9, 2025

Faithfully submitted:



Chairman Russell K. Paul

ATTEST:



Adam Berrios, Executive Director-Visit Sandy Springs