

**City of Sandy Springs, Georgia  
Hospitality Board  
Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
Thursday, December 3, 2020  
8:00 am**

**Live via Zoom Webinar**

**Members Present:** Mayor Rusty Paul, Chairman  
Tom Mahaffey, Vice Chairman  
Bruce Alterman, Secretary/Treasurer  
Eugene Jordan, Board Member  
John Visconti, Board Member  
Pam Rosenthal, Board Member

**Staff Present:** Jennifer Cruce, Executive Director-Visit Sandy Springs  
Samantha Marks, Marketing & Social Media Manager- Visit Sandy Springs  
Cynthia Adams, Office and Welcome Center Manager - Visit Sandy Springs  
Peyton Callanan-Marketing Coordinator-Visit Sandy Springs  
Lia Jones-Deputy City Clerk, (City of Sandy Springs)  
Toni Jo Howard-Finance Director, (City of Sandy Springs)  
Toni Carlisle, Assistant Finance Director, (City of Sandy Springs)  
Andrea Worthy-Economic Development Director, (City of Sandy Springs)  
Sharon Kraun- Communications Director, (City of Sandy Springs)  
Raquel Gonzalez-City Clerk, (City of Sandy Springs)  
Dan Lee-Attorney for Visit Sandy Springs

**Others Present:** Tracy Weatherly, Sales Executive, Courtyard Atlanta Perimeter Center  
Bob Pepalis, reporter, Sandy Springs Reporter newspaper  
David Green, The Select

The Meeting was called to order at 8:06 AM by Mayor Paul.

Mayor Paul asked for a motion to approve the September 24, 2020 Hospitality Board meeting minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Visconti and seconded by Mr. Jordan. The Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved by Board members present.

**I. Financials** **Toni Carlisle**

Financials were presented for September and October 2020. The financial highlights reports for September and October 2020 were emailed to all board members prior to the meeting.

**Presentation/Approval of 2021 Budget Amendment** **Toni Carlisle**

Ms. Carlisle presented a proposed budget amendment to accept the \$80,000 allocation of COVID-related funding for a safe travels advertising campaign from the City of Sandy Springs as well as budget reductions in several expenditure categories including a 10% reduction in salaries and related benefits. Mayor Paul stated that the most-impacted industry is travel and that most hotels are making similar adjustments. He also stated that the most valuable asset is human capital and that the financial impact on the Visit Sandy Springs staff as the result of the proposed reductions would be repaired as soon as revenue permits. Mr. Alterman proposed that the 10% reduction for the staff be postponed for 6 months. Mr. Visconti stated that most hotels will be running at 40-50% next year and 60-70% in 2022 and the hotels will not be back to 2019 occupancy and ADR levels until 2023. Mr. Mahaffey stated that the business market will not be back until late summer of 2021 and that business travel is cut by 50% and won't be back next year. Mr. Alterman asked Ms. Cruce to take another look at more reductions in the budget other than salaries and related benefits. Mr. Alterman made the motion to move the \$52,000 back to the budget and approve the remaining budget cuts and revisit the salary reduction proposal at the next board meeting (January 28, 2020). The motion was seconded by Mr. Jordan. The motion was unanimously approved by Board members present.

**II. Sandy Springs H&T Reports** **Jennifer Cruce**

**Smith Travel Report**

Cruce reported on Smith Travel Report weekly statistics for September and October 2020 including Occupancy, ADR, and RevPar.

**Marketing and Public Relations**

Marks presented the print and digital ads for September and October 2020 and a summary of Partnership Initiatives during that period, including the soft roll out of the Topside Tap Trail with Visit Roswell and Alpharetta CVB and the "Let's Do Lunch" campaign launched alongside of Dunwoody's City initiative of the same name. Cruce shared some research done by Advance Travel & Tourism which

showed the correlation between the DMO's digital advertising efforts and occupancy data.

### **Social Media**

Callanan presented the social media reports for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and blog content for September and October 2020.

### **Meetings, Projects, and Communications**

Cruce reported on the meetings attended by the staff including Performing Arts Center "Create Sandy Springs" Marketing (Cruce, Marks weekly), Southeast Tourism Society DMO executive check ins, GACVB Peer Check In meetings (Sales, Marketing), and GACVB Board and CEO member check-in meetings, Georgia Tourism Summit (all staff). She also provided information concerning working with Advance Travel & Tourism to develop the CARES Act funding proposal for a remarketing campaign that was eventually approved by City Council as an allocation of \$80K to the DMO. She described communications efforts of the DMO, which included bi-weekly newsletters to hotels and the restarted monthly subscriber newsletter.

## **III.**

### **Discussion**

Mayor Paul stated that the City had developed an innovative solution for the community to view Sparkle Sandy Springs via a drive-through Sparkle Parade Sunday, December 6, 2020 from 6pm until 8pm. Mayor Paul stated that assuming that a COVID vaccine would be approved next week, vaccinations would start early next year and there could follow a relaunch of City Springs concerts and performances, and that an announcement is anticipated in the spring.

David Green of The Select presented information about the Allurium application his brother developed for tracking employee health and that they are using at The Select. Mayor Paul stated that he should work with Ms. Cruce and Mr. Visconti to get more information and see if it would be helpful for others in the hospitality community.

Mayor Paul asked for a Motion to adjourn the Board Meeting. Mr. Mahaffey made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Alterman seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously. Mayor Paul adjourned the Board Meeting at 9:25 A.M.

Next meeting January 28, 2020 at 8 AM.

Faithfully submitted:

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Mayor Russell K. Paul, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Jennifer Cruce, Executive Director – Hospitality and Tourism