

**City of Sandy Springs, Georgia
Hospitality & Tourism Board
Minutes
Regular Meeting
Thursday, May 21, 2020
8:00 am**

Video Meeting via Zoom

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

Staff Present: Jennifer Cruce, Executive Director-Visit Sandy Springs
Samantha Marks, Marketing & Social Media Manager- Visit Sandy Springs
Cynthia Adams, Welcome Center Manager - Visit Sandy Springs
Peyton Callanan, Marketing Coordinator-Visit Sandy Springs
Toni Carlisle-Assistant Finance Director (City of SS)
Karen Ellis-Finance Director (City of SS)
Caroline Davis-Economic Development Specialist (City of SS)
Sharon Kraun, Communications Director (City of SS)
Dan Lee, Attorney for Visit Sandy Springs
Raquel Gonzalez, City Clerk / Meeting Administrator

The Meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM by Bruce Alterman. Board Chairman Mayor Rusty Paul was unable to attend. City Clerk Raquel Gonzalez served as Administrator for the Zoom meeting.

Bruce Alterman asked for a Motion to approve the February 27, 2020 Hospitality Board Meeting Minutes. Tom Mahaffey made the motion to approve the Minutes.

I. Financials

Toni Carlisle

Financials were presented by Toni Carlisle. She reported that the balance sheet was still as strong as the last meeting. All expenses are trending under the 75 percentile. The February, March, and April 2020 Financial Highlights reported were included in the board packets.

**Presentation and Approval of
Proposed FY 2021 Budget**

Karen Ellis

Ellis reported that the Hospitality revenue budget is a conservative estimate for the current situation with COVID 19. Hotel/Motel is expected be reduced due to low hotel occupancy and ADR. . Hospitality reduced the budget by a cutting programs or making reductions in staff, advertising, professional services, technical service contracts, travel and advertising. Alterman called for a vote on the budget. The budget was approved unanimously by the board members present.

**II. Visit Sandy Springs Reports
Marketing and Public Relations**

Jennifer Cruce

Cruce presented the VSS COVID-19 Overview/Timeline. Marks presented the 2020 Objectives for digital advertising and the digital advertising statistics. Marks stated that the Travel Industry website traffic for the end of March showed the worst month for all DMO website traffic in the recorded history of the industry. The restrictions and uncertainties of the Coronavirus pandemic negatively impacted sessions from all channels. Restaurant/Community outreach was started with the launching of the restaurant partner portal that allowed the restaurants to update their own COVID-19 business information. An e-newsletter was distributed to let the restaurants know about the partner portal. The restaurants were contacted by telephone weekly for additional information. Efforts were made to get earned media through public relations as paid advertising had been suspended to save costs. This included distributing press releases about upcoming events and interviews of “Hometown Heroes” with regard to the restaurant efforts Callanan reported on Social Media, including several highly engaged posts from Instagram, Twitter and bloggers.

Smith Travel Report

February and March 2020 reports included Occupancy, ADR, and RevPar. Reports were included in board packets. Cruce presented the AHLA COVID-19 statistics.

Meetings and Events Attended

Cruce reported on the meetings and events attended including Performing Arts Center Marketing, Wayfinding Project, Destinations International DMO CEO Update Webinars, STR update webinars, GACVB Peer Check In meetings, and GACVB Board and CEO member check-in meetings. In April Cruce and the

sales director began a series of calls with Hotels to discuss alignment in recovery.

Sales

Cruce presented the Sales Activity for March and April which included e-mail, phone calls or in-person meetings. Sales activities included attendance at Travel South Showcase in Baton Rouge, La.

III. Discussion

Bruce Alterman complimented the Hospitality team for the job well done in such a fluid situation. All the other board members concurred.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 AM

Next meeting July 23, 2020 at 8 AM.

Faithfully submitted:

Mayor Russell K. Paul, Chairman

ATTEST:

Jennifer Cruce, Executive Director – Hospitality and Tourism