

County of Tarrant
City of Grapevine
State of Texas

MINUTES

The Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors met in Regular Session on Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. at the Stephen W. Stinson Boardroom of the Grapevine Convention and Visitors Bureau, 636 S. Main Street, Grapevine, Texas with the following persons in attendance:

Joe Szymaszek	Chairman
Dan Weinberger	Board Member
Debi Meek	Board Member
Chuck Pacioni	Board Member
Iain Scouller	Board Member
Cynthia Blankenship	Board Member
Matthew Brink	Board Member

Constituting a quorum, with the following liaisons and staff members present:

Paul W. McCallum	Executive Director
Leigh Lyons	Managing Director of Sales, Marketing & Communications
Becky Roberson	Assistant to the Executive Director
Leon Leal	Council Liaison

Absent: Kelly Schwartz, Mark Terpening and Chuck Pacioni.

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chairman, Joe Szymaszek, called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

NEW EMPLOYEE INTRODUCTION

Executive Director, Paul W. McCallum, welcomed Dan Fisher, Senior Maintenance Technician and Shelley Wimberly, Controller.

OATH OF OFFICE

Oath of Office was administered to incoming Board Member, Matthew Brink by Becky Roberson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Board Chairman Szymaszek called for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 18, 2024 meeting. With a motion from Mike Oakley and seconded by Debi Meek, the minutes from the previous meeting were approved by a vote of 8-0.

SALES AND MARKETING REPORT

Managing Director of Sales, Marketing & Communications, Leigh Lyons, shared that the January STR report shows that year over year 2024 January, occupancy was up 3.8% from 2023. The average daily rate was up to \$195.09, which is up \$2.32 over January 2023. She also shared that the American Baseball Coaches Association which filled 9,349 rooms in Grapevine and utilized 13 Grapevine hotels took place in early January, which is often a challenging time to fill.

She then reported on the many trade shows and conferences that staff attended in January. National Sales Manager, Ellie George, attended the Religious Conference Managers Association January 9-11 in San Antonio. Grapevine was part of the Team Texas booth which also included Abilene, Beaumont, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, Frisco, Grapevine, Irving, Laredo, Lubbock, Plano and South Padre Island. 175 planners stopped in the Team Texas booth with 100 of those showing interest in Grapevine. She also hosted a client dinner which focused on faith-based groups, non-profits, U.S. Armed Forces, trade associations and private sector groups and came away with 3 requests for proposal totally more than 8,000 room nights to source to Grapevine hotels.

National Sales Manager, Tanja Nichols, attended the Independent Planners Educational Conference January 21-23. The trade show focused on independent meeting planners and had a record attendance of 200 attendees, of which 106 are planners. The event consisted of 15 minute appointments with planners and suppliers. The show produced 3 requests for proposal with more than 425 room nights.

National Sales Manager, Codi Missimo, attended Southwest Showcase January 17-19 in Round Rock. The show had 360 attendees including both planners and suppliers. Hotel partners from Hyatt Regency DFW, Grand Hyatt DFW, Great Wolf Lodge, Hilton DFW Lakes and Grapevine Silverlake properties attended the show with Codi Missimo. The team received a total of 10 requests for proposal totaling 7,000 room nights.

Director of Leisure and International Sales, Heather Egan, attended American Bus Association Marketplace 2024 in Nashville with 3,500 attendees and 100 new tour operators at the event. Grapevine took the lead at the Texas Tourism booth at the event with Plano, Waco, Lubbock, El Paso and Houston as participants. She hosted 36 one on one appointments with many appointments focused on Christmas tour leads for 2024 and 2025.

Mrs. Egan also attended the Brand USA Mexico Sales Mission January 29 – February 2 with multiple appointments and her focus to specifically target shopping tours and sports travel tours. While in Mexico City, Mrs. Egan presented to 120 travel agents and while in

Guadalajara, she conducted 12 appointments and presented to a group of 100 travel agents. As a result of this mission, Grapevine was included on the Brand USA Sports Travel Fam February 17 and 18. The great work she did on the mission directly resulted in Grapevine being featured on this Fam. Additionally, it was reported that Price Travel had been in Grapevine in 2022 and reported that their Grapevine bookings were up 50% in 2023.

Director of Destination Services, David Taylor, attended the Event Services Professionals Association Annual Conference January 18-21 with 400 industry professionals in attendance. This conference provided an opportunity for professional development. He learned what other destinations are doing to meet visitor needs and learned how to evaluate current trends, potential future roadblocks and opportunities. He also gained valuable knowledge about staffing challenges including planning for longevity and turnover. This was great information and could be applied across the board and not just for staffing related to Destination Services.

Director McCallum reported on the Texas Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus Mid-Winter Conference in Abilene on January 23 and 24. The conference marketing track had a special focus on AI. Some of the key takeaways are purposeful use of AI can save time and create efficiencies. There are more than 40 free AI apps and tools. The more information you feed into your AI request, the more effectively AI will work for you. AI can be used to edit video, scripts, you tube shorts. You can use AI to clone your voice and have it read a script for you, even in another language.

Moving on to the media and marketing report, Mrs. Lyons reported that a local news segment highlighting Giddens Gallery aired on CBS 11 as part of a Black History Month storyline. The CVB Director of Communications, Elizabeth Schrack and her team worked to secure the segment. The story was also pitched to Fort Worth Star Telegram and subsequently picked up. It was then picked up by Yahoo which resulted in a far greater reach as tens of millions look for news on Yahoo, daily.

Over the month of January, there were 19 Facebook posts with 323,000 impressions and 67 Instagram posts, including stories or reshared content with 98,000 impressions. In addition, multiple ads, including ads in Classic Trains and the MPI Digital Leaderboard ran in January.

ONGOING BUSINESS

Executive Director, Paul W. McCallum, reported that the roof for the Cotton Belt Depot had been replaced in recent weeks. He expressed his approval and stated that as the last roof had lasted for more than thirty years, that the anticipated life of this new roof was a minimum of thirty years. He went on to share that the significance of the Cotton Belt Depot and the district was felt far and wide by both residents and visitors alike.

NEW BUSINESS

Director McCallum spoke to the numerous festival volunteers that give of their time and talents not only for the benefit of the festival guests but to also raise funds for historic preservation projects. He expressed that one of the most important structures of Grapevine history was up

for sale for \$200,000. The Bushong cabin, which is believed to have been built in 1858 by one of the area's early settlers, George Bushong was occupied until recent years. In 2017, the homestead was reported to have been the oldest log cabin still occupied in Tarrant County. The log cabin was the original Bushong homestead and bore witness to the early growth of Grapevine. Mr. Bushong arrived in Grapevine at the age of 22. He was an educated man who taught school, built a saw mill, flour mill and the first cotton gin in town. He then became the president of the Grapevine National Bank, a position he held until his death. The Bushong family raised 13 children in the cabin with 8 being born in the one room home. Director McCallum reported that the opportunity to not only save this historic structure but preserve it for future generations was years in the making. If the use of festival funds to purchase this historic homestead was approved, the plan was to relocate it to Heritage Park, within the Grapevine Botanical Garden and become a place for meetings and events, as well as an educational tool. Council liaison, Leon Leal, stated his support of the project and praised Director McCallum's efforts to preserve the historic cabin.

Chairman Szymaszek called for a motion to fund the purchase of the historic Bushong log cabin.

Motion: Cindy Blankenship

Second: Iain Scouller

Approved 7-0

Mike Oakley left the meeting at 8:41 a.m., prior to the vote.

Director McCallum then spoke to the significance of the public art pieces of Grapevine. Many of the public art pieces were made possible by generous donations, festival surplus, and the Public Art Fund. These additions of public art enhance Main Street and beyond. A recent public art piece, Choppin' Cotton resides at Nash Farm and stands as a reminder of Grapevine's agricultural history and serves as an educational teaching tool. Peace Circle, the largest piece of public art, pays homage to the ten American Indian chiefs/captains of the Grapevine Prairie and the Republic of Texas President, Sam Houston at the Peace Circle meeting. This piece is an interpretation of the spirit of friendship, peace, hope and trust. The magnificent installation sits prominently at the corner of S. Main Street and Dallas Road in Peace Plaza. It serves as a reminder of the past and the hope for the future. The Sidewalk Judge is a lifelike tribute to a generation of men who would spend their afternoons at the center of town offering advice to those passing by, whether asked for or not. With funding from surpluses and revenue of previous festivals, a new installation with an estimated price of \$90,000, would pay tribute to Grapevine's history was recommended.

Chairman Szymaszek called for a motion to fund the public art project.

Motion: Cindy Blankenship

Second: Iain Scouller

Approved 7-0

Mike Oakley left the meeting at 8:41 a.m., prior to the vote.

Director McCallum then shared that preparation for the 40th Annual Main Street Fest was well underway. Seth and Wendy Nelson are the co-chairs for the festival. He shared that the Festival and Events Team had designed a streamlined organization chart that had recently been presented to the co-chairs and vice chairs and would be unveiled at the Steering Committee meeting later that evening. He praised the team's efforts to bring greater structure and purpose to each role, as the new program allows for directed staff guidance and leadership development within the levels of the steering committee volunteers. He went on to speak of the various activations with Main Street Fest, including a new activation centered around family fun and golf.

Director McCallum then shared that the Southwest Bluegrass Club, which came about as a result of the Grapevine Opry, was petitioning the board for a grant-in-aid in the amount of \$25,000. Later this year, the Southwest Bluegrass Club will celebrate its 50th anniversary. The club was planning a weekend long celebration on October 24 -26 that would ideally bring in multiple bluegrass musicians and groups from throughout the state. The plan is for musicians to be spread between Peace Plaza, Liberty Park, Main Street Gazebo, Cotton Belt Depot District and possibly Settlement to City Museums. Last year, a grant-in-aid in the amount of \$2,000 was awarded to the group and they used the funds for technical support, supplies and marketing. The club reported that the shows that were played at the Settlement to City Museum brought in both local and out of town guests, some of whom stayed, shopped and dined along Main Street with some staying overnight. The funds requested this year would primarily go towards sound, lighting, and to pay the musicians. The club intends to market Grape Jam 2024 as a family fun event and encourage guests to stay throughout the weekend. Director McCallum reported that CVB staff would be available that weekend to support the group and had agreed to assist with both marketing the event and with physical preparation. After much discussion by the board, it was decided that the event could indeed bring in guests and does fulfill the requirement of promoting the arts.

Chairman Szymaszek called for a motion to fund the grant-in-aid request in the amount of \$10,000 to support the Southwest Bluegrass Club.

Motion: Cindy Blankenship

Second: Dan Weinberger

Approved 7-0

Mike Oakley left the meeting at 8:41 a.m., prior to the vote.

HOTELS/ATTRACTIONS/ACTIVITIES

Mrs. Lyons shared that Cirque Italia will come to Grapevine Mills March 21-24. Cirque Italia will present its Aquatic Spectacular, a unique show under a tent, and will feature a custom designed water stage that travels from city to city. The stage holds 35,000 gallons of water that performers dazzle while thrilling the audience with every move.

Brazilian born celebrity chef Carla Pellegrino has opened Teatro Bistro and Cocktail Lounge. The restaurant serves new American cuisine with a European twist. Pellegrino, who will run the kitchen, has appeared in Bravo's Top Chef and Food Network's Beat Bobby Flay. She has had several restaurants in Las Vegas. Marlon Tapanes is her business partner. He is a native of Cuba, moved to Las Vegas in 1996. He entered the hospitality industry, which led to a move to San Antonio, then to the Gaylord Texan in Grapevine in 2011 and then a stop in Mexico. Teatro opened on Monday, February 19.

Dan Weinberger was congratulated for receiving the Business Hall of Fame at the recent Chamber's Community Awards event. Members of the Grapevine Chamber of Commerce Business Hall of Fame are longtime area businesses that have made outstanding contributions, not only to the Grapevine Chamber but to the community as well.

Lastly, Meow Wolf has recently launched a new program for Grapevine hotel guests and guests at the Vineyards Campground to receive a 20% discount on admission tickets. Meow Wolf will be producing rack cards and will be delivering to the hotels as well as the Vineyard Campgrounds soon.

ADJOURNMENT

Board Chairman Szymaszek called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 a.m.

Motion: Dan Weinberger

Second: Debi Meek

Approved 6-0

Matthew Brink left the meeting at 9:20 a.m. prior to the adjournment.

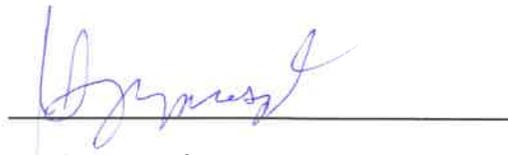
ATTEST:



Becky Roberson

Executive Assistant

APPROVED:



Joe Szymaszek

Chairman