

Louisville Tourism Commissioners July 2021 Meeting

July 22, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Louisville Tourism, 401 West Main Street, Suite 2300, Louisville, Kentucky.

Commissioners Present:

Sarah Robbins, Chair
David Greene, Vice Chair
Chris Poynter
David Beck
Scott Shoenberger
Laura Douglas
Ryan Bridgeman
Guy Genoud

CVB STAFF & GUESTS

Cleo Battle, Doug Bennett, Chris Kipper, Stacey Yates, Nicole Twigg, Zack Davis, Mike Shull, Althea Jackson, and recording secretary, Ange McKinney.

CHAIR WELCOME AND REPORT

Chair Sarah Robbins called to order the meeting of the Louisville Tourism Commissioners at 3:01 p.m. **Chair Robbins** announced a quorum was present. Upon asking for a motion to accept the May 27, 2021, minutes, **Chris Poynter** made the motion; **David Beck** seconded. **Motion carried.**

Chair Robbins directed the Commissioners to the back of the Board Book for the assignments of the Commission committees.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

David Greene, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported on the Finance Committee meeting, as follows:

TID INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

Karen Williams has been engaged to assist in the navigation of the TID process over the next 12 months. Since funds for this position have been budgeted, there was no action needed.

CULTURAL TOURISM SMALL BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM

Louisville Tourism has implemented the Cultural Tourism Small Business Grant Program in an effort to grow diversity and small business participation. **Mr. Green** discussed its goals, expectations, as well as the cost. Since funds for this program have been budgeted, there was no action needed.

Louisville Tourism Commissioners July 2021 Meeting

LOUISVILLE FORWARD MOU

Louisville Tourism has been asked to continue the current partnership with Louisville Forward with respect to acting as custodial agent for the administrative processing of business development expenses. Metro Council has approved this partnership. The County Attorney will sign the MOU along with Louisville Tourism and Louisville Forward. There being no budgetary impact, no action needed.

BANK ACCOUNT SIGNATURES

Chris Kipper discussed the need to update Louisville Tourism's bank accounts to reflect Cleo Battle, Doug Bennett, and Chris Kipper as representatives permitted to transact, open accounts, close accounts, change signers, et cetera. **Scott Shoenberger** made a motion to update the bank accounts to reflect Cleo Battle, Doug Bennett, and Chris Kipper as authorized representatives of Louisville Tourism. **Laura Douglas** seconded. Motion carried.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Cleo Battle pointed the Commission to the report in the Board Book, highlighting the legislative meetings he will be having with local and state officials over the next month or so. Thus far, there are about 30 meetings scheduled. He will keep the Commission informed of those meetings. **Mr. Battle** reminded everyone of the Destination Marketing Forum: Back on Track which will take place Tuesday, August 3, 2021, at the Galt House. Tori Emerson Barnes of U.S. Travel will provide insights about U.S. travel and what is happening in the country.

EXECUTIVE VP REPORT

Cleo Battle reported that occupancy and average daily reports in the Board Book represent July 4-10. This was a good week. Weekday occupancy was in the 70s and weekend occupancy in the 80s. This was a strong week of rates compared to the past few.

Mr. Battle called the Commission's attention to the Summer Quintessential Black Experience piece in the Board Book. This idea emanated from the Black Tourism Advisory Council, and the experiences will be on our website.

FINANCE REPORT

Chris Kipper reported on April and May. There was an improvement in transient tax for both months coming in at over \$1.1 million. **Mr. Kipper** indicated that have not seen monthly transient tax over \$1 million since February 2020. Transient Room Tax is still about 50 percent below the prior fiscal year through May, but that continues to improve. Mr. Kipper reported positive financial results in April and May.

Mr. Kipper pointed out that Louisville Tourism paid \$390,000 of the \$430,000 for KICC capital improvements. The remainder is expected to be paid in the current fiscal year.

Louisville Tourism Commissioners July 2021 Meeting

With respect to the PPP loan, **Mr. Kipper** reported that the process for application for forgiveness has begun. MCM is optimistic. By the end of the month, the PPP2 funds should be spent down. At that point, application for forgiveness will be made.

Regarding the Debt Service Fund, April revenues were sufficient to cover the monthly debt service requirement. **Mr. Kipper** is hopeful that we will begin to add back to the reserves soon. Principal and Interest payment of \$5.6 million was paid as scheduled.

TOURISM REPORT

Nicole Twigg reported an avalanche of leisure tourism coming back. The Visitor Center walk-in visitor traffic at Fourth and Jefferson is rising sharply from 417 in January to over 3,300 in June. The busiest day of operation since reopening last July was last Saturday, both in walk-ins and in sales. The July numbers will exceed those just experienced in June. Those numbers reported on a five-day a week operation. The Visitor Center has just expanded to six days and is looking at going back to seven days a week before September.

Ms. Twigg shared information about attraction attendance at the top 20 attractions and distilleries around Louisville. There are incredible attendance numbers right now, from 38,500 in January to 480,500 in June, over an 1,100 percent increase. Louisville Slugger Museum topped 3,000 guests in a four-hour period last Saturday, the first time since 2019. The Frazier History Museum has had two record-breaking Saturdays in a row, marking their highest attendance ever since opening. The distilleries are sold out and strongly recommending advance reservations. Michter's plans to reopen in late August.

Ms. Twigg described how we are inspiring short-term visitation. One way is through the weekly leisure e-blast that goes out to the regional feeder market database, highlighting special events and festivals taking place in the short-term, seven to ten days out, and one long-term festival event, about 30 days out. Second, blocks of leisure overnight packages are featured on gotolouisville.com. These usually feature bundled attraction tickets as well as an overnight stay. Lastly, the Tourism Department is curating resources for partners to help them manage expectations.

Ms. Twigg discussed the progress being made on Black Heritage Leisure Outreach. In late August, the Steadfast and Strong Cincinnati Black Family Reunion festival is scheduled, and 20,000 attendees are expected. Additionally, a three city promotional event series is planned with the Nomadness Travel Tribe.

DESTINATION SERVICES

Zack Davis reported 106 definite events in the next quarter, which will bring in approximately 140,000 room nights. This September looks to equal 2019, December looks better than 2019.

Louisville Tourism Commissioners July 2021 Meeting

Sports and state groups have dominated the pandemic. Moving forward, we should see more diversity in the market segment. Though sports and state groups will continue, trade business, commercial, corporate, legal government groups are getting in the mix.

A few highlights:

*14 planning visits in May and June

*Housing team has a new partnership with Lou City FC, facilitating the housing for several of their upcoming camps

*Emails, calls, housing reservations are up, in great part due to the hotel promo earlier in the year

Homelessness & Panhandling Task Force is back up and running. Metro Council members Nicole George and Markus Winkler have re-formed the working committee to discuss new initiatives.

CONVENTION SALES REPORT

Doug Bennett reported on fiscal year end numbers. Almost 200,000 room nights were taken off the books either through reduction or cancellation. We were able to save about 150,000 room nights in moving groups. Settled at 392,720, 70 percent. About 75 percent were generated in the last quarter of the fiscal year. **Mr. Bennett** reported 613 leads. Site visits are down, but planners are getting back out and setting dates.

Mr. Bennett shared with the Commission that **Mr. Battle** spoke in a general session. Louisville Tourism hosted a digital session on food and beverage trends.

Convention Sales participated in the first event to reopen in DC, MPI Potomac Chapter Evening of Stars. Kate Burger and Lisa LeCompte spoke at this event.

Mr. Bennett updated the Commission on the process of identifying the next senior vice president. The two finalists are in the city and have been toured. We should be able to set a start date a little after mid-August.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Stacey Yates reported that her department was able to host 31 journalists in market hosted visits. Hopefully, we will be get back to the 100, 130 journalists in market.

Ms. Yates pointed out **Mr. Battle** on the cover of Meetings Today. **Ms. Yates** shared an article on Louisville in Worth magazine with the final word by **Ms. Yates** herself!

Louisville Tourism Commissioners July 2021 Meeting

Ms. Yates directed the Commission to page 74 of the Board Book for marketing samples. She shared that **Mr. Battle** gave an update to the Louisville Hotel Association this week. A hotelier asked if that video could be used in their in-house marketing. **Ms. Yates** is happy to share the link to that.

One of the hot buttons in the press office right now is the continued advocacy message, making sure **Mr. Battle** is out there, **Mr. Bennett** is out there, booking some press with the new senior VP of the Convention Trades.

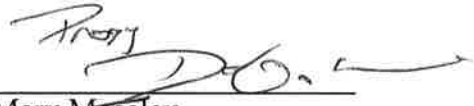
ADJOURNMENT

Chair Robbins called for a motion to adjourn. **Chris Poynter** made the motion; seconded by **David Beck**. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Recording Secretary Ange McKinney

Minutes approved by:


Chair Sarah Robbins


Secretary/Treasurer Mary Moseley


David Greene