

Louisville Tourism Commissioners May 2022 Meeting

May 26, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. hosted at Louisville Tourism, 401 West Main Street, Suite 2300, Louisville, Kentucky.

Commissioners Present:

Sarah Robbins, Chair
David Greene, Vice Chair
Chris Poynter, Treasurer/Secretary
Kate Latts
Scott Shoenberger
Ryan Bridgeman
Guy Genoud
Laura Douglas

CVB STAFF & GUESTS

Cleo Battle, Doug Bennett, Chris Kipper, Stacey Yates, Nicole Twigg, Zack Davis, Sonia Fong, Mike Shull, Althea Jackson, and recording secretary, Stephanie Skinner.

CHAIR WELCOME AND REPORT

Chair Sarah Robbins after confirmation of a quorum the May meeting was called to order at 3:01pm. Upon asking for a motion to accept the March 24, 2022, minutes as written. **Scott Shoenberger** made the motion; **Ryan Bridgeman** seconded. **Motion carried.**

Chair Robbins then directed the members to the 22/23 FY Commission Meeting Dates in the board book and called for a motion to approve the dates as presented. **Chris Poynter** made the motion. **Laura Douglas** Seconded. **Motion Carried**

Chair Robbins called on **Laura Douglas** the Chair of the Nominating Committee to report on the May 24th meeting of the Nomination Committee. **Laura** reported the committee's recommendation for Executive Officers of the Commission for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year. We are recommending Sarah Robbins as Chair, David Greene as Vice Chair and Chris Poynter as Secretary/Treasurer. **Laura Douglas** made a motion to approve their recommendations as presented. **Guy Genoud** seconded. **All in Favor. Motion Carried.**

Chair Robbins announced the committee assignments would remain the same for 2022-2023 Fiscal Year. No further action needed.

Chair Robbins then asked **Chris Poynter** to report on the latest meeting of the Finance Committee held prior to the Commission meeting.

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FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Chris Poynter, Chair of the Finance Committee along with **Chris Kipper** explained the following recommendation/approval made by the Finance Committee at their last meeting on May 26, 2022

- **Budget Amendment – Pass Through Rent**

Chris Kipper shared some details and background on how the tenants share in an increase in operating expenses over a base year. The electric, water, and sewer were higher, and the building occupancy was lower in 2019. However, since we just received this bill, I have requested a bit more details and based on the answers to those questions the amount may be less than the \$15,500 we are requesting in a budget amendment today. We will update you of any changes in that amount, once I get more clarification.

Chair Robbins called for a motion to reallocate money from the capital expenditures to pay the additional rent up to \$15,500. **Guy Genoud** made the motion. **Kate Latts** seconded.
Motion Carried.

Chris Poynter, that concludes my report from the Finance Committee.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Cleo Battle shared just a few highlights in his President's Report. We had a very successful legislative session for the tourism community in Louisville and throughout the state. The Kentucky State Fair Board received \$180 million towards the refurbishment of KEC and they got an additional \$5 million dollars to do a study related to that. The tourism industry received \$75 million from the legislative body for the entire state. This will be divided up between all the tourism agencies in Kentucky. We haven't gotten the breakdown on the amount that Louisville Tourism will receive, but they are broken into four buckets relating to the tourism industry. We certainly believe we're going to see a decent portion of that funding. More to come on amounts once we receive more details. The other update I will mention is the Cultural Tourism Grant that the (BTAC) Black Tourism Advisory Council, developed as an idea that was brought to you all a while back. To refresh your memory, we supported the grant with \$30,000. The goal was to bring culturally diverse organizations into our organization as partners. We thought the \$30,000 would give us about 30 new organizations/partners. I am happy to report that we have 27, as of today. Now, the goal will be to retain those partners as we move forward and continue to build more relationships in that arena.

EVP REPORT

Doug Bennett wanted to spend a few minutes shining light on workforce development. Two years ago, we wouldn't have been spending much time in this specific area, but we are today due to the staffing needs in the hospitality industry. To be more specific we've really kicked in community initiatives, career fair support, and a network connector for our industry. Many of

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you may not be aware that there are four JCPS high schools that have a hospitality related curriculum. We have made it our mission to make sure that we are illuminating our industry to these impressionable seniors at these high schools. We want to make sure these students understand there are several professional career paths in our industry. Prior to the Pandemic, the hospitality/tourism sector in Jefferson County employed slightly more than 70K workers. Today, now two years later we have approximately 53K workers tied to a tourism related job. This is a 32 percent decline in the number of positions supporting this sector across Jefferson County. Louisville Tourism has played an active role in the last 6-8 months in getting jobs back into the local industry through advocacy, relationship building, academia contacts, job posting support and coordinating an industry career fair. Our next industry career fair is scheduled for September 13th. More details to come.

FINANCE REPORT

Chris Kipper covered the finance report highlights for the months of February and March 2022. February transient room tax was \$1.4 million above budget by \$295,000 or 26%. Total Revenue just above that at \$1.5 million above budget by \$264,000 or 22%. For March, transient room tax was \$1.5 million above budget by \$83,000 or 6%. Total revenue close to \$1.6 million above budget by \$31,000 or 2%. On the expense side we had some savings for these months. Total expenses for February were \$800,000, which was below budget by \$75,000 or 8%. Total expenses for March were \$1.6 million, which was below budget by \$33,000 or 2%. As you know our reporting is always behind two months due to how we receive our transient room tax data. However, we know April and May should be strong months.

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Stacey Yates started off by saying- it's not in my report because its unfinished, but we had a very busy Derby Season at the press office. We probably did more economic impact interviews than we ever have. One thing I do want to mention for the first time ever in my 16-year career at Louisville Tourism, we were asked for follow up interviews after the Derby-hotel occupancy percentages etc... Stacey shared some additional lifestyle stories related to the Derby and highlighted some of the press coverage that took place in March & April. We are executing National Bourbon Day, which is on June 14. Thanks to a great conversation that Cleo and Kate Latts with Heaven Hill they are partnering with us along with the Omni to do a celebration of National Bourbon Day in Boston, particularly to communicate and hammer home that direct flight on American Airlines.

CONVENTION DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Sonia Fong stated speaking of the Derby, this week we had our DOS meeting with 20 representatives from all the hotels, there was a lot of great energy. Everybody stated it was record breaking and everybody was hard at work, but it was extremely healthy in terms of the revenue for their hotels. Thanks to all the hoteliers that joined our conversation this week. Speaking of numbers, on your report. We have already surpassed the number of leads and site

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inspection goals. As for the room nights booked, we are very confident that we will exceed that goal. Our team is working very hard to get to that final goal. We are five weeks away from the end of our fiscal year and we have a lot of good things coming in the last few weeks to end out our fiscal year. Sonia also shared an update on some city-wide events that were secured since the last commission meeting. She reported that the last CAC Meeting took place on April 6-8, 2022. Staffing Update- Janel Theilen as National Sales Manager. Janel comes from the Aloft Hotel Louisville East. We are interviewing for the Southeast Regional Director next week, so there will be more to come on that once we have that finalized.

DESTINATION SERVICES UPDATE

Zack Davis Our department has been very busy too. We had 63 planning visits last July and 22 of those took place in March and April. It's been a heavy couple months with groups coming in to plan and get ready for their events. We also hosted the Mid America Truck Show which as you all know, was the 50th Anniversary. Zack shared a few other highlights on events, Top 5 groups hosted in April & May and then updated the Commission with the merging of Destination Services and Partnership Development department. Melissa Sparks has moved over to our team and has become our Director of Strategic Alliances. We've moved away from the "Partnership title" and we have added Olivia Woods from the VIC to be our Strategic Alliance and Housing Manager. We also shifted Katherine Peck from our team to support this area as the Strategic Alliance & Housing Assistant, so we now have a three-person business unit for that area of the department.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Nicole Twigg updated the Commission on leisure travel recovery. From an attraction attendance perspective. I'm talking about attraction attendance, as it relates to our top 20 attractions and distilleries here in Louisville. Year to date, July through April. Our attraction attendance is at 162,200, for the FY 21/22 versus 1,347,400 during the same timeframe of July through April last fiscal year. That is more than a 60% increase year over year. Today we are at 95% of our annual goal for attraction attendance and that is without attractions in May and June, which are two of our biggest months. The Visitor Center walk in traffic has seen incredible numbers. We have been completely swamped. July through April we are at 38,988 for the fiscal year versus 7,300 last fiscal year. That is a 431% increase year over year. We had almost 8000 visitors that stopped by to see us at the VIC versus just 1900 last April. That's a 310% increase just for the month of April. We are at 90% of our goal at the Visitor Center for this fiscal year. We have also been busy hosting clients. We had a fantastic Derby Fam as Sonia mentioned across our tourism sales verticals, representing clients from the international market, our live market and the tour travel market. Nicole also shared the opportunity of hosting the Collette Vacations Annual Sales Meeting on April 7-9- there were clients from US, Canada and Australia. Louisville is a featured destination in Collette's tour offerings and has resulted in high demand for additional future tour development. Nicole also shared some additional highlights on TSA, Atlanta Nomadness Travel Tribe, Bourbon Boule and the Ali Festival Familiarization Tour.

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ADJOURNMENT

Chair Robbins with no other business, can I get a motion to adjourn. **Chris Poynter** made the motion; seconded by **Scott Shoenberger**. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Recording Secretary Stephanie Skinner

Minutes approved by:

Sarah Robbins,
Chair Sarah Robbins

Chris Poynter
Secretary/Treasurer Chris Poynter