

Minutes
Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau
Board of Directors
October 17, 2007



The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Board met at the Burwell School Historic Site located at 319 North Churton Street in Hillsborough at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Board Members Present

Lee Pavao, Frances Dancy, Bob Ward, Bill Crowther, Linda Convisor, Mark Sherburne, Rachel Hawkins, Rick Strunk

Members Absent

Moses Carey, Jon Wilner, Jim Ward, Liz Parham, Creston Woods

Staff Present

Laurie Paolicelli, Willie Best, Linda Ekeland, Tina Roberts

Guests

Laura Blackmon, Orange County Manager; Tom Stevens, Mayor of Hillsborough; Elizabeth Read, Interim Director, Alliance for Historic Hillsborough

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lee Pavao, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m.

WELCOME TO MEMBERS AND GUESTS

Chair Pavao welcomed Orange County Manager, Laura Blackmon; Assistant County Manager, Willie Best; Burwell School Director, Elvan Cobb and Hillsborough Mayor, Tom Stevens

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Pavao asked for approval of the September 19, 2007 Board Meeting minutes. Bill Crowther pointed out that on page 4 under New Business it should read: Bill Crowther stated that the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough's Board has recommended Dave Gephart as their representative on this board. Chair Pavao again asked for a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Mark Sherburne motioned and Rick Strunk seconded the motion. With all Board Members in agreement, the motion was carried unanimously.

Chair Pavao gave the floor to Laura Blackmon who deferred to Mayor Stevens.

Mayor Stevens gave a brief update on the current projects that are under construction/ under review in and around downtown Hillsborough i.e., the community college, Oakdale shopping center, UNC medical facility, judicial building, market shelter - just to name a few and included the possibility of a light rail transit. He stated that there is substantial support for this idea and talks are underway. Laurie thanked the Mayor for his support in tourism and announced that Mayor Stevens will be the facilitator at a November meeting in Chapel Hill of forty state convention and visitors bureau and among other things, Mayor Stevens will discuss leadership vs. management. Mayor Stevens gave credit to the whole triangle area as the big picture in the tourism effort.

Laura Blackmon was given the floor. The County Manager briefly described her background history in central Florida and noted some of the issues, changes and ideas in that area that are common with and/or might benefit Orange County - transportation and ecotourism. Blackmon informed board members of the Sports Endeavors commitment of \$150,000 to build 6 soccer fields over a 5-year period. The County was asked to match that \$150,000. Discussion ensued on signage, budget, bleachers, tournaments, and the impact this project would have on area businesses and the community.

Chair Pavao then introduced our host, Elvan Cobb. Cobb, Director of the Burwell School Historic Site for 2-1/2 years, gave a brief history of the school for girls, revealing its 170th- year anniversary and a new book recently released. Members were invited to tour the home and grounds after the meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Marketing Committee

Rick Strunk reminded members that although the positioning line is important, it is not the basis of the campaign; that there is more to it – citizen journalism, ads portraying our hotels collectively on a two-page spread in which Jennings & Co. is moving forward on. Rick deferred to Laurie to continue the marketing report in her Executive Directors report. Chair Pavao concurred.

Budget & Bylaws

Laurie recommended postponing until our next meeting. No objections by members, Chair Pavao concurred.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Paolicelli proceeded with a PowerPoint presentation hi-lighting who we are and what we are doing as a Visitors Bureau – the use of tax dollars to scout new business and educate new arrivals, research public opinion and supply very specific promotions for Carborro and Hillsborough as well as Chapel Hill; alluring the visitor to stay longer. Laurie stated that while 75% of the market may already visit due to UNC, medical facilities and family, 25% of the driven market is producing 14.3 Mil towards the hotels based on statistics provide by the hotels.

Laurie spoke to the board about the gay community – advertising that our community is gay friendly—to CEOs of associations who want to bring their meeting here but fear that many parts of North Carolina are unfriendly to gays. Durham and Chapel Hill teamed to tell gay CEOs that we are gay friendly and we welcome them—like we do everybody else- to our towns.

New website is projected to premier around the holidays.

With regard to the research on the positioning line, research respondents picked “ A Carolina State of Mind” however, the marketing committee—Pavao, Convissor, Strunk and Ward, as well as the advertising agency, suggested to stay with “The Feeling Never Leaves You”. Discussion ensued and the decision was made to stay with “The Feeling Never Leaves You”

Rachel Hawkins, representing the Hillsborough Chamber of Commerce asked Laurie how the Visitors Bureau worked with the Alliance and the Hillsborough Chamber. Laurie showed how the countywide bureau promoted, sold and publicized all three towns but also collaborated on promotions that impacted Hillsborough specifically, including a Nov/Dec promotion titled: Blues, Books and Bone China. Paolicelli explained that this additional support to Hillsborough was important considering that Tar Heel Athletics received a contract with the Visitors Bureau that primarily benefited Chapel Hill hotels.

NEW BUSINESS

Lee Pavao updated board members on the proposed 2008 tax increase. Hotel GM’s are in favor of the 1% increase and offered to speak to the BOCC on our behalf. Pavao requested to confer with them first and is in the process of setting up meetings.

Mark Sherburne updated board members of the East 54 timeline. All Best Western patrons - 19 groups and 360 individuals - were displaced successfully with the exception of one lone guest. Assets were donated to three different charities. As of September 16th the Inn was officially closed and the building is coming down. Fifty-two residential units went on sale 3-1/2 weeks ago of which 42 have already been pre-sold. Office spaces and a 130- room hotel are also planned. Projected finish date is 2009. Groundbreaking will be in January.

OLD BUSINESS

In honor of Bill Crowther’s last day of his appointed term, Laurie and the remaining board members presented him with a proclamation.

ADJOURNMENT

With all business of the Board completed, Mr. Pavao asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mark Sherburne motioned to adjourn and Rick Strunk seconded the motion. With all Board Members in agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 9:19 a.m.

Minutes Drafted by:
Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director

Minutes Accepted by:
Lee Pavao, Chair

Date

Date