

**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES TO
QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE
VISIT BOERNE ADVISORY BOARD
RONALD C. BOWMAN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
447 North Main Street
Boerne, TX 78006
January 16, 2025 – 4:00 p.m.
(Rescheduled from January 9, 2025)**

Present: Vice-Chair Guy Sanders, Board Members: Nicole Chapman, Emily Carvalho, Brad Wilson, Paula Lay. **Chairman of the Board, Tommy Mathews joined the meeting at 4:18.**

Absent: Ross Partlow

1. CALL TO ORDER – 4:00 PM

Vice-Chairman Guy Sanders called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

- a. Make any necessary announcements.

There were no new announcements to be made.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no citizens present at the meeting, and therefore, no public comments made.

3. APPROVE MINUTES

- [2024-665](#) a. Approve Minutes from Regular Quarterly Meeting of October 10, 2024.

Vice-Chair Guy Sanders asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on October 10, 2024. Brad Wilson so moved, Paula Lay seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. RECEIVE PRESENTATION ON HOTEL PERFORMANCE

- [2024-666](#) a. Fair Market Share Report - Hill Country Competitive Set
3rd Quarter Ended 9/30/24 and Comparative to 9/30/2023

Larry began by sharing the fair market share report for the 3rd quarter ended September 30, 2024, as compared to our competitive set of other cities in the Hill Country. He pointed out that Boerne finished the

quarter at 6.23%, exceeding our share of 5.91%, beating out Bandera, Fredericksburg, and Kerrville, adding that we came in 2nd in occupancy and 3rd in average daily rate. He talked about the state average being around 60% in occupancy, whereas Boerne's was 62.88% proving that our hotel activity is moving in a positive direction. Larry continued by explaining the comparative analysis of Boerne's 3rd quarter 2024 to its 3rd quarter 2023, pointing out that we did much better than 2023 wherein we fell a little bit behind our fair market share by .20%.

[2024-667](#)

b. Smith Travel Research Overview

3rd Quarter Ended 9/30/2024, and January - December 2024

Larry moved through the Smith Travel Research reports for the 3rd quarter ended December 2024, and for the year January 1, through December 31, 2024 pointing out that occupancy, average daily rate, demand and revenue all showed steady increases with an almost \$2 million dollar increase in revenue for the year 2024 over 2023.

[2024-668](#)

c. Datafy Traffic Summaries

3rd Quarter Ended 9/30/2024 and Comparative to 9/30/2023

For the Datafy reports, Tori Bellos reminded the board that for the hotel reports, these were people that were in our hotels who came from 50 miles away or more. She moved through the visitor trip report stating that the data was up in most areas, especially in the 5+ days category which was up by 66.9%. After making phone call inquiries to the hotels, she found that there had been a couple of weeks-long groups staying in Boerne for police dog training exercises and also construction workers for recent construction projects in the area, including the Walmart remodel.

She also reminded the board that for any 30 or more consecutive overnight stays, hotel occupancy tax is not collected. Guy asked if hotel tax is paid at all, even for the first few days, to which Larry explained that no tax is collected if the room is reserved for 30+ consecutive days, even if it is not actually occupied. Some discussion continued on this topic with Brad interjecting that this is also seen with short term rental properties especially during times of home construction or weather related events like flooding and fires, as is the case in California.

Moving on, Tori summarized the visitor trip data trends which tell us

where people come from and other demographics, pointing out that for the out of state visitation, Albuquerque and Sante Fe were still number one, but visitors from the Harlingen/Westlico area had a significant increase. Guy Sanders asked if visitors from international markets like Mexico are being tracked to which Tori explained that we do not currently have the ability to capture these visitors as our algorithms are only set up to track movement in the US. Guy said he would like to see what these numbers looked like and Emily Carvalho agreed, stating that the Mexican nationals are a substantial market and she would like to see if we can track those visitors as well. Tori agreed to look in to the possibility of obtaining these figures. As far as visitor demographics, Tori reviewed these slides stating that there had not been much change in this area as our visitor age, ethnicity, and demographics has not changed.

Moving on to the Hill Country Mile Reports, Tori reviewed these slides addressing the slight decreases in visitor trips for the third quarter 2024 as compared to last year contributing this downturn due to the continual highway closures. Guy asked how that compares to the hotel report being up to which Tori explained that hotel stays do not necessarily mean they will go to the Hill Country Mile. She further explained that the Hill Country data includes all visitors to the downtown area which includes residents of Boerne and employees who frequent our shops, restaurants and business.

Moving on, she shared the spending trend on the Hill Country Mile, showed the overall Boerne traffic to be slightly down, but spending by Boerne folks was up. Some discussion on this topic continued. A quick explanation on the visitor demographics to the Hill Country Mile showed that all were in the same alignment as last quarter and year-over-year.

5. RECEIVE UPDATE ON MARKETING & ADVERTISING

[2024-669](#) a. Current/Recent Advertising Creative

Moving on to the update on advertising, Tori reminded the board that these slides were all on marketing and advertising that had taken place since we last met in October and would therefore be focused on Christmas and holiday happenings. She covered digital advertising with Tour Texas and Texas Highways and focused on a TV segment with Great

Day Houston wherein she traveled to Houston to appear in a segment that included the holiday events happening in Boerne. Elaborating on this opportunity, she added that we paid for two airings, but that we actually received 3 airings plus some social media components as well as some banner ads, and would be open to future opportunities with Great Day Houston.

Moving on to other digital ad campaigns, Tori spent a little time explaining click through rates and benchmarks, pointing out that Boerne consistently performs over the standard benchmark rates by significant margins.

Continuing through the advertising slides, she reviewed CTV (which is Connective TV like Hulu), and E-mail newsletters which included events like the Hill Country Mile Rod Run and Concerts in the Cave, which are very well received.

Moving forward we are focusing on culinary initiatives, which is also Tori's Capstone project for Tourism College and one of her goals for this year in 2025. She is in the process of putting together a culinary strategic marketing plan for the community which has included purchased campaigns in Travel, Taste and Tour Magazine and Food & Travel Magazine, pointing out that we ended up with a photo on the table of contents page, as well our ad spread within the magazine. The digital and social media components of these publications will also go live in the very near future.

[2024-670](#) b. Influencer Status Report

Moving on to the recent influencer/content creator activity, Tori reviewed our relationship with Jessica Serna of My Curly Adventures who had been in market and had just left at the time of our last meeting. We will be seeing more of her posts throughout the year as she collected a lot of content that she will be able to share for the rest of the year. Guy pointed out that she does a great job and has already done numerous posts for and about Boerne, and asked how many more can she do since she has been here several times. Tori acknowledge that Jessica is a great partner and continues to find more great things about Boerne to share to her followers; for example she did a gliding activity out at Boerne Stage Airport that she will be posting in the future. Tori expanded on some the additional platforms and content that Jessica Serna creates

that positively impact Boerne directly by continuing to engage her followers long after her visit has ended. Paula asked if we will be working with other influencers as well, to which Tori confirmed that we will be working with Explore With Westley, who we have used in the past and are partnering with again, as well as several other influencers as outlined in the slide presentation. Larry interjected that Tori spends a substantial amount of time vetting our influencers to insure that they are legitimate, have a substantial followership and align with the Boerne brand before contracting with them to insure they are not just looking for a free weekend in Boerne. Nicole Chapman mentioned seeing posts from Texas Eats being in Boerne as well, which sparked a short conversation among the board members of other content creators they had worked with and would be working with in the future, and sharing with the Visitors Center.

6. RECEIVE UPDATE ON DEPARTMENT

[2024-671](#) a. Tourism Industry Update

Larry began by talking about Texas Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus wherein he was Chairman of the board until this past August and part of their initiative was to rename the association which would be happening in the next quarter, from TACVB to Destinations Texas. He explained that he would be stepping back from his involvement in these associations to allow Jeanette and Tori to attend more of these conferences such as the TACVB Winter Conference coming up the following week in Waco. He mentioned the Texas Travel Alliance (formerly TTIA) Annual Conference coming up later this next quarter in Houston, which he would attend, and the Texas Hotel & Lodging Association of which he is a board member. Larry went on to explain THLA's website and that Visit Boerne pays the membership dues for all of our hoteliers and we encourage the hoteliers to look at the site for any changes they want to make. Larry has been talking to THLA about adding the Short Term Rentals to their website as well and that they would be added in the very near future which would enable these properties the opportunity to market their own properties on this website, as the hotels can, and that Visit Boerne would be covering these membership costs as well.

[2024-672](#) b. Groups/Collaboration Update

Regarding groups coming to Boerne, Larry and Tori attended the site visit meeting at The Bevy Hotel last year with Texas Higher Education Business Officers (THEBO) and were instrumental in booking that piece of business in Boerne this past August. THEBO was very pleased with everything and are planning on coming back next year.

He talked about other groups that would be coming to Boerne including the annual Corvette Show, the North American Development Bank, and Daughters of the Republic of Texas. He also talked about the Living Church of God who would not be coming back in 2025 for their Feast of Tabernacles celebration, but for whom we would be working to get back for 2026 and 2027. He summarized the relationship that Boerne has had with LCG for the past 8 years and why they would not be in Boerne for 2025, but that we were confident we would be able to get them back for future years.

Regarding some of the groups we have worked with to bring to Boerne, Larry mentioned a ladies Bunco group from Austin, and a group of about 25 ladies that came from Barton Creek Country Club on a tour bus to shop and dine in Boerne.

Next Larry informed the board of a 3-day visit from the Volkswagen car company where in 10-15 drivers from San Antonio caravanned to Boerne to test drive new VW cars and met at the Visitors Center for lunch. Larry talked about how we assisted them with their meet-up plans and the press coverage they received from publications like Car and Driver Magazine and Motor Trends Magazine.

7. 2024 HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX GRANT EVENT SUMMARIES (AWARDED APRIL 2023)

Giving a quick overview of the hotel occupancy tax grants that were awarded to groups in 2023 for their 2024 events, Jeanette Teague gave a quick recap of the four groups that had received funding and the results of those events based on the Post Reports each group had submitted after their event.

[2024-673](#) a. Texas Corvette Association Annual Open Car Show - April 20, 2024

For the Texas Corvette Association's Annual Open Car Show in 2024, the

group was awarded \$7,000 in HOT funds and according to their post report, the 3-day event brought in over 5,000 spectators who occupied 380 hotel room nights. At an average hotel rate of \$200 per night, the event generated \$76,000 in total hotel revenue, which at 7%, generated \$5,320 in HOT funds. In addition to the hot funds, this organization also brings a positive economic impact to local shops, restaurants and other businesses in downtown Boerne.

[2024-674](#) b. Tour de Boerne, Inc. - June 29, 2024

For the Tour de Boerne bike ride on June 29, 2024, the organization was awarded \$5,000 in HOT funds. According to their post report, they had 1,250 riders, guests and volunteers in attendance at this one-day event. Booking 464 hotel rooms, at an average rate of \$181 per night, they brought in \$84,740 in total hotel revenue, which equates to \$6,072.00 in HOT funds. Jeanette and Val attended the packet pick up at The Bevy Hotel and were able to verify that the overnight stays were pretty accurate as reported.

[2024-675](#) c. North American Lutheran Church Continental Youth Gathering -
July 1-4, 2024

The slide for the North American Lutheran Church had inadvertently been left out of the presentation at the time of the meeting. This summarization has been added to the minutes after the fact to provide continuity in the reporting from the post report for this group.

The North American Lutheran Church received \$5,000 in Hotel Occupancy Tax for their July 1-4 Youth Gathering to help pay for a tour bus to bring attendees from other states to Boerne. According to the post report, there were 297 attendees, 275 of which were from out of town. The 4-day event booked 404 hotel rooms at an average rate of \$206 per night for a total \$83,224 in total hotel revenue which equates to \$5,825 in HOT funds generated.

[2024-676](#) d. Hill Country Mile Rod Run - October 11-13, 2024

The Hill Country Mile Rod Run was awarded \$13,000 in HOT funds; \$10,000 per their application request and another \$3,000 as an add-on from the board in order to help the new organizers get the re-vamped car show off the ground. According to the organization's post report, the

3-day event brought in 2,500 spectators, of which 1,000 were from out of town. HCMRR reported 800 hotel rooms were rented at an average rate of \$225-\$250 per night, generating \$196,250 in total hotel revenue, which equated to \$13,737 in HOT funds.

8. RECEIVE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING DATES FOR 2025

[2024-677](#)

a. 2025 Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund Application Process Schedule

Update on the Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund Application process that has been posted in January and will commence through the April 10, advisory board meeting.

[2024-678](#)

b. 2025 Regular Meetings Schedule

Review of scheduled meetings for the remainder of 2025.

9. COMMENTS FROM BOARD & STAFF

Larry mentioned the new continuing education opportunity that the City of Boerne was implementing called Boerne University wherein employees who were in the number two positions or who were on leadership tracts within the City could attend a 9-month program to learn more about City government, leadership, and management skills, and that Jeanette Teague has been selected to attend the inaugural class beginning in January.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on April 10, 2025.

s/s Larry Woods_____

Visit Boerne, Director

CERTIFICATION

**I hereby certify that the above notice of meeting was posted on the 13th day of
January 2025 at 4:00 p.m.**

s/s Jeanette Teague_____

Secretary