



Indiana Office of Tourism Development

## MINUTES AND MEMORANDA OF A MEETING OF THE TOURISM COUNCIL

Held: September 7, 2017

A quarterly meeting of the Indiana Tourism Council was held September 7 in the Riverhouse Meeting Room of the Indianapolis Zoo, 1200 W Washington St., Indianapolis, IN 46222.

The following Council members were present at the meeting: Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, Rebecca Kasper (Lieutenant Governor's special counsel), Mark Newman, Dr. Liping Cai, Jim Wallis, Patrick Tamm, Pete Eshelman, Lorelei Weimer, Denise Pence, Misty Weisensteimer, Carrie Lambert, Representative Wes Culver, Representative Justin Moed, Lu Porter, and Eric Snow. Senator Lonnie Randolph, Senator Chip Perfect, Cameron Clark, Rob Caputo, Dr. Jonathon Day, Chris Leininger, and Gale Gerber were not present.

Lt. Gov. Crouch called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

### I. Welcome

Lt. Gov. Crouch welcomed the council, called it to order, and introduced Mike Crowther, President and CEO of the Indianapolis Zoological Society. He spoke briefly on recent Zoo accomplishments (hosting the National Association of Zoos and Aquariums conference for the first time in 25 years; completion of the Bicentennial Pavilion without taxpayer funding; being recognized by Condé Nast), and thanked the Council for exhibiting leadership amongst the tourism community and Indiana.

### II. Approval of minutes

Lt. Gov. Crouch asked for a motion for the approval of the Council's April 7, 2017 minutes.

A motion was made to approve the minutes for the meeting held on April 7, 2017, as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

RESOLVED, that the minutes for the Indiana Tourism Council meeting held on April 7, 2017 are approved as presented.

### III. Workforce Development Report from Council Member James Wallis

James Wallis recaps the Tourism Workforce in Indiana presentation that was provided as part of the pre-meeting reading material.

- a) For 22% of Americans, their first job is in leisure and hospitality. One third of them will go on to receive a bachelor's degree, and receive an average career salary of \$82k.

- b) Leisure and hospitality leads all other industries in the number of part-time employees attending school full-time. It is second only to financial services for workers receiving bachelor's degrees. Financial services is also the only sector that exceeds leisure and hospitality in wages.
- c) People who begin their work history in leisure and hospitality are often picked off by other industries. Why? It's the people skills they learned. People skills translate into every other industry. Society is moving towards preferring soft skills for leadership positions.
- d) The Indianapolis region currently employs 77,800 in leisure and hospitality. Those numbers are expected to grow to 97,800 by 2025. Statewide, those numbers 202,500 and 257,500, respectively.

James introduced Matt Carter, Vice President of Destination Development at Visit Indy.

- a) There is a stigma attached to the hospitality sector: "but they're low-paying jobs." When we say that, what hospitality employees are really hearing is "you don't matter." To combat this, Visit Indy has adopted the ROSE Awards (Recognition of Service Excellence). It's time we start talking about the role tourism plays, not only in economic development of our communities, but in bringing our citizens along.
- b) There are three career pathways: The low socio-economic pathway targets entry barrier populations with a job that is open to all. The mid socio-economic pathway is a better job that requires a level of skill and professional experience. The high socio-economic pathway requires a high level of demonstrated success, but in turn, is a career. The key takeaway here is that the net gain from taking someone from low to mid-level is far more substantial than taking them from to mid to high.

Matt introduced Betsy Delgado, Vice President of Mission and Education Initiatives for Goodwill Industries of Southern and Central Indiana.

- a) Goodwill Industries' Excel Center addresses the educational needs of our most vulnerable populations: people exiting the criminal justice system, first time moms and Medicaid families, and people who have dropped out of traditional high school. This is an underestimated population. These are people who are being judged by a poor decision early in life, when they could be assets to Indiana's economy.
- b) The current Goodwill Industries pathway for moving underestimated populations into hospitality careers in conjunction with Visit Indy: recruitment from GI partner organizations, assessment, job shadowing, additional training if needed, and finally placement.

- c) The majority of GI students are ages 18-24. They have their entire working careers to learn, add to their skill set, and see wage growth and improvement in benefits. Year over year, we are already seeing those trends.

The floor was opened up for discussion.

- a) There is tremendous projected growth, but not without credible threats. The greatest threat is currently economic disparity in the labor force. Carmel cannot fill many of its entry level positions because of the transportation barrier. We want to be wary of the gentrification seen in cities that have become high-tech magnets; we do not want Hoosiers priced out.
- b) When it comes to funding, we are seeking a fresh approach to development dollar distribution. There needs to be balance between quality of life and tourism attractions. Indiana's growth rate is growing, but not so fast that we can't think ahead of it. The new standard operating procedure is to give a prescription to the people deemed unqualified.
- d) There are Goodwill Excel Centers in Indianapolis, Clarksville, South Bend, and Hammond. One for Muncie is in development, and there are plans for two more. 97% of the students in GI programs will graduate with either a certification or dual credit.
  - a. It would be great to sit down with Leisure and Hospitality business, cater the certifications offered to fit their needs, and have that certification authorized by workforce development.
- e) White Lodging has a one-year program for international students that provides employment and housing. It is worth exploring the possibility of similar two-year program for vulnerable populations, especially since so many barriers are environmental (oftentimes when people fail to show up for an interview, it is due to transportation or childcare issues). The need for labor is so intense that businesspeople are making decisions by asking themselves, "Will I have enough people to staff this?"

Lieutenant Governor Crouch would like to see action on these workforce development plans and recommends to place this in front of Governor Holcomb.

#### **IV. Tourism Task Force Considerations**

The Lt. Gov. turned the floor over to Rebecca Kasper to discuss recommendations for Tourism Taskforce members. These appointments will be made by the Lt. Gov. and charged with looking at the operational structure organization, and funding of tourism departments in other states. The independent consultant compiling the report is not one of the appointees.

Part of the discussion addressed concern that this taskforce would be merely looking to replicate other states' strategies, rather than leveraging Indiana's unique assets. It was determined that a large part of research and ensuing recommendations would be focused on state tourism funding, and thus it is not necessary to "reinvent the wheel."

- a) Carrie Lambert brought up that the wording of "Tourism Marketing Professional" was very broad and lends itself unnecessarily to destination marketing organizations. Not only does the group need to cover the state geographically, it needs to represent the variety of industry. She nominates Jim Epperson of Go SoIN (Clark-Floyd Counties), Eric Snow of Holiday World, and Julie Basich from Fair Oaks Farms, to give a perspective outside of central Indiana. It is also worth considering a person from IEDC, as most attractions work with their local EDCs. She suggests Chris Cotterill.
- b) Patrick Tamm suggests asking hoteliers that also operate in other states for recommendations; looking for someone in the weeds of how the market is run. He recommends Matt Carter; notes that he is a tremendous resource and great with data.
- c) Denise Pence requests having retail represented; recommends a representative from Simon Malls or David Eskenazi from Sandor. For maximum effectiveness, representation should come from privately held companies. The taskforce should not be duplicated with employees from CVBs.
- d) Dr. Laiping Cai volunteers to make one of his graduate students available for the taskforce.
- e) Lu Porter recommends Mark Newman for the taskforce.
- f) James Wallis says that national experience is needed for this. Recommends Ed McWilliams, and Michael Crowther from the Indianapolis Zoo.
- g) Mark Newman thinks it would be beneficial to include someone who leads a DMO; recommends Diana Lawson of Elkhart County.
- h) Matt Carter concludes by saying that it almost always helps to have an advisor on these projects who is independent of the team and consultant. Independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party assessment is valuable to the credibility of any study. Ultimately, this person is going to have to make a case to the legislature that tourism matters, so this person should be well-versed in economics; recommends Ken McGill or Adam Saxby.

## V. Executive Director Report

- a) Mark Newman presented the Indiana Road Rally excerpt from the Summer 2017 issue of

Midwest Living and the Indiana Breweries & Wineries and Agritourism Guides, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in a series as part of IOTD's greater culinary and agritourism strategy.

- b) The Indiana Bicycle Trails Task Force met for the first time last month. The purpose of the taskforce is to study Indiana's bicycle trail systems, and create plans to improve and further fund them. This is important because not only do well-developed bicycle trail systems drive tourism and economic development, but they positively impact the health and wellness of our citizens. Leading the taskforce is Kyle Hannon of Elkhart County and Paul Grayson of Marion County.
- c) Prior to IOTD's 2017 Spring/Summer campaign, the office made a goal of increasing the value to our partners of advertising with us. To do that, we moved away from a consolidated landing page and instead drove visitors to individual landing pages created for partners. This resulted in a decrease in page views for Visit Indiana, but an explosion in page views for partners. Partner landing page views were up 2007% over last year, with a 328% lift in clicks of landing pages to partner websites.
- d) At US Travel's national tourism promotion conference, ESTO (Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations), Visit Indiana received a 2017 Mercury Award related to the Torch Relay for Best Public Relations Campaign. The Relay was three years in the making and included the entire IOTD staff; it was an honor to be recognized.
- e) Also at ESTO, Mark Newman attended the annual meeting of the National Association of State Tourism Directors.
- f) Visit Indiana has joined Great Lakes USA.
- g) The Economic Impact Research Cooperative interest surveys and registration was emailed to CVBs and chambers on Tuesday, September 5. This is an effort to create a rallying point for around the state, using common, vetted data. Patrick Tamm and Carrie Lambert agreed to voice their support for the co-op with their respective organizations.
- h) Destination Development Grant applications have opened. The deadline to apply is December 1<sup>st</sup>. There is a lot of excitement going into this next round. At the upcoming December meeting we will receive an update on projects that received first-round grants.

## **VI. Adjournment**

- a. The next meeting will be December 7 at Minnestrista, 1200 N. Minnestrista Parkway, Muncie, Indiana 47303.

- b. A motion is made to adjourn the meeting, and then seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Suzanne Crouch  
Lieutenant Governor

ATTEST:

  
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Mark Newman  
Executive Director for IOTD