



VisitColumbusGA

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Commissioners Present: Lauren Becker, Chair; Jamie Waters, Vice Chair; Amy Bryan, Sherricka Day, Dan Gilbert, Pace Halter, Michelle Spivey, Mayor Skip Henderson

Commissioners Absent: Miles Greathouse; Peter Jones

Staff Present: Peter Bowden, Stacy Bridges, Gracie Childress, Shelby Guest, Kim Gonzalez, Lacy Harden, and Ashley Woitena

Call to Order Lauren Becker

- The March 2024 meeting was called to order by Lauren Becker at 4:00 pm.

Secretary Treasurer Report Jamie Waters

- In the absence of Secretary/Treasurer, Miles Greathouse, Jamie Waters presented the consent agenda -- minutes for the February 2024 board meeting, as well as financials for February 2024. He asked if there were any questions or discussion. There being none, a motion was made by Michelle Spivey to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Dan Gilbert. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Chair Report.....Lauren Becker

- Ms. Becker introduced Marianne Richter, Executive Director of the Columbus Museum. Ms. Richter reported on the Columbus Museum renovation progress and provided images along with information on the new layout and design of the Museum. She explained the Museum will re-open May 4, 2024 with a number of activities leading up the opening and beyond to mark the occasion.

President’s Report.....Peter Bowden

- Ms. Becker turned the meeting over to Peter Bowden. He began by introducing 2 new staff members: Stacy Bridges and Gracie Childress, Sales Service Coordinators.
- Mr. Bowden advised the Board that Bill 1180 – film related legislation -- is having a favorable response along the efforts to change the wording in the legislation from “rural” to “regional” that would benefit cities the size of Columbus. Without the change, the legislation would only impact communities with populations 50,000 or less.

- Tourism Investment District – Mr. Bowden explained that the process for determining the best strategy forward to establish a Tourism Investment District (TID) was on-going with a meeting scheduled later in the week with representatives from Civitas. He also mentioned that other Georgia cities were now in discussion with Civitas about implementing a TID and some had dropped off the list to pursue increasing their local hotel motel tax. Mr. Bowden emphasized that the destinations he has spoken with are looking for additional revenue to keep pace with demand for services.
- Mr. Bowden presented two awards VisitColumbusGA received from the Service Industry Advertising Awards. These awards were for the Website Refresh and the “Go All Out” 2023 Integrated Marketing Campaign. He complimented staff for its work in earning these awards of recognition.
- Ashley Woitena provided an in-depth analysis of the importance of tracking meetings and conventions. She illustrated the staff’s summary of the calendar data of Columbus Convention Center. Ms. Woitena explained this is necessary to help staff with prospecting and recruiting conventions/meetings -- to understand when the Trade Center has the prime opportunity to increased bookings while maximizing the facility along with other infrastructure supporting the market. There was discussion about how this could be applied to other meeting venues in the city. Staff agreed and offered that this example was just the beginning of the process to understand and capture data. It was suggested that there may be software available to help merge calendars to help with the project.

Adjournment.....Lauren Becker

With no further business, Ms. Becker adjourned the meeting at 4:52 pm.