

CITY COUNCIL
BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 6, 2014

The City Council Business and Community Affairs Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 8:33 a.m. in the Municipal Building Multi-Purpose Room located at 201 West Gray on the 6th day of June, 2014, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:	Councilmember Castleberry and Chairman Griffith
ABSENT:	Councilmembers Heiple and Williams
OTHERS PRESENT:	Mayor Cindy Rosenthal Mr. Steve Ellis, 633 Reed Avenue Mr. Roger Gallagher, 1522 East Boyd Ms. Ann Gallagher, 1522 East Boyd Mr. Dan Schemm, Director, Norman Convention and Visitors Bureau Mr. Don Wood, Director, Norman Economic Development Coalition Mr. John Woods, Director of Norman Chamber of Commerce
STAFF PRESENT:	Mr. Jeff Bryant, City Attorney Mr. Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator Mr. Anthony Francisco, Director of Finance Ms. Jane Hudson, Principle Planner Mr. Ken Komiske, Director of Utilities Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager Mr. Shawn O’Leary, Director of Public Works Ms. Kathryn Walker, Assistant City Attorney Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV

Item 1, being:

PRESENTATION BY MR. DAN SCHEMM, NORMAN CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU DIRECTOR, REGARDING CONVENTION AND TOURISM ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE STRATEGIES.

Mr. Dan Schemm, Norman Convention and Visitors Bureau (NCVB) Director, said it has been an exciting first four months as Director of NCVB and Norman has changed dramatically since he left in 2000. He said Norman has tremendous hotels and meeting space for a City of its size. He said Embassy Suites is the largest hotel with 50,000 square feet of meeting space, a ballroom, and 298 hotel rooms; however, conference/convention planners usually want all their people under one roof and 298 rooms will not meet most demands. He said Holiday Inn and Residence Inn are under construction near Embassy Suites and that will give the area a campus atmosphere which will help overcome the room deficit at Embassy Suites. He said the Marriott Hotel at the United States Postal Training Center on East Highway 9 is a 998 room hotel, but in the past they have always been full due to government meetings and conferences and could only block 200 to 250 rooms for conventions/conferences that were not government related. However, due to the downturn in the economy, government meetings have scaled back and more rooms have become available. He said Marriott will currently block 500 to 600 rooms for conventions/conferences during off peak dates. He said the Marriott has 35,000 square feet of meeting space and the Postal Training Center has another 35,000 square feet of meeting space.

Mr. Schemm said Norman has many attractions and amenities and NCVB will work on getting those on the radar for people who may not know about them. He said the Sam Noble Museum recently won the National Medal for Museum and Library Service from the White House and NCVB has been publicizing and marketing that. He said other Norman amenities include the Fred Jones Museum, the National Weather Center, Andy Alligators Fun Park and Water Park, Westwood Golf Course, Westwood Pool, Legacy Park, etc. He said the National Weather Center is unique to Norman and hosts over 345 tours per year bringing in tens of thousands of visitors to the facility. He said it is important to build on

Item 1, continued:

Norman's package of attractions. Everyone who searches the internet can find information on OU football games, Campus Corner, or Bricktown in Oklahoma City (OKC) and that is a wonderful thing, but NCVB wants people to know about all the attractions in Norman so they will spend their money in Norman opposed to OKC, Edmond, or other Oklahoma communities. He said the biggest battle is getting people to come to Norman and that will be NCVB's focus.

Mr. Schemm said the Big 12 Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVB's) recently met in Waco, Texas, for a conference. He said Waco has the natural feature of a river flowing through the heart of the City. He said Baylor University is building a new stadium along the river and a local developer has purchased land all along the river to develop restaurants, townhomes, retail shops, etc. He said the City of Waco has partnered with the developer to develop parks and greenspace. He said Waco is promoting "sail gating," which is tail gating with boats and they built dock slips along the river to rent for sail gating. He said the CVB group stayed at a hotel on the river and although the hotel was not connected to the convention center, it was within a minute's walk. He said Waco's convention center has over 120,000 square feet of break down meeting rooms with two large flat floored expo style ballrooms to accommodate livestock shows and agriculture groups. He said Norman is missing out on these types of groups and although facilities in Norman have great meeting spaces, they do not have the large, prime, flat space with high ceilings, no columns, and individual electrical hookups for kiosk displays.

Mr. Don Wood, Norman Economic Development Coalition Director, noted that Texas has tax dollars dedicated to building these types of facilities and attracting events.

Mr. Schemm said his previous job was Director of Sales with the CVB in Wichita, Kansas, and one of the events he worked on was the YMCA National Championship Gymnastics Tournament, which has been held in several different cities over the years and Wichita won the contract for the tournament. He said the tournament will bring in over 8,000 spectators and participants and 3,000 to 4,000 room nights for the community. He said Wichita is able to host the tournament because of their 200,000 square foot flat floor convention center. He said Norman cannot bid on a tournament of that caliber and he felt that is something Norman should be going after. He said Bart Connors has a gymnastics training facility in Norman and it would be great to be able host gymnastic events in Norman. He said Norman will never attract the types of conventions/conferences that Orlando or Las Vegas attract, but being in the Bible Belt, Norman would be perfect for religious conferences as well as sporting events, hobby conferences, etc. Norman is a perfect location for conferences/conventions due to its proximity to OKC and Will Rogers Airport. He said OU has great facilities for events, but because of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) regulations, the facilities cost a great deal of money to rent and the costs cannot be discounted. He said Norman is competing against communities that are offering free facilities or offering highly reduced rates based on the size of the event.

Mayor Rosenthal asked the minimum square footage that would be needed for an expo type center and Mr. Schemm said it would depend on the location of the facility. He said if it is a stand-alone facility, his best guess would be 40,000 to 80,000 square feet of flat floor space with 30 foot ceilings and an additional ballroom and meeting spaces because trade shows usually have educational sessions that require separate meeting rooms. If the facility is connected to a hotel or will be near a hotel the meeting space and ballroom would not be as critical. Mayor Rosenthal said discussions have placed a facility in the University North Park (UNP) District in close proximity to Embassy Suites and other hotels. Mr. Schemm suggested a study be done to ensure Norman is not overbuilding or underbuilding, but believes the facility should have a minimum of 40,000 to 80,000 square feet of flat floor space, 30 foot ceilings, bay doors to accommodate large equipment, ten plus breakout meeting rooms, and a ballroom with a stage for multi-use functions. He said in the case of gymnastics, the facility would need 40,000 plus square feet of flat floor space in order to set up four sets of every type of gymnastic equipment that would be used for routines such as four balance beams, four pommel horses, four parallel bars, etc. Separate rooms would also be needed for judges, coaches, referees, awards area, and a warm-up room. Mayor Rosenthal asked if an expo center could be very compatible for gymnastic events and Mr. Schemm said absolutely.

Mr. Schemm said the tennis center at Westwood Park is one of the top two facilities in the State, but is missing out to communities that have indoor facilities such as Edmond. He said when families come to sporting events, they are not only bringing the child that is participating in the event, they are bringing the entire family and taking them to places like Andy Alligators, restaurants, shopping venues, etc., so they are spending money while they are at the event.

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Schemm said Fort Worth, Texas, recently hosted the Southwest Veterinary Association and Oklahoma is a part of that association and although OU does not have a veterinary school, veterinarians would be very interested in coming to Oklahoma for conferences and Norman could host them if Norman had the space.

Mr. Schemm highlighted trade shows that could be hosted in Norman such as the American Rabbit Breeders Association, Square Dancers Association, International Machine Quilters Association, National Toothpick Holder Association and the list goes on. He said there is an association for everything and a hobby for everything and those associations and hobby groups are perfect for Norman because they are not large corporation conglomerates that want everyone in one hotel. He said the opportunities are limitless. He said religious conferences and conventions need large meeting spaces as well as large flat floor areas for trade show booths and Norman cannot currently bid on those because Norman does not have the type of facility needed.

Mr. Schemm said downtown Norman has grown and the Second Friday Art Walk is sensational, but there is an opportunity to add to that. He said if Campus Corner could be connected to Downtown, which is currently being studied, NCVB could sell that and event planners would love that. Councilmember Castleberry said Campus Corner and Downtown Norman do not have hotels so would that be sold as a destination as opposed to a place to stay and Mr. Schemm said yes.

Mr. Schemm said NCVB is selling amenities, attractions, restaurants, and shopping venues. He said when NCVB brings a conference or convention to Norman, those attendees may never leave the hotel, but event planners want to know the options are there and that there is a vibrancy and energy to the community. He said many event planners build activities into their budgets so NCVB could put together a "pub crawl" between Campus Corner and Downtown Norman instead of bussing people to Bricktown.

Mr. Schemm said NCVB will be working on communication and collaboration. He said in the past, his office has not communicated as well as it should with the City or the community. He said there is so much NCVB can do in this community because there are so many people in the community that have passion about the community. He wants to communicate and collaborate with them to make sure they know what NCVB is doing, what its mission is, and how it impacts the community at the same time keeping all lines of communication open to draw on all of Norman's strengths to enhance cross promotion and get businesses networking together. He said NCVB also wants to communicate and be transparent to the citizens of Norman and find ways to help them. There are people throughout the community with different passions and if someone local is in a leadership position within an association they may not realize they could potentially bring the association to Norman so NCVB needs to market Norman locally as well as nationally.

Councilmember Castleberry said the Oklahoma Tax Institute will hold their annual convention at the Embassy Suites next week, which consists of 600 people. He said these conventions are normally held in OKC or Tulsa. Mayor Rosenthal said people would love to come to Norman for the Oklahoma Mayors Conference if Norman had the exhibition space. She said people do not like the hassle of trying to find parking in Tulsa and OKC and Norman is strategically located to compete for conferences.

Mr. Schemm said signage between Will Rogers Airport and Norman is an issue he wants to work on as well as exploring locations for greater visibility of NCVB that could possibly include a mobile visitor's center.

Mr. Schemm said NCVB wants to continue statewide and national marketing enhancements. He said in the past, hoteliers have done most of the marketing to state organizations, but NCVB is going to begin enhancing that by making sure state, regional, and national organization planners know more about Norman. NCVB will also be targeting third party companies that organize the planning of events for organizations. He said if NCVB can build a relationship with one of those third party companies then that opens the door to others.

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Schemm said in April, NCVB published information about Norman in the Horizons Travel Magazine, which is an insert in the Wall Street Journal with a huge reading audience. NCVB was also able to negotiate, at no cost, a five second scroll of "VisitNorman.com" on the Times Square Good Morning America Billboard over the course of one week, which totaled up to 240 scrolls. He said these outlets get the attention of people that may never have considered Norman as a destination.

Mr. Schemm said in order for NCVB to make the best decisions, it is important to know who is coming, where they are coming from, and why they are coming to Norman. He said NCVB will conduct a visitor profile survey that will be distributed physically or electronically at hotels over the course of six months or one year. At the end of that time, NCVB will have hard and fast information that tells the who's, where's, and why's and this will help NCVB decide what magazines or papers to target for advertising Norman.

Mr. Schemm said NCVB will work to enhance its website. Currently, it is not a responsive website meaning the website does not recognize whether a person surfs the web from a tablet, mobile phone, or laptop. He said it is important that the website looks and functions the same on all types of devices. He said there are not enough pictures and descriptions of attractions in Norman on the website. NCVB will work on making the website visitor friendly and informational. He said NCVB currently lists restaurants on the website, but there is no information on pricing and that is a simple addition that is needed because a family of four may not be able to afford Benvenuti's, but they do not know that based on information currently available on the NCVB's website. NCVB will also work on adding off-site reviews to the website because people trust internet reviews more than anything else and it would be helpful to have that on the website so people do not have to go to another site for that information. He said NCVB would like better branding because people do not think of Norman as a destination. He said Norman does not have a negative perception, Norman just does not have any perception unless the person is a sports fan familiar with OU. He said NCVB will create leisure videos for the website and is hoping to get someone famous from Norman or with ties to Norman to help with those videos such as James Garner. He said that may not happen, but NCVB will give it a shot. He said data reveals that people want videos and they watch videos so if they are shown what Norman has to offer, they will come and stay longer.

Mr. Schemm said NCVB will work on enhancing social media. He said NCVB has over 14,000 Facebook followers, which is a huge number for a CVB. He said they will start "Trivia Tuesdays" where they ask trivia questions and give away prizes. He said this will be part of the local engagement to get the community involved in events. He said NCVB will also be looking into text marketing where they text deals to people driving through Norman to get them to stop and stay awhile.

Mr. Schemm said NCVB has always submitted an annual report to the City, but he wants to move away from annual reporting to give the City a more measurable monthly or quarterly accounting. He said in the past, the NCVB team has not been held accountable for or been involved in goals, but that is changing. He wants the community to be involved as well and will bring back a sports committee to discuss what events are going on in Norman to avoid clashes on the calendar. He said a tennis tournament could be held, but \$20,000 to \$30,000 would be needed as prize money, which could possibly be done through business sponsorships.

Mr. Schemm discussed enhancing NCVB tools. He wants to create a database of events held in other cities for NCVB Staff comparisons. He also wants to include a gap analysis to help fill calendar dates that usually have no events scheduled. He said this will be a great tool to enable NCVB to prospect more efficiently. He said NCVB will go to the meeting planners to start relationships instead of calling them over the phone. He said NCVB will no longer deal with low number trade shows, but will sales blitz the larger trade shows and offer tier services based on the number of hotel rooms needed.

Councilmember Castleberry asked if NCVB would be able to organize events similar to OKC's Friday night food truck events and Mr. Schemm said NCVB could partner with anyone that would like to organize such events by marketing and advertising the event. He felt it would be a great event since there seems to be a growing food truck culture. Chairman Griffith suggested a food truck event be tied to the Second Friday Art Walk event. Councilmember Castleberry felt the

Item 1, continued:

Downtowners' Association would be the group to organize such an event and Mr. Schemm said it will take a partnership with the business community. Mayor Rosenthal heard the Cleveland County Health Department licensing regulations are more problematic than Oklahoma County's Health Department regulations and thought someone should try to find out how Oklahoma County handles licensing of food trucks.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated April 24, 2014, from Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator, through Steve Lewis, City Manager, to Council Business and Community Affairs Committee
2. PowerPoint entitled, "Helping Businesses During Construction – Lindsey Street – 24th Avenue SW to East of Berry Road," by Leidos Engineering, May 2, 2014
3. PowerPoint entitled, "Public/Business Information Strategies & Temporary Construction Directional Signage for the Lindsey Street Project," Council Business and Community Affairs Committee, May 2, 2014

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Item 2, being:

STAFF UPDATES ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD AND RETAIL GAP ANALYSIS.

Economic Development Advisory Board

Ms. Kathryn Walker, Assistant City Attorney, said the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) has met several times and are currently focusing on the parking facility discussions that took place during the Charrette process. She said EDAB is planning to have a recommendation to Council in approximately 60 days.

Retail Gap Analysis

Mr. Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator, said preliminary data on the Retail Gap Analysis is being reviewed by Staff and the rest of the data is expected within a few days. Staff will be working with the consultant to finalize the report and stakeholder and public meetings will be scheduled.

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Item 3, being:

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION.

None

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The meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.