

**MINUTES**  
**Tourism Advisory Board**  
**Meeting of October 24, 2019**

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*The Tourism Advisory Board of the City of Cedar Hill, Texas, met on Thursday, October 24, 2019, at 6:00 pm. in the Administration Conference Room of the Cedar Hill Government Center, 285 Uptown Blvd., Cedar Hill, Texas.*

*The following members were present: Joshua Choate, Michaela Kral, Alexander Ray and Traci Uncel-Martin. The following City staff members were present: Russell Read, Director of Customer and Visitor Experience, Patty Bushart, Tourism Marketing Manager and Michelle Hernandez, CVE Coordinator. Absent board members: Alice Chase, Randall Chase, Adriana Huizar, and Zina Martin*

**I. Call the meeting to order.**

Chair Michaela Kral called the meeting to order at 6:44 PM declaring an open meeting with notice of the meeting duly posted and a quorum present.

**II. Approve the Minutes of August 22, 2019 Regular Meeting.**

A motion was made by Joshua Choate, seconded by Alexander Ray, to approve the minutes of August 22, 2019. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. Receive update from City Manager, Greg Porter.**

The update from City Manager Greg Porter will be rescheduled, City Manager was unable to attend board meeting.

**IV. Solicit input and discuss nature corridor development.**

The board received an update for nature corridor development:

- The official name of Balcones Trail 1382 was approved on September 10, 2019. The official name will be Balcones Trail. Future corridor that extends to include all the trails that would connect to Balcones Trail would be called Balcones del Norte. Inquiry to the Dallas portion of the trail was posed, but Cedar Hill State Park representative could not speak to the Dallas segment as it is not part of park property.
- Discussion of possible opening date for the trail which has been scheduled for February 2020 with official grand opening occurring during warm weather timeframe. Parks Department will maintain trail when completed.
- Singleton property update includes information that the property owner is deceased and there have been discussions between the family, former mayor and city administration about the possibility of acquiring the property by the city. Suggested use of property includes FM 1382 frontage presence, visitor center or nature corridor entrance for Cedar Hill.
- Update of proposed parking lot at the Cedar Hill State Park FM 1382 entrance. The city is waiting for approval from Texas Parks and Wildlife to proceed.
- Phase II Waterfront update: City is still investigating an entertainment area on the lake. Suggested amenities have been a water-based obstacle course or a restaurant concept. Suggestions would be presented to Cedar Hill State Park and once concept

has been agreed, the design phase would begin. A proforma would be necessary for sustainability of restaurant and remainder of project.

- Signage budget of \$15,000: Discussion regarding the change of the Cedar Hill sign that is overgrown across from the Cedar Hill State Park. A \$15,000 package towards the wayfinder package for the whole corridor that would help to improve look of sign and promote visitation to Cedar Hill.
  - State park is building a new sign so we would not be able to change any Cedar Hill signage at the park until the sign is changed.

#### **V. Receive Update on the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session.**

Staff provided updated on the Promote Texas and Restore Summers programs:

- Promote Texas is a program for full funding for state tourism promotion: Passed with a record-high amount of state funding (\$110 million for the 2020/2021 biennium), an increase of 223% from the 2017 Legislative Session.
- Restore Summers is an initiative that was passed into law in 2007 for a uniform school start date of the fourth Monday in August. Districts (up to 85% at last count) use a loophole created by the 2015 Texas Legislature to start their school years earlier by declaring a "district of innovation", which can exempt a district from a wide range of rules in the state's education code, including Texas' uniform start date. The travel industry officials were unsuccessful in restoring the fourth Monday start date.
- Preserving hotel tax usage: Almost 20 hotel occupancy tax bills were filed that affected the use of local hotel occupancy taxes. Preserving the hotel occupancy tax (HOT) continues to use local HOT revenues to promote communities as travel destinations.

#### **VI. Aloft Hotel / Cedar Hill Convention Center update.**

Staff provided an update that activity will begin at the end of the month. Movement would begin in November. Contractor is working with Oncor and AT&T to make sure of lines on the property and ensure lines are prepared for implementation.

Explanation of the EDC Bond 2016 for roadways and will help not to impact the overall budget.

Staff notified Board that Miranda Auzenne is no longer the manager at Hillside Village. Rene Timms is the new manager at Hillside. The retail center was purchased by Prep Group. Prep Group is looking to use Lee Lewis, contractor for the hotel convention center, to manage infrastructure installation on the adjacent parcel of land.

#### **VII. Election of Officers.**

Motion by Traci Uncel-Martin to re-elect Michaela Kral as Chairperson, seconded by Josh Choate. Russell Read made a motion to re-elect all officers, seconded by Alex Ray. All passed motions unanimously.