Louisville Tourism Commissioners July 2026 Meeting

Thursday, July 23, 2026, at 3:00 PM EDT
Louisville Tourism, 401 W. Main Street, Louisville, KY 40202
Meeting Room: Winner's Circle Board Room

Commissioners Present:
Ryan Bridgeman, Chair
Mike Anderson, Secretary & Treasurer
Guy Genoud
George Stinson
Josh Zik
Scott Shoenberger
Michael Berry
Damaris Phillips
David Greene

Commissioners Absent:
Christi Lanier-Robinson

Commission Representatives Present:
Matt Wallace, Arts & Culture Rep
Jennifer Cummings, LHA Rep.
Althea Jackson, Mayor's Office Rep.

LT STAFF & GUESTS
Cleo Battle, Doug Bennett, Chris Kipper, Nicole Twigg, Zack Davis, Stacey Yates, Mike Shull, and recording secretary, Stephanie Skinner.

CHAIR WELCOME AND REPORT
Ryan Bridgeman called the July meeting to order at 3:02 pm.

- **Welcome New Board Chair**
  Cleo Battle officially welcomed Ryan Bridgeman as the new chair for the 26/27 Fiscal Year. Ryan has been on our board since 2021, and we are excited to have him as our board chair.

- **New Board Members**
  Cleo Battle introduced two new board members. Damaris Phillips and Michael Berry. Damaris is a Governor appointment that replaced Kate Latts seat on our board. He shared her bio with the group. He also introduced Michael Berry, Interim President at Kentucky Venues. His position by virtue replaces David Beck. We are excited to have them both on board. He then turned the meeting back over to **Chairman Bridgeman**.

First on the agenda is the approval of the minutes from May's meeting. **Ryan Bridgeman** called for a motion to accept the May 2026 commission meeting minutes as written. Motion made by **David Greene**. Seconded by **Guy Genoud**. **All in Favor**. ***Motion Carried***.

Chairman Bridgeman, then called on **Mike Anderson** for the Finance Committee Report.

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FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mike Anderson, Chair of the Finance Committee, provided an update from the last meeting. Our committee discussed three topics, two of which were informational only. We had an investment review with Raymond James Public Finance Investment Strategic Group. The second topic was our Series 2016 Bonds, which is a debt against Louisville Tourism to be used for the renovation of the Kentucky International Convention Center. We will likely be coming back to you in September for a recommendation of how that will be paid. No further action at this meeting. The final item is a budget amendment related to the expenses for the 2028 Solheim Cup, which was awarded to Louisville. **Doug Bennett** offered out some additional details.

I. **Solheim Cup Pre-Promotion – Chairman Bridgeman** We have a motion from the **Finance Committee** to approve a budget amendment of $50,500 to fund the 2026 Solheim Cup pre-promotion activities. As the motion is from the **Finance Committee**, it does not require a second. **All in Favor**. ***Motion Carried***.

PRESIDENT REPORT

Cleo Battle shared a few highlights with the board not related to his President's Report. The Governor announced 4th consecutive record years for tourism revenues in the state of Kentucky. 2022-2025 had record tourism revenues and we are excited to be a part of that process. We hosted 20 or so Jefferson County legislators at Louisville Slugger Field in late June growing their appreciation and support in improving tourism in our city and state. I have also been spending time engaging with other community organizations in support of tourism.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chris Kipper provided a brief overview of April & May financials. April was a solid revenue month, coming in $135K above budget, driven primarily by transient room tax. May was slightly below budget, with total revenues of about $90-100K under budget. Again, largely from the transient tax, but I'll point out that one of the three primary Kentucky Derby days fell into the month of April, so that impacted results. Year to date, transient tax remains $650,000 ahead of budget, and total revenues are about $1.2 million favorable. Occupancy remains stable at 63% in both April and May. On the expense side, expenses continue to be well managed by the team. April expenses were $376K below budget, and May expenses $354K below budget.

DESTINATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT REPORT

Zack Davis covered group services & short-term rental analysis. He reported strong performance in Group Services during the fiscal year, with the team supporting 610 meeting and event groups, generating approximately 3.7 million attendees, 990,000 hosted room nights, and an estimated $1 billion in economic impact. Compared to the previous year, group events increased 4%, attendance increased 2%, and hosted room nights increased 5%, reflecting continued growth in Louisville's meetings and events sector. He also presented an analysis of Louisville's short-term rental market, highlighting significant demand during major events such as Louder Than Life, Bourbon & Beyond, the Kentucky Derby, and the Utility Expo. Data showed peak occupancy and booking activity during these events, with the Kentucky Derby driving the highest average daily rental rates. In comparison with peer destinations, Louisville maintains approximately 2,400 active short-term rental listings, ranking lower in inventory than many competitor cities, but achieving the second-highest average daily rental rate in

its competitive set, behind Nashville. Mr. Davis noted that while short-term rental growth has leveled off in recent years, the market continues to perform strongly in both occupancy and rate metrics.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT REPORT

Nicole Twigg reported that Louisville Tourism exceeded its fiscal year attraction attendance goal, achieving 4.74 million visitors, or 103% of goal, representing a 6.5% increase over the previous year. She also highlighted the success of the organization's expanded Visitor Experiences program, which recorded a record 116,729 visitors, reaching 132% of goal and increasing 27% year over year.

She noted that the enhanced visitor experience strategy, including the downtown visitor center, airport welcome center, and mobile visitor center, has helped drive greater visitor engagement through community events, activations, and convention-related activities.

She also shared a significant tourism development achievement involving Viking River Cruises, which has designated Louisville as a major destination and turnaround port beginning in 2027. This partnership is expected to bring additional affluent visitors to the city and create opportunities for extended stays, excursions, hotel bookings, and increased tourism spending. Louisville Tourism is actively collaborating with Viking to develop visitor experiences, training programs, and destination offerings to support the new cruise itineraries.

BOARD REPRESENTATIVES UPDATE

- **Arts & Culture Representative – Matt Wallace** reported that Louisville's arts and culture organizations are actively preparing for upcoming seasons and America 250 programming initiatives. He noted continued leadership momentum within the arts community, including the appointment of Jude Vaclovic as the Louisville Orchestra's new CEO.

  He also shared that the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts will temporarily relocate some staff offices to Louisville Tourism's building during the Belvedere construction project.

  Mr. Wallace highlighted the success of Hamilton, which sold out all 16 performances and attracted approximately 39,000 attendees. He further noted that some arts organizations have reported attendance challenges related to the I-65 closure and unfavorable weather, including a decline in attendance at Kentucky Shakespeare and reported impacts to tourism-related attractions outside Louisville.

- **LHA Representative, Jennifer Cummings** reported that applications are now being accepted for the University of Louisville Hospitality Program scholarships, with two $5,000 scholarships available this year. She also shared that the LHA has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for public relations services to broaden awareness and communication of the association's initiatives. Additionally, she announced that the LHA Golf Outing is scheduled for October 15 and encouraged board members to save the date.

- **Mayor's Office Representative, Althea Jackson** – no updates to share.

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OTHER BUSINESS

- **MFA EMAIL ACCOUNT**
  Stephanie Skinner introduced **Dan Kyle**, our IT Manager, to share some new updates that will affect emails. Starting this Monday as ongoing security measure we will be turning on the multi-factor authentication step to all email accounts which include board members. He passed out a tutorial guide that would assist them in the process.

- **BOARD SERVICE RECOGNITION**
  Cleo Battle recognized **David Greene** for his nine years of service on the Louisville Tourism Board, including three years as Board Chair. Cleo expressed appreciation for his dedication, engagement, and contributions to the organization and hospitality industry. Special recognition was given to his leadership in advancing the Tourism Improvement District (TID) initiative, which was successfully approved in 2022 and now provides approximately $8 million annually to support Louisville Tourism's efforts to attract meetings and conventions. Mr. Greene was thanked for his longstanding partnership, leadership, and commitment to Louisville Tourism, the Louisville Hotel Association, and the broader tourism community.

ADJOURNMENT

Ryan Bridgeman called for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by **Mike Anderson.** Seconded by **Josh Zik.** ***Motion Carried.*** Meeting adjourned at 3:52 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Recording Stephanie Skinner

Minutes approved by: _____

Chair Ryan Bridgeman

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Secretary/Treasurer Mike Anderson