



To: Ms. Diane Stoddard, Interim Lawrence City Manager

CC: Lawrence City Commission

From: Larry McElwain, CEO, The Chamber of Lawrence Kansas

Date: June 19, 2015

Re: Convention and Visitors Bureau

In April, The Chamber became aware of a proposal to take the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) from under the umbrella of Destination Management, Inc. (DMI) and move it to the City. Having concerns about the City being the best place for the CVB to function and compete for business, Chamber staff had discussions with elected officials, City staff, hoteliers, and various CVB Advisory Board members. Those discussions were positive and resulted in City leaders asking for additional input on a plan to ensure the CVB is poised for success in the years ahead. The Chamber very much appreciates the opportunity to participate in this important process.

At this time, we would suggest the following four actions to ensure the future success of the CVB:

1. Convert CVB Advisory Board to a Board of Directors
The role of the CVB board needs to be upgraded to provide greater accountability, governance, and fiduciary oversight.
2. Identify and hire a strong CEO for the CVB
At this time, the CVB needs a credible, competent, and caring CEO who can collaborate and build alliances with other leaders and organizations in town. We believe the CVB would be best served by a resident of Lawrence.
3. Develop a Strategic Plan for the CVB with measurable objectives
The incoming CEO should collaborate with the CVB board of directors, DMI, the City, the Chamber, ReInvent Retirement, local hoteliers, the Economic Development Corporation, Downtown Lawrence, Inc. and others to develop a Strategic Plan. The plan should include measurable objectives and leverage all available resources in the community to meet those objectives.
4. Include the CVB in Community Economic Development Strategic Plan
Once a Strategic Plan for the CVB is developed and adopted, the CVB should be worked into the Community's Economic Development Strategic Plan. This will help establish the CVB as an important partner in our economic development efforts, ensuring improved communication and collaboration with the Chamber and other organizations to achieve shared goals.