

## **HANTX Public Affairs Update** | Ken Benson **August 2019**

Here's a short update on several public affairs issues impacting hotels across North Texas:

**City of Dallas Prepares to Implement Paid Sick Leave Ordinance August 1.** Passed by the Dallas City Council in April, the ordinance will require all employers with 15 or more employees starting August 1 to provide one hour of paid sick time for each 30 hours of work. Paid sick leave would be capped at 68 hours per year for an employee. For employers with less than 15 employees the new ordinance starts next year on August 1, with a cap of 48 hours per year. Most hotel properties in Dallas are not expected to be impacted as most have paid personal time policies that address sick leave. The Dallas ordinance may face a lawsuit as both the Austin and San Antonio paid sick leave ordinances have been challenged in court and not yet been implemented. If you have a question how the new ordinance could impact your property, please contact the HANTX office.

**Dallas Elects New Mayor and Six Other New Members to City Council.** Former Texas State Representative Eric Johnson took over as Dallas Mayor at the end of June. He will replace Mike Rawlings who was term limited from running again. In addition to a new Mayor six new members - Chad West (District 1), Jaime Resendez (District 5), Adam Bazaldua (District 7), Paula Balckmon (District 9), Cara Mendelsohn (District 12) and David Blewett (District 14) also took office in June, making it the highest turnover on the 15 member Dallas Council since 2007.

**Remainder of North Texas City Elections in May Showed No Surprises.** Council races in Irving, Allen, and Addison went pretty much as expected with few turnovers. In Plano, issues about zoning and development issues resulted in two new members being elected to the Plano City Council.

**Irving, Frisco and Denton looking to form Tourism Public Improvement Districts.** State legislation was passed this past session that will allow all three to form new TPID's sometime over the next year. They would join TPID's already in place in Dallas, Arlington and Fort Worth in North Texas.

**Visit Dallas Audit Controversy Settles Down.** Following the resignations of CEO Philip Jones and CFO Matt Jones, and a Dallas City Council briefing on the issues related to the audit in May, the focus for Visit Dallas the past several weeks has been implementing a series of financial and accounting reforms which are expected to be approved by the Dallas City Council sometime in August or September. There had been suggestions by some Council members that the Visit Dallas contract with the city be terminated and contract be put out to bid. The Visit Dallas Board named long time Dallas businessman and civic leader Sam Coats as the interim CEO in May and are in the process of hiring a new CFO.

**Cities Begin to Enter into Negotiations with Airbnb to Collect Local Hotel Occupancy Taxes.** Plano announced earlier this spring they had reached an agreement with Airbnb to start collecting city hotel occupancy taxes for Airbnb stays in that city. Irving and other North Texas cities are also looking to enter into agreements with Airbnb on local hotel taxes.