

**TLDR:**

1. **The Administration of the City of Saint Charles are pushing for a plan to restructure the tourism branch of the city (CVB), putting someone with no experience in tourism, Beth Norviel, who has led a department with a history of high turn-over and preventable mistakes, in charge (which includes leadership over Christmas Traditions, Legends & Lanterns, and Once Upon a Valentines.)**
2. **This is a decision that had no input from the CVB and is not based in data, nor is it a good “business” decision as it stands to impact the amount of tourism dollars supporting the local economy and the community by putting someone with a lack of experience and history of bad leadership in charge.**
3. **We wish for the Saint Charles City Council to vote NO on the Tourism Restructure. We wish for the CVB/Tourism Center and its staff to remain intact and operate at the high-performing, effective rate that it currently is. We also signal support for the hardworking, understaffed team of the Special Events & Communications Department in City Hall (headed by Beth Norviel) to get support and assistance in ways that will bolster their performance (without having to involve the CVB/Tourism Center or their staff whatsoever).**

**What’s all the hubbub?**

The Administration of the City of Saint Charles (Mayor Dan Borgmeyer, City Administrator Larry Dobrosky, and Asst. City Administrator Lawrence Perney ) have unveiled a plan to restructure the Saint Charles CVB (the tourism branch of the city). At the heart of the plan is promoting the city’s current head of communication and special events (who has no experience in tourism, and whose current departments have experience understaffing, high turn-over, and preventable blunders) to assume the position as director of tourism. Meanwhile, several long-time, high-performing tourism professionals will have their roles diminished.

In short, the Administration (without many details, answers, or any consultation with the tourism department) wish to carve-up one of the city’s most high-performing and successful departments, combine it with a separate department that is facing organizational issues and needs help, and put someone with no tourism experience in charge of the crucially important task of drawing tourism to the city.

**Sounds boring, why should I care?**

This restructure would have a negative ripple effect for visitors, residents, and merchants.

1. **Financial Troubles:** A lack of experience in tourism will result in less tourists, and therefore less economic impact (i.e. less money coming into local businesses, restaurants, and hotels). Think of the mom & pop shops on Main Street, a bad tourism season could result in some of them closing their doors.
2. **Festivals:** If you like attending events like Legends & Lanterns and Christmas Traditions, they would look very different. According to the proposed restructure flow chart, 50% of the CVB/Tourism Center staff who produce these events would no longer be involved in the festivals at all. Instead the Signature Event Producer would now be overseen by two individuals who have no history or experience with these events, which would greatly weaken the quality of these long-cherished events. Additionally, a large number of long-time cast, crew, and production staff have indicated they would stop participating in these events if the proposed restructure went into effect.

3. You only have one chance to make a bad impression. Whether in festivals or other tourism services, if visitors sense a diminishing of quality in the experiences they used to enjoy, you won't get a second chance, they'll choose to spend their time (and money) elsewhere.
4. If you've seen the news lately, you'll know that there are any number of issues that the Administration of Saint Charles could be focusing on, "fixing" something that isn't broken shouldn't be one of them.

### **What is the CVB?**

An acronym for Convention and Visitors Bureau, it is also known as the Tourism Center. As the tourism branch of the city of Saint Charles, their job is to bring visitors (and their economic impact) to the area. They maintain a visitors' center on Main Street (complete with a small army of volunteer staff to help guests), oversee destination marketing of St. Charles across the country, create visitor resources (such as the Discover St. Charles website, a yearly visitor magazine, "bite size" dining guide, Main Street maps, etc.), in addition to overseeing operation of the Foundry Art Center, producing large-scale events such as Legends & Lanterns, Saint Charles Christmas Traditions, and Once Upon a Valentine, facilitating a historic walking tour program, supervising the St. Charles Convention Center, there is also a small sales department dedicated to bringing in groups, conventions, and meetings to stay in and experience the destination, as well as a content creation team that maintains all "Discover St. Charles" social media, blogs, photography, among many other things.

### **What is the difference between "Signature Events" and "Special Events?"**

It can be confusing, but there is a distinction:

- **Signature Events:** These are events that are produced entirely by the CVB/Tourism Center for the expressed purpose of drawing tourists (and their economic impact) to the area. Examples include Legends & Lanterns, Saint Charles Christmas Traditions, and Once Upon a Valentine. Each event involves nearly 100 members of the local community who participate as actors, designers, and crew members to create events that are unlike any other programming in the country. While a wonderful offering for locals, visitors drawn from out of town stimulate the local economy with spending at shops, restaurants, and hotels.
- **Special Events:** Produced by the Special Events department located in City Hall, these are events that are primarily designed for locals, and (while wonderful), are not used to draw out-of-town visitors. These include Paw Parades, Farmers Markets, Mardi Gras Parade, and Hot Summer Nights concert series.

### **What is the outcome we wish to see?**

We wish for the Saint Charles City Council to vote NO on the Tourism Restructure. We wish for the CVB/Tourism Center and its staff to remain intact and operate at the high-performing, effective rate that it currently is.

We also signal support for the hardworking, understaffed team of the Special Events & Communications Department in City Hall (headed by Beth Norviel) to get support and assistance in ways that will bolster their performance (without having to involve the CVB/Tourism Center or their staff whatsoever).

### **What is the process for the restructure plan to go into effect or not?**

To go into effect, the City Council needs to pass an ordinance that outlines the restructure. It has already passed its first hurdle when on August 12<sup>th</sup>, the Council voted 7-3 to proceed with the Administration drafting the ordinance. The ordinance will then have to go through two "readings" (i.e. it will be presented a two separate council meetings for discussion and an eventual vote to pass it or not). These

Council meetings are open to the public and there is a section for members of the public to make comments to the council. These meetings generally take place on the first and third Tuesday of the month. They have not put this matter on the agenda yet (it is a belief that Administration may be stalling to wait for public outcry on this issue to die down...so keep the pressure up!) Keep an ear out for when these meetings are to take place.

### **What Can I Do To Help?**

1. Get informed. Know what's going on, and spread the word. Most importantly, make sure you have the facts correct, there is a lot of passion regarding this topic, but we have to ensure that our legitimate concern does not get infiltrated by misinformation. This FAQ answers most of the over-arching questions, and this website also has a list of talking points to help craft your argument.
2. Contact the City Council Members, encouraging them to vote NO on the proposed restructure. Remember to be firm, but kind and respectful (remember, they were blindsided by this proposal as well).
3. Come to the Council Meetings when this matter will be discussed. Show your support, and (if you feel comfortable), lend your voice during the public comment section (arrive early to fill out a "speaker's card." Just remember that each speaker only has 3 minutes to make their point (so keep it personal, powerful, but concise).

### **Mayor Dan has (repeatedly) said he's a businessman and wants to run the city like a business, what's wrong with that?**

True, he is a businessman. You know what else was also run by businessmen? Circuit City, Borders, Radio Shack, Blockbuster Video, and Enron. The city is not a business, it is a community where people raise their families and live their lives. Mayor Borgmeyer doesn't care about quality or what makes this region special, he wants to cut corners, throw around nonsense buzzwords he thinks make him sound cutting edge (take a drink every time you hear him use the word "synergy!"), and see dollar signs everywhere he looks (as he mentioned at the August 28<sup>th</sup> tourism commission meeting "show me the money.") Make no mistake the Tourism Department has a huge, direct positive financial impact on the area (some of the figures can be found listed on this website), and the crowds that are drawn to attend CVB/Tourism Center events help sustain businesses on Main Street to be able to keep their doors open and thrive.

But on the other hand, we should trust Mayor Borgmeyer's recent business record...a barren plot of land called "Riverpoint" (complete with a parking lot in the middle of nowhere!), a large hole at 5<sup>th</sup> street and First Capitol (squint hard and it will look like the luxury apartments that were supposed to be there), and let's not even get started with the recent debacle with the Data Center...and NDAs...and the land being owned by his family (oops).

### **Restructures are sometimes good, you're just afraid of change!**

Indeed, restructures can be good IF thoughtfully constructed by people who have an intimate knowledge of the affected departments and the resulting ripple effects of the change. This restructure has neither of those things.

1. Twice during the August 12 city council meeting, City Administrator Larry Dobrosky made mention of the city's Farmers Market that "takes place in the parking lot of the Foundry Art Centre." Interesting, since the Farmers Market hasn't taken place in the Foundry lot since 2024. This is no mistake, it is an all too sad pattern. The Administration has zero interest in learning the details of the events that they now seek to shake up. Likewise, neither of the three

members of Administration attend any signature festivals or Foundry Art Centre events produced by the CVB/Tourism Center aside from an occasional ribbon cutting or photo op (despite these events taking place a block away from city hall, or in one case, mere yards away from one of their homes). If they cannot be bothered to be actively involved in signature festivals that draw hundreds of thousands of visitors and are nationally known, how can we possibly trust them to make an informed decision this is best for the city, its residents, and visitors?

2. Beth Norviel, the current special events & communications director, who is the individual pegged by Administration to lead the Tourism Center as the new director is a good person and a hard worker. However, she also has been bogged down by various pitfalls in her current role of special events & communications director (i.e. publicly sharing AI-generated maps that are incorrect, botched communication response to merchants and residents about a recent boil order, a lack of transparency regarding livestreaming a recent Data Center meeting, a general lack of communication with merchants who email her multiple times and never get a response, purposely double-booking a “St. LOUIS Taco Fest” in St. CHARLES twice (once during the busiest weekend of Legends & Lanterns and AGAIN during the annual merchant-produced Main Street in Bloom event)...this bad faith decision took away a massive amount of parking for visitors who came to participate in the years-long established events on Main Street, drew hungry patrons away from Main Street businesses, and pumped loud music that competed with carefully created vibe of these local events.) And the list goes on and on. Add to this she has zero tourism experience, a recipe for disaster that could be totally prevented by leaving the expertise at the Tourism Center intact.

**RUMOR: I hear they are defunding the festivals (i.e. Legends & Lanterns, Christmas Traditions)**

This is not true. While there are several Saint Charles merchants who can attest that the Mayor has spoken previously about a desire to move the festivals off Main Street, as well as his belief that the city spends too much money on the festivals (that generate a huge amount of economic impact for local businesses), the current proposed restructuring plan does not indicate a cut to festival funding, and therefore should not be used in any argument against the plan (though it should keep you motivated as it may hint towards strategies in the future if the restructure is approved).

**RUMOR: In the new plan, production of the festivals (i.e. Legends & Lanterns, Christmas Traditions) will be transferred to the Main Street merchants.**

This is not true. Under the restructure plan, the festivals would still be under the purview of the Signature Events Producer, though these festivals would fall under new direct management/supervision from the newly proposed “Special Events/Tourism Director” Beth Norviel and “Events Assistant Director,” two individuals with no experience with these large-scale events.

**RUMOR: Individuals will be fired as a part of this restructure.**

This is not true. At this point. Instead, there WILL be highly qualified individuals who will be forced out of having any involvement with certain tourism-related matters, control of which will be given over to individuals with ZERO experience in the tourism industry, transferred from under-performing city departments.

**Rebuttals:**

**Director of Administration, Larry Dobrosky has said many times “nothing will change.”**

You could start a drinking game every time humble public servant Larry Dobrosky (who costs the city tax payers only \$262,594 a year), uses the phrase “nothing will change” as an answer to a question. During the August 12<sup>th</sup> council meeting, he uttered no less than four times “nothing will change,” while standing next to the projected image of a restructure flow chart...of changes. Relocating the CVB’s content creators away from tourism and into another city department is a change. Removing the Assistant Director from having anything to do with signature festivals is a change. Placing someone with no tourism experience as the head of St. Charles tourism is a change. The fact that Dobrosky doesn’t recognize this is as infuriating as it is mind-boggling.

**Director of Administration, Larry Dobrosky stated at the August 12 Council Meeting “if it doesn’t work, we’ll look at how things can be done differently.”**

We would like to see a metric of what determines if this restructure “doesn’t work.” What is the time line? If it crashes and burns in six months will administration tell us “the new director is just getting warmed up, give her a year?” And what if after a year it’s still not running as well as it used to, will the excuse then be “well, now that she’s got a year under her belt, let’s give it another year?” Who gets to determine if it’s not working? The mayor? The merchants & stakeholders? We would like clarity on what mechanics are in place should the restructure under-perform the current operations of the CVB/Tourism Center.

**Mayor Dan has stated that “people go on social media and catch their hair on fire” over this situation.**

It’s almost as if constituents don’t like a lack of transparency (this restructuring plan blindsided local merchants, the city council, and the CVB/Tourism center itself when it was presented August 12<sup>th</sup>...at the same time that a Data Center raised alarming transparency questions of this Administration). It’s almost as if constituents don’t like a plan that is all fluff and no details (but you’ll get plenty of buzzwords. Synergy! Efficiency!) It’s almost as if constituents don’t like being constantly antagonized and degraded by their elected officials (at the August 28<sup>th</sup> tourism commission meeting, Mayor Borgmeyer, unable to control his emotions, picked up a microphone and got into a verbal spat with concerned resident & former tourism director Steve Powell during the public comment section...super cringe!) It’s almost as if constituents are tired of “businessmen” trying to fix what isn’t broken (but I hear a certain hardworking, understaffed communications department could use some help and attention, rather than being rewarded with the keys to the Tourism Department).

In short...continue to catch your hair on fire, friends! Stay informed, spread the word, raise your voice, keep up the pressure, keep positive, and TOGETHER we will win this fight!