

April 7th Approved Minutes

Date: April 7<sup>th</sup> 2016

Time: 11:00am(Reception/Lunch)

Location: Rutherfordton Club House

Members Present: Amy Bridges, Barbara Meliski, Dawn Hemmelgarn, Dave Long, Diane Barrett, Richard Lundy, Tammy Martell, Willard Whitson

Members Absent: Jeff Bradley

Ex-Officios Absent: Eddie Holland, Paula Roach

TDA Staff Present: Don Cason, Karen Tegen, Sherri Seay, Taylor Hardin, Wesley Alexander

Others Present: Candace Hladick, Mark Teague, Michelle Yelton, Media (2), Scott Webber, Doug Barrick, Bob Keith

Meeting Called To Order At: 12:03

Public Comments: The board has adopted the county's policy regarding public comments and will now use a sign in sheet.

Addition To Agenda: Closed Session G.S 143-318.11 during Budget discussion

Motion To Accept Addition To Agenda: First-Tammy Martell; Second-Barbara Meliski

Motion Passed.

Motion To Adopt Amended Agenda: First-Diane Barrett; Second-Willard Whitson

Motion Passed.

Changes to Previous Meeting's Notes: No changes to prior meetings notes.

Motion to Approve Notes as Minutes: First-Barbara Meliski; Second-Amy Bridges

Motion Passed.

Second Vice Chair: Don put in his resignation to the board during his time as Interim Director. Richard nominated Willard Whitson.

Motion to Accept Willard as Second Vice Chair: First- Barbara Meliski; Second- Tammy Martell

Motion Passed.

Willard Accepted.

Treasurer Replacement: Don explained the position. The board has been asked to consider the position. Vote will be move to May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Executive Director Report: Don Cason

- First days spent at the VisitNC 365 conference.
- Spent additional time with the McConnell Group and J.M. Teague Engineering to start the budget planning process for FY 16-17.

Finance Report: Don Cason

- From the TSA and TEIM 2014 Study:
  - Of 100 counties in the state of NC, Rutherford County is number 26 for tourism.
  - 1,170 of our jobs are in Tourism.
  - RC households pay \$380 less in taxes each year because of what tourism does for the county.
- According to the most recent Occupancy Tax report, we have collected 91% of our projected collections with four strong months to come. Our new projections show we may bring in over \$800,000 in occupancy tax for the total year.
- The April RFF Summary shows revenue projections are up, expenses are flat compared to the budget. In marketing, we are over budget in some items due to not budgeting for printing but the McConnell Group will finish on track if not below.

Motion to Approve Finance Report: First- Dawn Hemmelgarn; Second-Barbara Meliski

Motion Passed.

Committee Reports:

- Information – Continuing to meet and working on projects to be done at the Welcome Center
- Wayfinding – The airport approved the painting of the compass rose and the addition of TDA info stand
- Website – RFP was sent out end of march to 12 companies. RFPs due back April 15<sup>th</sup>
- TAF – Public Launch of Gold Trail in July. Hidden Floor of Gold is planned for spring installation at the mint site

Guest Speaker: Molly Oakman (Community Relations Manager for TIEC)

- Molly presented all of the changes taking place at TIEC including new openings and current construction. She mentioned that the “game changer” is a fraction of what is about to come. The TDA is in their temporary visitor center and at the start of the season, the TDA mobile unit will be on site free of charge with agreement that Polk County visitor center will help man it and will have use of it. Molly mentioned that lodging is one of their biggest challenges. This impacts Rutherford County greatly.

County Wide Strategic Plan: Don Cason

- Development of potential advisory board has started
- Richard wants us to start contacting the potential advisory board to get their thoughts
- The advisory board is to lead and direct. All citizens will have the opportunity to give their input
- Richard wants to see an example of what the plan may look like
- Request for board to email their suggestions for members to Don
- Don has created action steps for the process with meeting with the individuals towns being at the top of the list

Marketing Update: Michelle Yelton

- 2015-2016 Highlights: Held 2 coffee talk meetings, completed visitor research, NYC media mission, created driving tours and created Instagram length videos
- Summer 2015 theme – “Choose Your Adventure”
- Fall 2015 theme – “Fall in love with Lake Lure and the Blue Ridge Foothills”
- Winter 2015 theme – “Hometown Holidays”
- Winter 2016 – Focused on history. Currently planning for spring/summer 2016
- Spring 2016 theme – “Unplug this Spring in Lake Lure and the Blue Ridge Foothills
- Total media impressions for top media hits totaled 92,184,214
- FY 2016-2017 proposal – “Have the time of your life...”
- Plan for FY 2016-2017 is to continue emphasis on Social Media. A strong focus will also be placed on media pitching and tours

Wayfinding Update: Mark Teague

- J.M. Teague has worked with the TDA since 2010
- The “wheel” shows that the TDA/Wayfinding falls under Collaboration Management and Transportation Planning.
- Cherry Bounce Trail Signs are complete. Over Mountain Victory Trail is also complete.
- Info Stands are still going up.
- Working on having the Google car to come to the visitor’s center in Lake Lure.
- Air-markings- need to talk to the airport to get the process started ASAP. The designs are the same for every airport. Paint colors vary as paint is donated by the DOT.
- FY 2016-2017 plans include Wayfinding Implementation of 48 signs to complete the entire county.

Budget:

- The Budget process has started
- The Budget plan for 2016-2017 shows that Revenues and Expenses will be going up.
- The board needs to discuss the budget process further.

Closed Session: G.S. 143-318.11

3:11 pm-3:54 pm

No votes/action taken.

Meeting Adjourned: 3:55

Next Board Meeting: May 5<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon at the Woodrow Jones Building.