

**Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority**  
**Board Meeting**

**Call to Order:** 12:03

**Members Present:** Amy Bridges, Barbara Meliski, Dave Long, Diane Barrett, Kitty McCammon, Lynn Brown, Richard Lundy, Chuck Martell, Willard Whitson

**Members Absent:** Ruthie Hanson

**Ex-Officos Present:** Paula Roach

**Ex-Officos Absent:** Eddie Holland

**Others Present:** Amy Brevard, Jimmy Dancy, Karen Tegen, Kevin Cooley, Leniece Lane, Merri Oxley, Media (2),

**Public Comments:** Jimmy Dancy – On behalf of the town – thank you and Merry Christmas. Thank you for what you are doing for the town of Rutherfordton and the whole county. There has been times in the past when TDA has seem distant. Over the last few years we now feel part of the TDA and I personally thank you for being on Main Street. This organization is great one to be downtown. Thank you again for what you are doing. You have come a great distance in a short time and I think you are making well advancements in our communities and I think all communities would agree. Thank you for allowing us to be apart of it.

**Agenda(changes if necessary):** No Changes

Approval: 1st: Diane Barrett  
2nd: Chuck Martell

Motion Passed.

**Prior Meeting Minutes (changes if necessary):** No Changes

Approval: 1st: Diane Barrett  
2nd: Barbara Meliski

Motion Passed.

**Finance Report:**

- Year to date through November, we are \$35,000 ahead of last year or 6% (1% below plan)
- We are confident that we will be at the 1-million-dollar budget
  - Hampton Inn online end of December
  - Occ Tax increase from 5%-6% – January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018
  - STR Program will bring new receipts
  - Line items on schedule

Audit: Paula Roach

- Gould Killian
- County sent out RFP for new year
- Similar numbers as to what Don has presented previously
- Fund Balance Numbers finalized - \$671,000
- Revenues show growth

Motion to accept audit:

Approval: 1st: Chuck Martell  
2nd: Diane Barrett

Motion to Approve Finance Report:

Approval: 1st: Amy Bridges  
2nd: Diane Barrett

Motion Passed.

**Don Cason – Tourism Strategic Plan**

- TDA has finalized partnerships with towns for Tourism Master Plan, contracts approved and signed by Town Councils and TDA
- Tourism Plan process to be completed by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2018
- The Towns of Lake Lure, Chimney Rock, Rutherfordton, and Spindale have formed steering committees and initial meetings are complete.
- Implementation and funding campaign to follow

**Executive Director Report:**

- Busy couple of months attending and participating in different meetings
- Presentations to county meetings and town meetings
- Attended County Department Head Meeting – WEG Update and County Updates
- RHI / Green line Committee – RHI provided grant for Green Line Trail Research
- Rail Trail Meeting – Review preliminary branding and logos
- Designated by County Commissioners to serve on Historic Preservation Board
- NCTTC Meeting – Networking with Tourism Leaders in State
- Met with NCSU – Reviewed possible reservation system for web
- Met with Visit Lex – Visit Lex presented WEG impact on Lexington KY
- Participated / Attended – Rutherfordton / Spindale Tourism Steering Committee Meetings

**Welcome Center Update:**

- Snapshot of attendance
  - Less visitation – cannot identify at this time – continuing to monitor
- Continuing to collect surveys. Continuing to receive good feedback
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**Marketing Update:**

- New slide highlighting Amy's involvement
- Photo shoot for travel guide cover - complete
- Aditorial opportunity – rate sheet provided
- Visit NC regional tour in Atlanta – 20 one on one opportunities
- Growing database of contacts
- Upcoming – ad campaigns for spring
  - media and fam tours
  - polar plunge events
  - SEO contract

Leniece – Spent time with Amy in transitioning over to her

- McConnell group still going blogs
- Amy is leading on advertising – McConnell still doing impressions
- Provided September and October update
- Analytics:
  - Charlotte, Nashville, and Atlanta are top three cities
  - Website traffic is continuing to increase
  - Continuing to work on ad word campaign

**Committee Reports**

**Marketing:**

- Reviewed website and SEO presentations from four vendors. Decided to go with Simpleview Lite option.
- Reviewed Travel Guide Cover Ideas and layout.
- Reviewed Travel Guide Ad-itorial Price Sheet.
- Reviewed and Discussed Amy's new roles and responsibilities.

**TAF:**

- Hired a marketing coordinator –helping keep the house open more hours through the week
- Added new benches for visitors in the Bechtler House
- Updated and maintained Hidden Floor of Gold display at Mint Site

**Finance:**

- RFF Updates
- Audit Review
- Occupancy Tax Program
  - STR Helper Update

**Information:**

- Mobile Unit Sale
- \$7,500 sell price
- Where to allocate the money
- Welcome Center
- Staff Update
- New Morse Park Plan

**Grant Committee:**

- Did not Meet

**Committee Updates Cont'd**

**WEG committee:**

- Informational WEG meeting with Visit Lex Director. We discussed how they prepared, ideas, training and suggestions of WEG impact and had Q & A time. Surrounding town officials and representatives were also in attendance.

**Executive:**

- Provided Wayfinding Update – Discussed potential time-line for completion
- Reviewed Marketing Committee meeting and Website Optimization – Reviewed marketing contract/optimization contract
- Provided update on staff progress for marketing – marketing responsibilities to internal staff going well
- Provided WEG update – Discussed VisitLex meeting
- Provided Welcome Center staff update
- Reviewed board meeting agenda
- Provided TDA Tourism Master Plan Update – All towns are in planning process

**Announcements:**

- Willard – kid senses purchased building for expansion – just received \$35,0000 grant and two grants from RHI
- Amy – Christmas in FC – hometown spotlight tomorrow. Park taking shape. Concrete pouring now. Demolition contract for rail trail received and signed up on. A lot of publicity especially from romantic Asheville
- Diane – polar plunge January 1<sup>st</sup> in Lake Lure – 10<sup>th</sup> annual- 2 new events this year: fun run and tug of war

Motion to enter Closed Session G.S 143-318.11(Attorney-Client)

1<sup>st</sup>: Willard Whitson

2nd: Barbara Meliski

Motion Passed.

Motion to end Closed Session G.S 143-318.11(Attorney-Client)

1<sup>st</sup>: Amy Bridges

2nd: Willard Whitson

Motion Passed.

**Meeting Adjourned: 2:08**

Next meeting February 8th 2017 at 12 noon in the Woodrow Jones Building