

Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting

Call to order: 12:05pm

Public Comments: ----

Welcome New Board Member: Margaret Annunziata, new president of Isothermal Community College as of February 1st 2021. Originally from the Davidson/Davie County area, with her previous workplace being their community college system. She feels that community college systems play such central and important roles in their communities—so she looks forward to being a part of our community here in Rutherford County.

Members Present: Dave Long, Mia Chapman, Jim Masek, David Hislop, Dana Bradley, Margaret Annunziata, Jeff Geisler, and Mary Jaeger-Gale

Members Absent: Kitty McCammon, and Janet Mason

Ex-Officos Present: David Hunt

Ex-Officos Absent: Paula Roach

Others Present: Don Cason, Emily Ostertag, Taylor Hardin, and Kayley Smith

Additions / Deletions from Agenda: ----

Motion to approve Agenda:

Approval: 1st: Jim Masek
2nd: David Hunt
Motion Passed.

Prior Meeting Minutes (changes if necessary): ----

Approval: 1st: David Hunt
2nd: Dana Bradley
Motion Passed.

2021-2022 Board Updates:

- Reviewed all documents in 2021-2022 board handbooks, including the organizational background, conflict of interest, TDA legislation and county resolution, the TDA by-laws, board dates, committee information, contact info for each other and your TDA staff, fiscal year year-end 20-21 review and fiscal year 21-22 goals, and all of the fiscal year 21-22 budget documents.
- Review of Conflict of Interest form. Each board member signed and returned their form.

2021-2022 Board/Executive Board dates:

- Reviewed the proposed board meeting dates for the 2021-2022 fiscal year:

2021-2022 Meeting Dates for TDA Board

RCTDA Board Meetings:

All Board Meetings are held in the Woodrow Jones Building conference room at 12:00 noon unless otherwise noted.

July 22nd, 2021	March 31st, 2022
September 9th, 2021	May 12th, 2022
October 21st, 2021	June 9th, 2022 (Public Hearing)
December 2nd, 2021	July 21st, 2022 (First meeting of FY 20-21)
January 6th, 2022	
February 17th, 2022	

RCTDA Executive Committee Meetings:

Meetings are held one week prior to board meeting at the Woodrow Jones Building offices at 3:00 pm unless otherwise noted.

July 22nd, 2021	March 24th, 2022
September 2nd, 2021	May 5th, 2022
October 14th, 2021	June 2nd, 2022
November 23rd, 2021	July 14th, 2022 (First meeting of FY 20-21)
December 30th, 2021	
February 10th, 2022	

Motion to accept the 2021-2022 board dates as presented

Approval: 1st: David Hunt
2nd: Mary Jaeger-Gale

Motion Passed.

Board Positions / Nominations:

- Reviewed the board positions, and which board members currently fill those positions. The board was given the opportunity to decline these positions and/or make new nominations. Since Dave Long has transitioned to the position of Board Chair, his former position of 1st Vice Chair is now vacant.

Presented the Executive Board's recommendations and opened the floor for other nominations:

Chair – Dave Long (appointed by County Commissioners

July 6th, 2021)

1st Vice Chair – Mary Jaeger-Gale (approved by board)

2nd Vice Chair – Jim Masek (approved by board)

Treasurer – Jeff Geisler (renewed for another year)

Secretary – Mia Chapman (approved by board)

Motion to accept nominations as presented

Approval: 1st: David Hunt
2nd: Dana Bradley

Motion Passed.

TDA Committees:

- Reviewed the 2021-2022 Committee slate, giving the board time to review the committees they serve on and make any changes if necessary

2021-2022 TDA Committees

Executive-DON	
Dave Long	dlong@tryon.com
1st Vice Chair	
2nd Vice Chair	
Treasurer	

Relocate to Rutherford-DON	
Margaret Annunziata	mannunziata@isothermal.edu
Mia Chapman	miachapman@strivemarketingco.com
Jim Masek	jim.masek@yahoo.com

Tourism Strategic Plan-EMILY	
Margaret Annunziata	mannunziata@isothermal.edu
Kitty McCammon	kitty@blueridgedesignllc.com
Jeff Geisler	jgeisler@rumblingbald.com
Mia Chapman	miachapman@strivemarketingco.com
Dave Long	dlong@tryon.com

Information-KAYLEY	
Dave Long	dlong@tryon.com
Mary Jaeger-Gale	maryjg@chimneyrockpark.com

Keep RC Beautiful-TAYLOR	
Dana Bradley	prtcoordinator@townoflakelure.com
Janet Mason	janetmason@townofforestcity.com

Marketing/Grant-TAYLOR	
Kitty McCammon	kitty@blueridgedesignllc.com
Mary Jaeger-Gale	maryjg@chimneyrockpark.com
Mia Chapman	miachapman@strivemarketingco.com
Jim Masek	jim.masek@yahoo.com

Agritourism-TAYLOR	
Kitty McCammon	kitty@blueridgedesignllc.com
David Hislop	davidhislop@gmail.com

Finance-TAYLOR	
Jeff Geisler	jgeisler@rumblingbald.com
Janet Mason	janetmason@townofforestcity.com
Dave Long	dlong@tryon.com

Trails-TAYLOR	
Kitty McCammon	kitty@blueridgedesignllc.com
Jeff Geisler	jgeisler@rumblingbald.com
David Hislop	davidhislop@gmail.com
Dana Bradley	prtcoordinator@townoflakelure.com

Motion to approve the slate of committees as presented

Approval: 1st: Mary Jaeger-Gale

2nd: Dana Bradley

Motion Passed.

Finance Report:

Finance Report Highlights:

Highlights

Occupancy tax growth reviewed over the last several months

We came in at just over \$2.5 million for the year

This has been an absolutely record breaking year, with almost \$1.4 million over the project budget

Year-end budget and rolling financial forecast reviewed

Revenue is up and expenses are below budget

The fund balance is right around \$2.7 million, however this number includes a number of items that will be rolling over from last fiscal year

The total funds that will be rolled over is about \$862,000

We are well over the recommended fund balance of \$750,000

Motion to approve Finance Report:

Approval: 1st: David Hunt

2nd: Mia Chapman

Motion Passed.

Executive Director Report:

Highlights:

- The TDA had many meetings throughout the county this last month
- Met with the Hickory Nut Gorge Chamber to discuss a potential Farmers Market in the Gorge
- Participated in the Lake Lure Marina and Ribbon Cutting ceremony
- We are also partnering with the Hickory Nut Gorge to conduct an economic impact study

- Attended a community workshop in Bostic to discuss a Rural Village Center, which is based off a new State initiative to create gathering places in remote, rural communities. Over a 2-day workshop, community

leaders met and brainstormed about the different programs that could be offered at this center, as well as potential funding

- Met with the Mayor and Manager of Spindale to discuss their Phase II Strategic Plan Projects
- The TDA hosted and organized the filming and feature of Rutherford County on the WLOS program, Road Trippin'. The program will feature tourism assets throughout the county from Lake Lure to Bostic.
- Spindale and the County are working together on some of their Phase II projects, including work on the TBRT
- TDA staff were given a tour of the Lake Lure Dam, as improvements and reconstruction are being planned
- Met with the Rutherford County Theatre Association, and discussed a potential welcome center and museum at the theatre location
- Met with the Carolina Climbers Coalition, and toured a new trail in Chimney Rock. The TDA will provide funding to aid in the completion of this trail, with plans for a Fall ribbon cutting ceremony
- The TDA also attended the Historical Preservation Committee, and discussed the moving of the Guffey Cabin—the oldest home in Rutherford County

Welcome Center Update:

- Visitation and visitor traffic continues to be up
- The Welcome Center has had some staffing changes, including the promotion of Kayley Smith to Welcome Center Coordinator.
- Two new Information Specialists have also been hired, one full-time and one part-time. Karen Tegen, former Welcome Center and Project Manager, has stepped down to a part-time position as an Information Specialist with the Welcome Center.

Marketing Report:

Marketing Committee Update

- o Internal Marketing Report
 - o The TDA tourism website is still under renovation with a completion goal of September
 - o The 2021 Travel Guide has been extremely popular with businesses and welcome centers flying through their stock
 - o Meetings have been scheduled to do a redesign of the next travel guide, with a decrease in the directory in order to add more content to other sections
 - o Discussion will be had about potentially reprinting additional stock of our current guide, or printing the redesign sooner
 - o The TDA partnered with Dustin's Way Collective to gather video footage and content for future commercials
 - o The WLOS Road Trippin' segments are currently airing through the 25th
 - o Seeing Southern Magazine has writers here on assignment June 28th through July 1st. They were gathering content for upcoming articles about our area
 - o The TDA has partnered with and is volunteering for the Cycle NC event, which will be held August 6th through the 8th. This particular Cycle NC event has had one of the largest number of registrations of any of their past events
 - o The TDA also had banners made for each town which the Cycle NC riders will be passing through—Forest City, Rutherfordton, Spindale, Ruther and Bostic.
- o The Agency Slides presented by Taylor Hardin:
 - o Review of June data
 - o All social media is continuing to increase
 - o Review of top social media posts, impressions and website analytics
 - o 2019 stats. have be added to the data to show a true comparison to numbers from before the pandemic
 - o Website demographics were reviewed
 - o Top pages were reviewed—places to stay remains our most visited website page
 - o Charlotte, Atlanta, and Nashville remain our top three cities for visitors
 - o The SEO report from Simpleview shows that all traffic is up year-over-year, including our organic traffic, etc.
 - o Traditional media advertising was reviewed

Committee Updates:

Marketing Committee:

See marketing report

- Meeting with the Agency Marketing Group scheduled for July 27th

Agri-Tourism Committee:

- Stakeholders met June 8th
- Branding establishment
- Education and asset development
- Reaching the middle 60% of the population
- Next steps are:
 - o Look into Americorp Vista
 - o Consult through ASAP
 - o ICC Program
 - o Look into what counties are doing: Orange, Brunswick, Madison, Buncombe, Cleveland, etc.

Finance Committee:

- *See finance report*
- No meeting

Tourism Strategic Plan Committee:

- Committee met June 29th to hear program of work and budget requests from PMA Consulting and Destination by Design
- The committee has decided to put PMA Consulting's program of work on hold until further notice
- Destination by Design and the Strategic Plan Committee are still collaborating to finalize their 2021-2022 contract to be presented to the full board for approval at a later date
- The committee has requested TDA staff do more research in the community in order to decide on potential plan revision, funding goals, timelines, potential staffing, etc.
- The Agency Marketing Group's 2021-2022 Rutherford Bound contract has been reviewed and approved by the Strategic Plan Committee

Motion to approve The Agency Marketing Group's 2021-2022 Rutherford Bound Contract as presented:

Approval: 1st: Margaret Annunziata
2nd: David Hunt
Motion Passed.

CFHC Committee:

- No Meeting
- Review of current donation status - \$29,450

Keep Rutherford County Beautiful Committee:

- Full committee meeting July 29th
- Marketing committee met June 29th
 - o Discussed the budget, the next Trash Bowl, the Green Business Standard Initiative, website updates, the Green Scholarship, etc.

Information Committee:

- No Meeting
- *See Welcome Center Update*

Relocate to Rutherford Committee:

- Committee meeting on July 29th
- Committee is in the process of re-grouping post-COVID
- Destination by Design will be presenting a proposed website design
- Steve Lockett, from the Foothills Commission, will also be coming to the meeting to talking about housing in the county

Executive Committee:

- Met July 15th
- *See Executive Director Report*

Date:7/22/21.....

Approved as Minutes:9/9/21.....

Announcements:

- Chimney Rock Village is having a picnic to celebrate 30 years since the Town was incorporated
- WNCW is now selling tickets for Going Across the Mountain, which will be held at ICC
- The Cherry Bounce Festival won several different awards for the promotion of the event
- There is a quilt tour this weekend, which will feature several different locations throughout the county

Meeting Adjourned: 1:32pm