

MINUTES
BEECH MOUNTAIN TOWN COUNCIL
Special Meeting – June 18, 2014

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Owen called the special meeting of the Beech Mountain Town Council and the Tourism Development Authority Board to order at 1:03 p.m., Wednesday June 18, 2014 in the meeting room at Buckeye Recreation center; 1330 Pine Ridge Road Beech Mountain, NC 28604. Other Council Members present were Alan Holcombe, Vice Mayor Paul Piquet, and E. 'Rick' Miller. Cindy Keller was not present. Tourism Development Authority Board Members present were Chairperson Brian Barnes, Vice Chairperson Judy Decker, Calder Smoot, and Carl Marquardt. Candi Catoe was not present. Staff members present were Town Clerk Jennifer Broderick and Finance Officer Nancy Johnson.

II. Adoption of Agenda – Mayor Owen stated that the agenda would stand as presented.

III. New Business

- a. Working Relationship Between the Tourism Development Authority and the Town***
– Mayor Owen stated that we all have a big interest in the topic. Mayor Owen stated that discussion would begin with the job description and go from there.

Note: Cindy Keller arrived at 1:06. p.m.

Mayor Owen stated that the two boards were getting together to determine whether they were able to come together or if the Tourism Development Authority will be doing something on their own. Mayor Owen stated that there would also be discussion on what the Town can do with the Tourism Development Authority to facilitate the growth of the Town. Mayor Owen stated that the latest discussion has been that the Tourism Development Authority would fund half of the position and the Town would fund half; with the Town managing this position and the individual functioning much like the Town Planner in interacting with the Tourism Development Authority Board. Mayor Owen asked if the Tourism Development Authority is comfortable paying half. Chairperson Barnes stated that Tourism Development Authority had unanimously motioned at their last meeting to do so.

Job Description – Chairperson Barnes stated that Craig Distl had provided input which was reflected in the most current job description that was before Town Council and the Tourism Development Authority for consideration. Mr. Smoot stated that Craig Distl wanted to make sure that there was good synergy between the two positions. Mr. Smoot stated that it was important that the individual in this position develop a good repertoire with the community through direct face time with the businesses. Chairperson Barnes stated it was important that the Town know what was going on as well. Mr. Marquardt stated that the practice of holding meetings and having businesses come to those

informational meetings was not effective and that the individual in this position needed to go to the businesses. Family Fun Month, for example, has not been properly advertised. Councilwoman Keller asked if it would make sense to have a quarterly or seasonally meeting to review what is going on with the Town Council and Tourism Development Authority. Mr. Smoot stated it would be good for the Tourism Development Authority Director, Chamber of Commerce employee and the other people working there in the Visitors Center to make time for face time with the businesses. Mr. Marquardt stated that the employee should have an idea of all of the offerings on the mountain. Vice Chairperson Decker stated that when Peggy Coscia was there she would at least drop by the Pinnacle Inn once a month to go over what was going on. Councilwoman Keller felt that there should at least be seasonal meetings held. Mr. Smoot stated that there are some orientations that are taking place. Mayor Owen asked if the Town can find someone to do all of these tasks at this price. Councilwoman Keller stated that this position had been paid entirely by occupancy tax and now the Town is being asked to fund half of this position. Councilwoman Keller asked if this would free up Tourism Development Authority dollars to get Craig Distl to do more. Mr. Marquardt stated this money is not being specifically set aside for Craig Distl. Vice Chairperson Decker stated that the Tourism Development Authority wanted to have access to money for marketing opportunities that come along. Mr. Marquardt stated that this position is to be for more than heads in beds but to grow Beech Mountain. Vice Chairperson Decker stated that the Town does not see as many church groups up here like we used to and believed that was because this group was not being marketed to. There are other groups like this too. Vice Chairperson Decker stated that the Town needed someone who is knowledgeable to go after these types of groups. Mayor Owen stated that the job title might need to be looked at if this position is for something broader. Mayor Owen recommended including wording about economic development in the job title and asked whether the Tourism Development Authority was comfortable with including something about economic development. Mr. Smoot stated that we do not want the individual in this position to get so busy that they are neglecting the market. Councilman Holcombe motioned to approve the job description with staff changing the title. Vice Mayor Piquet seconded and the vote passed unanimously. Mr. Marquardt motioned to approve the job description with staff changing the title. Mr. Smoot seconded and the vote passed unanimously.

Funding – Vice Mayor Piquet discussed manning the sledding hill, fireworks and flowers and how these items came up as issues to be resolved time and time again. Vice Mayor Piquet stated that it would be great to iron these out permanently. Vice Mayor Piquet proposed that the Town could pick up paying the employees entire position if the Tourism Development Authority would pick up these items. Chairperson Barnes stated that the Tourism Development Authority may not be looking to hire another employee and doing something entirely different with their dollars stating that depending on how these discussions go they were not sure if they wished to continue down the road with this experiment. With this being said Chairperson Barnes stated that he was in favor of Vice Mayor Piquet's idea. Mayor Owen stated that the thought was that an employee serving in this position would bring some sort of consistency. Mayor Owen asked if there was a service that this employee was bringing that the Tourism Development Authority needed. Chairperson Barnes stated that Craig Distl has pointed out some of the

items that need to be taken care of that he is not taking care of. Mayor Owen stated that it seemed that it was important that this person have high visibility at the Visitor's Center. Chairperson Barnes stated that he loved keeping the Visitor's Center open but did not know why you there could not potentially have a couple part time people paid \$10 to \$12 to do perform these functions. Mayor Owen posed the question that if the Tourism Development Authority did not need this employee then why would the Town need this employee? Mr. Smoot stated that if the Tourism Development Authority has to make a choice between the two then the choice would be marketing. Mayor Owen stated that if the changes denoted in red are the things that were added by Craig Distl as the items that he is not taking care of maybe then someone could be hired to take care of these items. Vice Chairperson Decker stated that if Craig Distl can find someone that has ability to handle the social media aspect and graphics then that is all the Tourism Development Authority needs. Chairperson Barnes stated that the concern is that the coverage goes back to the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Marquardt stated that with Kate Gavenus in there this creates confidence in this idea, but that he liked going with the employee. Mayor Owen stated that he liked the bigger idea that Mr. Marquardt came up with about growing the Town. Mayor Owen asked if Vice Mayor Piquet had a figure in mind for some of the items he talked about. Vice Mayor Piquet stated the amount was approximately \$25,000 and included money for the sledding hill, fireworks and flowers. Councilman Miller stated that the construction end of the businesses do not get recognized as businesses. Councilman Miller stated that construction is part of the business community on the mountain. Councilman Miller liked the idea of figuring out what capital projects are being consistently paid for by the Tourism Development Authority. Councilwoman Keller was in favor of putting more money in the marketing end of rather than the employee end. Mr. Marquardt stated that the preferred method for the Tourism Development Authority is to put an employee in this position. Mayor Owen stated that it sounds like both boards are willing to fund the employee at 50%. Mayor Owen suggested reviewing the situation a year from now and possibly entertaining the idea of the Town taking over paying for the position and the Tourism Development Authority taking over some reoccurring needs in the Town. Mayor Owen asked if the Tourism Development Authority was willing to make a motion that they would pay half up to a certain amount in the range. Mayor Owen stated that he is combining salary and benefits. Mr. Marquardt motioned to approve the Tourism Development Authority funding the position at 50% for the coming year up to \$40,000. Chairperson Barnes stated that you have to give the employee the tools too. Chairperson Barnes stated that he wants to be a part of a long term commitment to the position and not just a one year term. Chairman Barnes did not want someone to leave a job and relocate for one year. Mayor Owen stated that he wants the Tourism Development Authority to be supportive to the employee as much as the Town is. Chairperson Barnes stated that he was simply stating the Tourism Development Authority's fallback position. Vice Chairperson Decker seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Councilwoman Keller asked who was going to hire the employee. Vice Mayor Piquet stated that this has been discussed and that the Town Manager will hire the person with a member of the Tourism Development Authority present. Chairperson Barnes agreed. Councilwoman Keller stated that it would be nice to have a committee for this. Vice Mayor Piquet motioned to approve the

Town funding the position at 50% for the coming year. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion and the vote passed unanimously.

Capital – Chairperson Barnes stated that whatever capital projects the Town would like to have covered by the Tourism Development Authority the Tourism Development Authority will take it on. An example was paving. Chairperson Barnes stated that there has to be some things that the Tourism Development Authority can assist with the 1/3 of their budget. Chairperson Barnes would be perfectly happy to go quid pro quo on this. Chairperson Barnes respectfully asked that Council give the Tourism Development Authority the list to resolve this situation. Mayor Owen stated that it helps knowing that the Tourism Development Authority is open to communication.

Parkway Overlook – Councilman Miller stated that the overlook is a signed year to year easement and would have liked something a little longer. The Town is in favor of putting in a nice kiosk there. Mr. Marquardt stated that the kiosk is funded from previous budgets. Councilman Miller stated that the paving was approximately \$14,000.

Unspent Capital Dollars – Chairperson Barnes stated that the Tourism Development Authority is going to make a commitment to spend the unspent portion of capital in capital dollars next year.

Joint Meetings – Mayor Owen stated that once this person is hired maybe two or at least one more meetings should be held between Council and the Tourism Development Authority.

Ex Officio – Chairperson Barnes stated that emphasis should be made for this position to be an ex officio in order to ensure that there are not conflicts on the calendar for scheduled events. Councilman Holcombe suggested that the Town look at what other local Tourism Development Authority's are doing by going to their meetings. Chairperson Barnes stated that in any community that is successful the key component was working together and that as the Town continued to grow together this progress could be made. Councilman Miller asked that the Tourism Development Authority keep the Town Council informed of things that are going on. Mr. Marquardt stated that several times a week the Tourism Development Authority gets links to things that are happening from Craig Distl. Councilwoman Keller asked if these were being saved for scrapbooking.

Visitor Center Coverage – Mayor Owen asked about the person being out of the office and away from the building while also having to work at the Visitor Center. Chairperson Barnes stated that this will work through building good working relationships. Chairman Barnes brought up the idea of having a central check in area for visitors to assist with them getting lost. Chairman Barnes stated that if there was a centralized check in then businesses could drop off their envelopes with what their guests needed.

Mayor Owen thanked everyone for their participation. Chairperson Barnes stated that the Tourism Development Authority Board appreciated the support of the Town Council.

IV. Adjourn – Vice Mayor Piquet motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:13 p.m., which was seconded by Councilman Holcombe. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned 2:13 p.m.

Minutes approved by Town Council on July 8, 2014.

Richard H. Owen, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jennifer Broderick, CMC
Town Clerk