

Tourism Development Authority

November 4, 2015

Board Meeting, 2015- 9:30 am

Town Hall Council Chambers

Minutes

Present: Brian Barnes, Carl Marquardt, Judy Decker, Calder Smoot. Representing the Town: Ed Evans, Steve Smith, John Merritt. Staff to Board: Kate Gavenus. Marketing Consultant: Craig Distl. Guests: Jim Brooks, Jeanne Birks

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairman Brian Barnes called the meeting to order at 9:35 am.
- II. **Adoption of Agenda:** Carl Marquardt moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Calder Smoot, all approved.
- III. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the September 30th meeting were approved unanimously upon a motion by Carl Marquardt and a second by Calder Smoot.
- IV. **Financial Report:** The YTD budget was reviewed and spending and income are in line with projections, though we expect fall revenue to be down due to the cancellation of Oz. Steve Smith explained that he would report the income in the month in which it was collected to be consistent with our past reports. He also stated that we could move funds at any time into or out of our NCCMT account, which does offer a small amount of interest.
Invoices were unanimously approved as presented, upon a motion by Carl Marquardt and a second by Judy Decker.
- V. **Chamber Report:** Jim Brooks reported that the Chamber determined that they didn't have the funds to continue a Chamber Director position, and had let their staff person go. They will pay for Lauren Mills, the current TDA Visitor Center Assistant, to work an additional two days a week, and Bell Bennett will write checks. They will contract with Kate Gavenus to make deposits, straighten out records and bill current members, help complete the cartoon map and other projects, and help plan for a return to financial stability. Lauren will assist in these and other chamber endeavors.
- VI. **Old Business:**
Cartoon Map- see VI. Chamber report above
Lighting for the Town- The lights from the professional lighting company are up at the Sledding Hill Parking area, the Parkway Overlook and around the sign at the resort. The resort entrance could use some more décor, and the board voted unanimously, upon a motion by Judy Decker and a second by Carl Marquardt, to spend up to \$3,500 additional funds with Christmas Décor to place some type of lighted structure in that location. Kate will contact Jennifer Mowdy and let her know of this decision.

discussed this idea, and felt that it was premature to make this type of statement without any specific plan underlying it at this time.

VIII. **The Marketing Report:** Craig Distl reported that the TDA website received over 5000 click-throughs from RomanticAsheville.com in the last 3 months, and we've had articles in Fort Lauderdale, South Florida Parent, Lake Norman Magazine and Cobb Life magazine in the past month. Our website has had traffic from every state and seven countries. The top key words are Vacations in NC and Fall Foliage and the top page views were for the Land of Oz.

Brian Barnes reported that the Beech Mountain Club would like to work with the Beech Mountain Resort and the TDA to develop a 2 minute four-season video that we could pull clips from for various promotions. The cost for this video could run about \$4000 for each of the three partners. The club would also like to develop posters that can be displayed at all lodging and key points for visitors to promote opposite seasons. They would like to create packaging with club-privileged lodging that includes club facilities, such as tennis or pickleball, to promote the other offerings that the club has in addition to golf.

IX. **The TDA Director Report:** Kate Gavenus reported that Elena Kontinos will begin working on Thursdays, Saturdays and key Sunday afternoons, while Lauren will work Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. The Town website will have a Tourism and Economic Development page in addition to linking to the TDA webpage. We will begin a Visitor Center article with the next Beech Mountain newsletter. We had a booth at the Woolly Worm Festival and gathered more surveys. The in-office visits to the Visitor Center were up by 31% in October 2015 over the previous year, with 602 vs. 459.

Phone logs show 62% of Sept-October's calls were from North Carolina, 10.6% from Florida, 7.6% from Tennessee, 6.6% from Georgia and 6.6% from South Carolina.

The new Book Exchange is open in the vestibule 24 hours a day. Books can be borrowed and returned, or kept and replaced with a different book. There are children's, young adult and adult books.

X. **Adjournment:** Chairperson Barnes adjourned the meeting at 11:12 am.

Signed _____

