

Beech Mountain Tourism Development Authority
March 28, 2012 9:30am, Regular Meeting

Town Hall Council Chambers

MINUTES

- I. Call to Order – called to order at 9:34
- II. Adoption of Agenda – No one would like to add anything to the agenda, Candi Catoe moved to approve. Calder Smoot seconded. All were in favor.
- III. Consideration of Minutes- February 29, 2012 - Regular Meeting – Calder asked Amy to correct a typo on the last page. Candi Catoe moved to approve the minutes, Judy Decker seconded. All in favor.
- IV. Financial Report –
 - Occupancy Tax/Budget to Date – before the end of the fiscal year, the TDA will have to move funds from reserves to meet the budget for the year. This winter was not pretty. This can be done next month.
 - Invoice/Reimbursement Approvals
 - The TDA has Craig's invoices (PR & Marketing), Fortner Insurance Directors and Officers Policy, HCH Marketing Partnership payment, Hike Beech Mountain.com hosting, and Staples Office Supplies
 - TDA Coordinator
 - Approval for gas reimbursement – \$118.43,
 - Hotel Room at governor's conference – \$225.90
 - Computer reimbursement for March/April - \$60
 - Motion to approve invoices and reimbursements made by Candi Catoe, seconded by Judy Decker, All were in favor.
- V. Chamber Report - John Troxler
 - March visitors – 182 to date, down from last year, but the Ski Slopes closed earlier.
 - Upcoming Events: June 8-9- A Cool 5 Race, June 26 – Community Yard Sale, June 23 – Kiddo Fishing Derby, June 30th – Annual Roasting of the Hog
 - Beech Mountain Town Summit: April 25th at noon in Beech Mountain Club's Recreation Room. There will be representatives from the Club, Town, Chamber, TDA and Resort. Discussions will be held on upcoming events and front-line representatives are strongly encouraged to attend.
 - TDA Contract – the Chamber has developed a contract after their budget committee meeting, where they agreed to a \$5,000 compensation per year for time that John uses to do Chamber work (or other Chamber employees). The Chamber would like to pay that quarterly, \$1,250 per quarter. Judy Decker

- Summer Program Guide
 - Completed, will go to the printer in the next week
- Business Directory
 - All of the restaurants, vacation rental companies, and inns have been added.
 - Amy would like to add attractions as well, is this something that the TDA feels would be beneficial? (Grandfather, Banner Elk Winery, Rafting Outfitters, Linville Caverns, Tweetsie, etc.) The TDA feels that as long as they aren't competing attractions, we could list them on the site. Calder would also like to see us add some itineraries.
 - How does the TDA feel about adding other restaurants in Banner Elk -- and distinguishing between On the Mountain and In the Area? The board feels that at this point, we should promote the restaurants on Beech only.
 - See hand out -- Amy discussed how other TDA's/CVB's around the state handle business directories on their sites. She did note that the larger destinations never list the rent by owners. The TDA felt at this point that until we can come up with a good way to list the VRBO that we leave them off. This will also help get the business directory up faster.
- Golf Meeting
 - Will be held April 3 in the afternoon, and will cover events and other summer topics. We would like to see front-line people at this meeting as well, so everyone can get on the same page.
- Newsletter
 - The early spring newsletter will be ready to send out in early April, it will cover topics such as the Emerald Outback, Recreational Programs, Save the Date for Gravity Nationals, events calendar, and guided hike schedule. It will also have information about the Bike/Hike Packages, and the Stay-and-Play program.
 - If you would like to see a topic covered, let Amy know asap.
 - New Newsletter Sign-ups from the new webpage -- 56!
- Computer/Photoshop
 - After speaking with Andi Saunders, she said that she could probably purchase photo-shop for the TDA through Lees McRae, which would reduce the cost of the program from \$699 to \$299. This would alleviate Amy from using her own computer and dealing with reimbursements since her computer has been crashing lately. Judy Decker feels that the TDA should go ahead and purchase Amy a computer for the programs so that she can use it at meetings, in media missions, and at home if work needs to be done after hours. Calder is concerned about licensing issues with the programs, and asked Amy if she could check with the Town on government discounts. After this, the board would like to authorize Amy to spend up to \$2000 to get a computer and all of the programs she needs. Fred Barth made a motion to approve up to \$2000. Calder Smoot seconded. All were in favor.
- Other Marketing Info
- Gnarnia

moved that we approve the contract as presented. Fred Barth seconded. All were in favor.

- LMC Playbill Ad – John proposed that the TDA pay \$275 to split the Playbill ad with the Chamber of Commerce, which would be a full page color ad featuring events. The TDA board felt that it is a good thing to do for the community. Calder moves that the TDA pay for the ad. Candi Catoe seconded. Three were in favor, Fred did not vote.

VI. Marketing Report

- Marketing Committee Meeting – the Agenda is before the board, please review if you were unable to attend.
 - Spring Advertising – Craig Proposes the following Spring Budget
 - Facebook Ads - \$202, Blue Ridge Outdoors (June magazine) - \$1200, Get Out Chattanooga (June magazine) - \$700, Romantic Asheville (3 months) - \$600, VisitNC.com featured event - \$250, and the Banner Elk Billboard (design/print) for \$425.
 - Amy wanted to add a second printing of Calendar Rack Cards (\$260), and also note that it will probably cost at least \$525 for the billboard.
 - After the addition of the Lees Mcrae Playbill Ad for \$275, the addition of \$100 for the billboard, and the Rack cards for \$260, the budget is negative \$630. However, the TDA has brought in \$800 from Banner Ads already, and this would bring the balance to \$170. She also asked if the Chamber contract for \$1250 per quarter was included in that budget, because if not, then that is even more revenue.
 - Candi made a motion to approve the spring budget. Fred seconded, all were in favor.
 - Biking, Hiking Packages – the marketing committee also discussed packages to promote for the upcoming
- New Billboard – The Banner Elk billboard must be re-printed. Options for changing out banners and buttons to feature the upcoming events were tossed around. Jim Brooks can help with this quote, and Talia Freeman would also like to help with the design. Candi Catoe authorizes that Amy is allowed to follow through on the new billboard. The board agrees. Amy will get the final proof approved before printing.
- Google Analytics – Amy sent out the monthly Google Analytics report via e-mail, and asked the board if she could continue to do that to save paper. If anyone has any insights, she would recommend making note of those before the meeting. Everyone should have access to the full analytics page as well. Fred Barth printed out copies of the entire winter statistics, showing Florida as our second largest market (which the TDA did not advertise in except for facebook ads). He would like to see us market in Florida more aggressively in the future. He also noted that the site is very well optimized, as our largest referrals are from search engine sites.

- Weather Station Access – extra user license is \$25 to hook up to the national weather station at Fred's. This is so that we don't have to go through Rays' Weather for a station that we have up here anyway. It will be used to monitor the Summer of \$79 promotion. Calder Smoot made a motion to pay for the hook up, this was seconded by Candi Catoe. All were in favor.

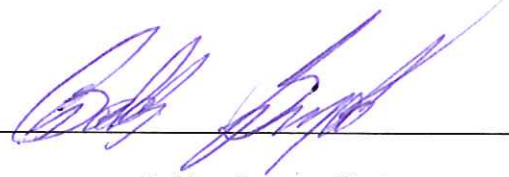
VII. TDA Coordinator Report - Amy Morrison

- Governor's Conference on Tourism
 - Great Experience to meet tourism professionals from all over the state - every single person Amy was introduced to knew where Beech Mountain was, and immediately asked how the snow was.
 - Learned about the new LGA ad campaign for the State of NC – Deeper Connections – they have switched their ad dollars from 60% print, to 40% print, with a huge focus on flash banner ads on sites like weather.com, etc. Amy also has their partner opportunities for the upcoming year.
 - Attended break-out sessions on Social Media, Partnering with AAA, and Straight from the horses' mouth – tailoring pitches for media.
 - Most beneficial was the partnering with AAA – since the meeting Amy has reached out to AAA on how to get our restaurants listed in their North Carolina travel data-base, and I also have a contact with the NC editor to get some of our recreational opportunities on their site as well (currently, only the Ski Resort has an icon on Beech Mountain, while several restaurants in Banner Elk are listed). There are also other opportunities to speak with AAA agents – through webinars, and in person, that were brought to my attention. Remember, 30% of people that book a vacation in NC are AAA members! Amy would like to see a little bit of travel budgeted next year to make a visit to regional offices in NC.
- Office Intern
 - John and Amy met with Starr Kepner from Lees McRae about getting an intern for the summer. She said that almost all students require a paid internship in order to stay up here in the summer. Does the board want to try to get an intern part time? They would probably only work 2 days a week, and we may split the intern with the Avery County Chamber. Remember that staff will have to take time to train the intern, and they will leave at the end of their time. (2x8hrsx\$8= \$128 per week, or \$512 per month) – we currently have 1200 budgeted for 6 months. Talia Freeman said that she may have an intern we could use part time. Amy feels that a \$300 stipend per month for about 16 hours per week would be reasonable. Candi Catoe made a motion that the TDA approve up to \$300 per month for an intern if we can find one. Calder Smoot seconded. All were in favor.
- Facebook, Twitter, Youtube Re-haul
 - Please take a look at all of our Social Media sites, as they have been updated with spring logos and images. (Twitter - @BeechMountainNC, Facebook – www.facebook.com/beechemountain, Youtube – Chanel BeechMountainNC)

- After speaking with Bowie about concerns over music, Amy told him to let her know the soonest he could come up and speak with Randy about noise ordinances and town assistance with police force and emt. Amy will also ask him how many rooms he would like comp-ed for his staff, and get that information to you all.
- The line-up has been released on their facebook fan page – www.facebook.com/gnarniafestival
- Should the TDA try to educate the public on this event and what to expect? Could we put some information in the Town Newsletter? Calder thinks this is a good idea, but would like for the message to come from the Town, and not the TDA, because the TDA doesn't need to take ownership for this event since we are not involved with the production. Amy will speak with Randy when he returns about the best avenue for this.

VIII. Adjournment

- Meeting was adjourned at 11:38 by chair Calder Smoot.



Calder Smoot, Chair

