

Beech Mountain Tourism Development Authority
October 30, 2013 Regular Meeting
Town Hall Council Chambers
MINUTES

- I. Call to Order – meeting was called to order at 9:35. Brian Barnes, Judy Decker, Carl Marquardt, Candi Catoe, and Calder Smoot were present.
- II. Adoption of Agenda – Judy made a motion to adopt the agenda. Calder seconded. All were in favor.
- III. Consideration of Minutes-
 - September 25, 2013 Regular Meeting – there was a typo on page three, it should say October 24-27th, not 24027. Carl made a motion to approve the minutes with change. Calder seconded.
- IV. Financial Report
 - Occupancy Tax/Budget to Date – Brian had requested a budget sheet to see more information about our financial situation. He thought that the amount listed on our report was savings, but it is our working bank account. Therefore, we will have to look at prioritization of projects to ensure that we have adequate funding to meet our obligations. Tax collections for September were about average, down just a few dollars from last year. The budgeted collections were lower than last year's collections, so we are still on track to meet our budget if we do not have low collections for the rest of the year.
 - Invoice Approvals –
 - BSG Events – Beech Mountain Metric Gold Sponsorship - \$1000
 - Sheherezade Designs – Channel 2 Configuration, Hosting, & Domain - \$566.81
 - File Investments – RomanticAsheville.com Sept/Oct - \$400.00
 - Big Boom Designs Hosting - \$75.00
 - Craig Distl – Marketing & PR - \$2200
 - Receipts
 - Fred's General – Supplies - TP - \$4.69
 - Postage - \$58.00
 - Marketing Expense – Mailing for Trade Shows - \$58.00
 - Carl made a motion to approve invoices as presented. Candi seconded. All were in favor.
- V. Chamber Report – Kate Gavenus
 - Visitor center had 410 visitors in October, which was down from last year. That could be attributed to the fact that Oz tickets were not sold in the office.
 - Autumn at Oz brought over 6500 people to the mountain Oct. 5-6 2013. Over 130 volunteers helped, and the chamber brought in about \$15,000 in profit.
 - 18 people attended the Hayride Oct 12th, and despite poor weather, they had a brief, yet enjoyable ride.
 - Meet the Candidates was very well attended on Oct 23rd, with over 80 members of the voting public in attendance.

- Beech Mountain Collegiate Nationals brought in more than 350 team members and support staff to the mountain, many staying in local accommodations.
- Trick or Treat at the Chamber served 47 children, thanks to Bernie and Susie for assisting.

VI. New Business

- Annual Goals Review – Brian wanted to go back and look at the goals that we took time to create, to evaluate progress, and areas in need of improvement.
 - Comply with enacting resolution and bylaws that established the TDA – the main issue was the budget, and that has been corrected.
 - Utilize Channel 2 more effectively as a marketing tool – Probably an average rating on this, not where we want to be, but working towards a more cohesive marketing message. The switch to Kathy Khalifa and hopefully creating more video content will make the channel more appealing to tourists and residents alike.
 - Work on a more cohesive branding strategy to encompass trails, parks, and events – Brian feels it is apparent that we are branding ourselves as a biking destination. Spending capital funds on creating a better product in the Emerald Outback will help match our marketing initiatives. The facilities and trails need to be in better shape, and there is need for a pump track, or something similar for inexperienced riders. The TDA needs to work with the Town to make sure everything is cohesive, including a more cohesive brochure.
 - Develop a database of market demographics to aid with marketing expenditure decisions – Amy discussed a few of the initiatives used to collect data over the past few years. We have general call/e-mail in and mail out inquiries, as well as data on who has been mailed trail maps, and those who have registered as actually using the trails in the visitor center (nearly 340 registered). The main issue is not having marketing and data processing software, which would allow us to see a little more information than hand creating maps in free plotting websites. The board discussed doing more survey's, especially in the hotels. Perhaps if the TDA created a survey, it could be distributed to hotels and at events. Talia Freeman agreed to work with Amy to create a short survey to distribute.
 - Create a comprehensive plan to offer reliable transportation – Brian thought the TDA was failing at this goal, and discussed if it was even possible for the TDA to undertake an effort this large. Private enterprise has served the town, yet it is restricted. Brian had discussed dual purpose trash areas and transit stops with Randy Feierabend, because they would need to be on Town property, and maintained. Brian said he would write a letter to Randy highlighting the issue brought forth, including all of the cohesive efforts discussed today.
 - Embrace the other areas of the High Country when considering marketing efforts, including attractions and events – The TDA bylaws do say to advertise the Beech Mountain area, but there is already cooperation through Amy Morrison being on the HCH Board of Directors. The board asked Amy to gather the nearby TDA schedules, so that they could attend some. We also need to have more promotions around the other large events in the area, like Woolly Worm specials.

- Increase cross promotion of seasons – Brian asked about the calendar rack card for 2014. Amy said she has usually just been held back by people reporting events to her. She can try to send something that says please respond if events are incorrect, otherwise they will be printed. She will have that designed before December.
 - Increase advanced planning of events to include with cross promotions – the TDA did approve the dates for the 2014 Bikes, Brews ‘n’ Views last month, allowing for increased promotion of our summer event this winter. She was hoping to get some coasters printed to put at the Ski Resort. Calder suggested putting them everywhere, perhaps getting a sponsor.

VII. Old Business

- 3 Peaks USA – Andrew Stackhouse – Andrew appeared to discuss the economic impact of the 2013 Three Peaks Race in September. 27% of participants found out about lodging through Pirate Race Productions, and 19% chose lodging based on the host venue. Overall, 44% of participants stayed on Beech Mountain, representing a 260% increase from last year, when it was hosted in Banner Elk. That number represents a total of 64 room nights, and \$4,842 in lodging spending. For 43% of participants, it was their first time visiting Beech, and 58% stated they were likely or extremely likely to travel to Beech again for a vacation or other activities. These riders are a great demographic; 47% of households earn over \$100,000 annually. In lieu of these numbers, Andrew was requesting a \$1,000 grant for advertising to build on the momentum. He hoped to set the date early, and capitalize on people signing up for rides at the beginning of the year. The TDA showed good support, but would have to consider the expenditure next spring as part of the budget process. They asked Andrew to come back to the February meeting.
- Channel 2 – Amy wanted to update the board that she had met with Kathy to learn about updating the slideshows. There are still some restrictions; it cannot switch to a live web camera from the slideshow unless it is manually switched over. Brian noticed it has been going down more recently. Amy was showed how to fix that if she is working and notices, but it is definitely a work in progress.
- Capital Expenditures Update
 - Greenway Paving – the paving has been completed, which will help with erosion, and probably lead to more usage this winter.
 - Facebook Signs – Brian said that Mike Moretz is working on prototype signs, 12 in. and 24 in. The signs will have to be reviewed by each of the Town Council members before we can place them in public areas, like kiosks. They will have a qr code to go to a webpage being created. Amy said Craig had already created that page.
 - Prioritization of remaining projects – looking at the budget, the remainder of the projects will most likely have to be pushed off until spring, or possibly postponed until the next fiscal year. It looks as though the board feels that the portable stage and the Buckeye kitchen purchases could be postponed. The paving and shrubbery have been expended and completed. Carl asked if they were working on the planning and work in the Emerald Outback. Brian said that he had been working on this for a while, and attended several meetings. Now it appears our budget may hold us up, but there is a designated person to work on the trails.

VIII. Marketing Report

- Update on Web Camera – the camera is not up yet, even though the contract was supposed to start in November. They have ordered the pole, and it should go in this upcoming week.

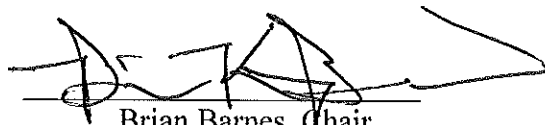
After that, the engineers are scheduled to come in another week to install the camera. We are waiting on internet service. Amy said that Craig was going to see about prorating, so we would offset the costs of installing. That way, it would not run into another budget year.

- Beech Mountain Resort Ads & Brochure – The board had asked Amy to see about getting a presence in the brochure, and because she made some copies for Talia for a race, Talia gave the TDA two ads online, and a mention in the brochure for lodging information. Several high resolution photos that Amy sent over also appear.

IX. TDA Coordinator Report - Amy Morrison

- Fall/Winter program guide – Amy has been working on the program guide, and still awaiting a little more information. It should be completed soon.
- New sledding/ice skating rack card – the Chamber asked Amy to modify the sledding rack card to include ice skating. Those who would like to pick it up can get some in the Visitor Center.
- Still organizing Visitor Guide information/design – Amy hasn't stopped thinking about the organization of the potential visitor guide, and has integrated a map created by Jes to show driving times and relative distances, as many guides do.
- Town Council Annual Update – Amy will be working on a slideshow to update the Town Council about marketing and capital initiatives completed this year. It also serves as the TDA update to the Town Council. She will send that out to the board for review this week.
- Amy is working on switching google adwords to winter advertising, which will go live soon.
- Governor's Conference 2014 – Amy asked the board if she should defer attendance to the conference this year, due to a tight budget, and attending Interbike; which was not budgeted initially. Craig usually attends, and Amy can get a lot of the information provided by the State without going. Carl felt that if they would like to continue having representation at Interbike that she not attend. The board agreed.
- Amy has follow-up with Singletracks.com and Adventure Cyclist, but still waiting to hear from the SORBA director (IMBA southern region).
- The website has been switched to new server, and the platform was updated, so hopefully there will be no more problems with the website. It has gone down a few times in the past month.
- Amy will be doing inventory of the flags and banners to see which seasons may need to have some reordered.
- There will be a Marketing Committee meeting November 7th at 11am at the Pinnacle conference room.
- Analytics – show that the website is still improving from when we repopulated the SEO earlier this year.
- Social Media Update
 - Facebook Fans – 3,780
 - Amy took many fall photos of Beech to increase fan base by over 140 this month
 - Photos appeared on WBTV, and were shared by WCNC and VisitNC as well
 - Twitter Followers – 445
 - Pinterest Followers - 77
- Calder asked about sending Amy to the BRNHA Gather round the Blue Ridge. She said that since she isn't going to Governor's conference, she would be happy to attend. He also said that he wondered if the tax form could be amended to include information about room nights sold. If the TDA doesn't get a report individually, it could probably be added.

X. Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned at 11:30am by chair Brian Barnes.



Brian Barnes, Chair