

Beech Mountain Tourism Development Authority  
November 27, 2013 Regular Meeting  
Town Hall Council Chambers  
MINUTES

- I. Call to Order – the meeting was called to order at 9:35am by Chair Brian Barnes. Judy Decker, Calder Smoot, and Carl Marquardt were all present. Candi Catoe was absent.
- II. Adoption of Agenda – Carl made a motion to adopt the agenda. Judy seconded. All were in favor.
- III. Consideration of Minutes-
  - October 30, 2013 Regular Meeting – Calder made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Carl seconded. All were in favor.
- IV. Financial Report
  - Occupancy Tax/Budget to Date – October collections were 50% higher than the previous year. It seems apparent that events, like the Gravity Nationals that occurred, are putting heads in beds. The collections are still down for the year; however, if collections stay as projected, the 185,000 budgeted collections should be reached.
  - Invoice Approvals –
    - Charlotte on the Cheap, Jody Mace - \$250.00
    - Romantic Asheville, File Investments - \$600.00
    - Sheherezade Designs, Inc. Web Maintenance - \$50
    - Staples - \$91.32
    - Staples - \$3.30
    - Carolina Tractor & Equipment - \$6.57
    - Craig Distl PR & Marketing - \$2200
    - VisitNC Keywords - \$250.00
    - Amy Morrison Gas Reimbursement - \$113.62
  - Receipts
    - Gather 'Round the Blue Ridge - \$47.57
    - Google Adwords - \$100.00
  - Carl made a motion to approve all invoices and receipts. Judy seconded. All were in favor.
- V. Chamber Report – Kate Gavenus
  - The new chamber board was installed Nov. 26th. The board members are
    - Judy Decker, President; Talia Freeman, Vice-President; Debbie Canady, Secretary; Bell Bennett, Treasurer; Jim Brooks; Cindy Keller; Carl Marquardt
  - The chamber's annual meeting was held at Mile High Tavern on Nov. 19th and there were 25 people in attendance. The Business Development Award for 2013 was awarded Talia Freeman of the Beech Mountain Resort, the Community Support Award for 2013 went to Susie O'Connell and the Chamber Service Award for 2013 went to Bernie Kneпка.
  - The 2012-13 audit is underway and lots of record-keeping is getting tidied up.

- The Chamber has a live radio spot once again each Wednesday morning at 8:35 AM with Tom Lanier on 100.7.
- Visitors Center- November 2012-310; November 2013- 205; After speaking with Craig, Kate feels that a lot of people are finding information elsewhere, and thus there isn't quite as much traffic in the visitor center.

#### VI. New Business

- Date change for December meeting 2013 & 2014
  - The town directory has the TDA listed as meeting December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 instead of December 25<sup>th</sup>. The December 2014 meeting falls on New Year's, and the board could meet December 17<sup>th</sup> instead. Judy made a motion to approve the change. Calder seconded. All were in favor.

#### VII. Old Business

- Street Pole Banner Inventory – Amy took inventory of the existing street pole banners. She found there are only 16 winter banners, and at least one looks like it will rip soon. There is also a need for summer/spring, as there are only 17 of those for 22 locations. Brian would like to see if there are themed banners for the activities on Beech, such as skiing, sledding, skating, hiking, biking, golf, and tennis. The budget for the banners is 1500-2000. The board suggested trying to purchase 6 for winter and 6 for summer. Calder made a motion to approve purchasing 6 for winter and 6 for summer if the budget allows. Carl seconded. All were in favor.
- Facebook Signs – the facebook sign prototypes have been completed. One is larger (24 inch diameter), and a second smaller one that will be placed at the club. The larger one does not list the elevation because it will be placed at the Skybar 5506, which is not quite 5506 in elevation. Brian thinks that they turned out great, but they do not meet the sign ordinance. Thus, the signs are awaiting approval by the Town Council members. Jim said that we also need to work on getting some signs in the sledding hill, not facing the road, to advertise everything we have year round. Brian said the council was opposed to signage in the sledding hill area, but possibly open to adding some info on one of the other signs. It is not in the budget.
- Brian had a few other items to review
  - In terms of the TDA goal of providing transportation, he has been advised to reach out to the Avery Co. transportation operation to see if they would be willing to run services on Beech.
  - Trail work has begun in the Emerald Outback. The same person who has worked on the professional downhill trails is spear heading efforts.
  - Amy did send out a list of the TDA meeting schedules that she was able to procure. Brian encouraged board members to attend a meeting if they can.
  - Channel 2 is slowly progressing. However, the program keeps going down, and he isn't sure of the right solution, mainly hosting all servers in the Town Hall. It could be an issue there. Amy said she has been shown how to reboot if it goes down during office hours.

#### VIII. Marketing Report

- Update on web camera – the web camera is in and it is working, although it has gone down. Amy showed the board the page where the camera appears, with our ads surrounding the camera. The location is working, however, there may be better spots. Brian is hoping to

showcase the view from the golf course in the summer. The board wanted to see a link added to our website advertising the camera.

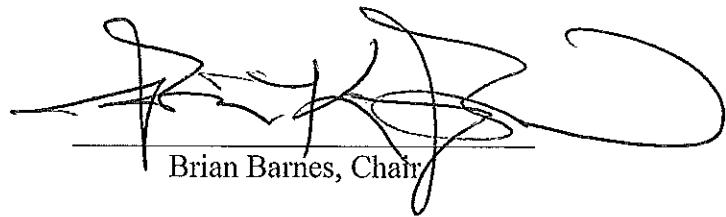
- Marketing Committee meeting review – at the November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, the committee discussed:
  - Current packages to ensure that everyone could still participate and knew about them. Those include the weekday \$99 package, the weekday Skiing 101 package, and the Retro 80's weekend rates. The Resort has decided to continue to offer the Learn to Ski Packages for \$45, leaving a good margin of about \$112 per night for lodging offices.
  - Retro 80's weekend is scheduled for February 21-13. Jim has agreed to host the Friday evening activities at Mile High Tavern, and Talia has secured the Breakfast Club for Saturday at the Beech Tree.
  - The committee was updated on the camera, which has progressed more since, and also updated as we just did on the facebook signs.
  - Craig reviewed TWC News 14 opportunities. A coverage map shows that they have a great presence in the Triangle, all the way down to Fayetteville and Ft. Bragg. Craig felt that since we were heavily investing in the Charlotte market with the web camera that the commercial funds go into Raleigh. The TDA Board discussed the coverage map, and felt this was a good market.
  - The Atlanta Mom Bloggers proposal to do a sweepstakes for January. He has a room and tickets secured. Craig would like to run starting in December to capitalize on the Skiing 101 program. Brian discussed the possibility of doing a summer sweepstakes as well with the same program. Amy said that she knew Craig wanted to do Family Fun month in June, and felt that would be a great time to coordinate.
  - The possibility of a winter media tour – Talia would like to get together with the TDA to sponsor, if Craig will help.
  - There is a big hair themed program on 102.9 FM in Charlotte that is willing to do a promotion for lift tickets and lodging. Craig wanted to make sure someone could provide a room that weekend for the winners. Judy said she felt certain she could, but had to make sure she had Talia's rooms covered first.
  - Craig has worked out keyword search terms to include vacation rentals, because the mountains/outdoors was already taken. Amy said that the partnership actually paid for that term, and Beech was assigned, so we have both terms now.
- Survey questions - Amy presented the questions that were prepared for the sledding hill survey two winters ago. Brian wasn't sure if the board had wanted a survey monkey type questionnaire to send out, or a physical survey in offices that they drop off. After short discussion, it sounds like there were two different ideas for collecting information. If there are, the questions still need to be the same, or very similar for data processing. Most felt that the main questions were where are you coming from and how did you hear about us. Brian asked everyone to create a few questions to submit for discussion.
- BMM – rider update – there are now close to 450 riders signed up. Jim asked about getting the e-mails to send them winter information. Brian said they probably wouldn't give up the e-mails, but would perhaps include something in their next update. Amy would follow-up, she also showed the landing page that was created for the riders.

#### IX. TDA Coordinator Report - Amy Morrison

- Fall/Winter program guide – the guide design has been completed, and is now awaiting proofing. It will be sent to print shortly thereafter.

- Town Council Annual Update that Amy created that everyone reviewed is now live on Town website
- The website and adwords have been switched to winter packages
- Amy attended Gather Round the Blue Ridge, the 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary and annual meeting of the BRNHA. It was an interesting gathering, with the Balsam Range playing. Amy sat next to representatives from the Asheville CVB, and it was interesting to hear about the differences in budgets. Amy felt that with a smaller budget, Beech has gotten much more creative.
- HCH Ever Wonder Contract – the HCH Marketing Partnership has agreed to pay for the partners to use the ever wondr event platform. Visit Winston Salem is a great representation of the layout, which is very user friendly, and adds to user engagement. They will be installing and going live in mid-December.
- 2014 Calendar Rack Card – Amy provided a rough draft of the Calendar, and said that the Recreation department needs more time to finalize dates. She hopes to receive from the printer before Christmas.
- Phone reimbursement – In Amy's contract, it says that she is obligated to be provided a phone. She knows the town provides a flip phone (not smart phone) or a \$40 reimbursement. She felt that a flip phone wouldn't be adequate for moving forward, and requested the \$40 reimbursement. There was discussion about tabling the second line in the office, and using that number for the line. The board felt it might be easier to get a separate line to ensure the second line stays available in the office. Brian asked if this would be an accessible business line. She said yes, and that her number available once she got one. Carl made a motion to approve the monthly reimbursement. Calder seconded. All were in favor.
- Analytics – the website is still improving compared to last year; however, it was down for several days, skewing the actual numbers for the month.
- Social Media Update
  - Facebook Fans – 3,926 – another gain of 140 in one month from snow postings
  - Twitter Followers – 491
  - Pinterest Followers – 82
  - WCNC has been tweeting and mentioning us in many posts with the new web camera

X. Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned at 11:35am by Chair Brian Barnes



Brian Barnes, Chair