

Beech Mountain Tourism Development Authority
December 18, 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. Carl Marquardt, Candi Catoe, and Calder Smoot were all present. Judy Decker arrived at 9:45am.
- II. Adoption of Agenda – Carl made a motion to adopt the agenda. Candi seconded. All were in favor.
- III. Consideration of Minutes-
 - November 27, 2013 Regular Meeting – Candi made a motion to approve the November 27, 2013 minutes. Carl seconded. All were in favor.
- IV. Financial Report
 - Occupancy Tax/Budget to Date – Collections for November are down, however, tax collections were due the same day this report was created, so Amy anticipates that will increase. We are still on track to meet the projected budget of \$186,000 in collections. Revenue under expenses has decreased, mainly due to very low spending during the month of November.
 - Invoice Approvals
 - Sheherezade Designs - \$50.00
 - Staples - \$3.30
 - Craig Distl - \$2200.00
 - Amy Morrison Phone Reimbursement (2 weeks) - \$20.00
 - WCNC - \$1562.50
 - Postage – \$18.29
 - Receipts
 - Amazon TV & Mounting Bracket for Visitor Center - \$207.39
 - 2014 Rack Card - \$424.31
 - AAA Contest Winner Gift Bag (Fred's General) - \$24.45
 - Carl made a motion to approve all invoices/receipts as presented. Candi seconded. All were in favor.
- V. Chamber Report – Kate Gavenus
 - Visitor Center guests were 310 in November of 2012, and 205 in November of 2013. Once again, a lot of people are finding information elsewhere.
 - The Meet Santa and lighting of the tree went well, however, no one showed up to the lighting of the tree part, so the chamber may re-evaluate that event.
 - The Yule Log Bonfire and Hayride is December 28th
 - The chamber has a new member – SERVEPRO of Watauga and Avery counties
 - The auditor is currently working on cleaning up some of the financials from the past year.
- VI. New Business
 - Banner Elk Billboard – This had been included on the agenda to discuss utilizing the billboard, however, Randy is going to terminate the contract.

- Date change for January 2014 meeting – Brian will be unable to attend the regular meeting January 29th, and suggested meeting January 22nd instead. Candi made a motion to move the regular meeting date. Calder seconded. All were in favor.

VII. Old Business

- Street Pole Banners – Amy had produced a few designs for review, and explained that the most cost effective will be a one color print on a one color background. She has been able to get a quote around \$120. The board said this was within the budget to get 12, and to move forward.
- Facebook Signs – the facebook signs have not been reviewed by all council members yet, however, there is positive feedback from those who have reviewed. The TDA hopes to order more shortly. There is one 12 inch sign, created for the club, and one 24 inch sign, created for the new Skybar.
- New TV for Visitor Center – Amy has ordered the new flat screen tv for the visitor center. It should arrive and be installed before Christmas.

VIII. Marketing Report

- Update on Winter Marketing Efforts – Craig was in attendance to review some of the marketing initiatives for the winter.
 - The web stats are way up, better than they have ever been before, with 27,000 visits in the past 30 days.
 - WRAL posted about the sledding hill, and it has gotten 164 hits in 48 hours, which may be a good opportunity for ads in the future.
 - The TDA has 200 commercials running on News 14 in Raleigh.
 - WCNC will be bringing two crews of media up around the holidays to get footage.
 - There is also a writer from Atlanta coming up that is staying with Carl.
 - Beech will be on the Carolina Cam tonight and Christmas featuring vacationing here.
 - Also, the Retro-80's poster will be printed and out around the new year, to catch people up around the holidays.
 - The WNCN camera has been getting a lot of press, however, they aren't showing the camera as much as they could because of problems with the upload speed. Craig said that we could check with Charter to see if they could service the site at a higher bandwidth.
- Coop opportunities with HCH – the HCH has coop opportunities available in the April issue of Charlotte Magazine, as well as the March Lake Norman Magazine. The rates are extremely affordable for the monthly issues, at \$200 for ¼ page ad in Charlotte Magazine, and \$250 for a ¼ page ad in Lake Norman. Craig thought those two would be good markets to take an ad out in. Calder made a motion to approve both expenditures. Carl seconded. All were in favor.
- Survey Questions – Amy had not received any responses from board members on ideas for survey questions, and asked if the board would prefer for her to create a small survey. Brian said he knows they wanted the questions to be the same, whether on survey monkey or through lodging. The TDA needs to know where people were coming from, how they heard about Beech Mountain, and get contact e-mails for the newsletter.


IX. TDA Coordinator Report - Amy Morrison

- Channel 2 is still a work in progress, but it has a lot of new and fresh content. Also, with the USB connection, the Visitor Center TV could run slides that just pertain to visitors. With everything getting up to date, lodging offices can set their guest room tvs to channel 2. There

is the possibility of purchasing hardware that can switch channel 2 from the static stream to the live web camera now on top of the mountain. It could cost a lot, but could be considered for next year's capital budget.

- Sandy Carr and the Recreation Department are not putting out a seasonal program guide this winter, the guide that was used wasn't really a program guide, as most of the "programs" were only one time events. Amy told her that she had been gathering information to design a visitor guide that could contain the non-dated information about Beech, including the trails and parks. Sandy wanted to work together to produce a more timeless piece to better utilize marketing funds for printing.
- Group sales and the visitor center need up to date brochures from lodging offices and restaurants.
- The new HCH Ever Wonder event platform is now up and lives, and Amy will be working on adding the directory before fully merging into the beechmtn.com site.
- The 2014 calendar rack card should be in before the end of the month, earlier than ever before.
- Scott Nelson has agreed to advertise the TDA winter packages through one of his rider updates.
- Craig agreed that doing another sweepstakes, like the one with Sue Rodman in January, would be good to promote Family Friendly month in June, including activities like a guided Oz tour, events such as movies at the Brick Oven, and lodging specials to showcase all of the family friendly activities on Beech in the summer.
- The winter seasonal newsletter will go out before Christmas, advertising all of the new additions and events through the holidays and throughout the winter.
- Amy is awaiting a proof for the brews 'n' views coasters to cross promote the event this winter.
- There is a new link on the home page directing people to the new web camera on wenc.com.
- Analytics – Craig already discussed the analytics
 - Facebook – has climbed to over 4,000 fans, at 4,009. Sometimes reaching 15,000 people in one week.
 - Twitter – 529 followers
 - Pinterest – 86 followers

X. Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned at 10:40am by Chair Brian Barnes



Brian Barnes, Chair