

Beech Mountain Tourism Development Authority  
February 27, 2013 9:30am, Regular Meeting

Town Hall Council Chambers

MINUTES

- I. Call to Order - meeting was called to order at 9:35 am by Chair Brian Barnes. Brian Barnes, Judy Decker, Carl Marquardt, Calder Smoot, and Candi Catoe were present.
- II. Adoption of Agenda - Agenda was adopted with no changes.
- III. Consideration of Minutes-
  - January 30 – Regular Meeting - Brian Barnes made a motion to approve the minutes. Candi Catoe seconded. All were in favor.
- IV. Financial Report
  - Occupancy Tax/Budget to Date - collections were down for January. However, dues can come in late and may not be reflected until the next month.
  - Invoice Approvals – see handout
    - Amy commented that the budget reflected the general liability insurance (\$214) this month. The \$90 Fast Eddie's invoice was for the Mom's Blogger Tour. WCNC contract was below budget, but received good coverage.
    - Brian Barnes motioned to approve all invoices on the handout. Candi Catoe seconded. All were in favor.
- V. Chamber Report – Gina Phenneger
  - Visitors in February to date – 562, up from 482 last year.
  - The sledding hill has been open and operational to date with good attendance.
  - Gina reported that the chamber was able to secure \$450 donation from the Kiwanis for the Kite Festival.
- VI. New Business
  - Jason Bryant – USA 10km Trail Championship
    - Jason has served as a race director, volunteer and liaison for the USA Track & Field Association – helping to organize events and activities. He is organizing the 10K Trail Championships to Beech Mountain June 29<sup>th</sup>, as well as two other races and wants the TDA to be a sponsor. Candi Catoe asked if he had approached Monster. Jason wanted to give Beech Mountain TDA a chance to refuse first. He is also bidding in December 2013 for the 2014 & 2015 10K Championships here. Sponsorship will also go towards putting on the race and the cash purse prize.
    - Past Publicity: Colorado newspaper, Trail Runner Magazine, Runnersworld.com, Wall Street Journal, Mountain 18, and other various blogs and websites for the sport. Trail Runner Magazine has said that they would be here, if he gets Max King (current Mountain Trail Running World Champ) to attend the race. The TDA would like Jason to work with Craig Distl on PR.
    - He is also requesting rooms to be comp'd for officials of the race and some of the elite runners for 2 nights. Judy mentioned she could handle many of them. Candi

asked about the TDA as the only lodging on his website with a link as well as sending out our info with the registration packet. Jason said he would do both.

- Later in the meeting, Candi commented that she would like to pursue the sponsorship opportunity with Jason Bryant and the 3 races. She felt like this was a perfect marriage for us, as long as we had certain stipulations up front.
- Brian Barnes made a motion that the TDA should split the payments in 1/3s to see how the event went before committing further dollars. His motion was to pay 2/3s up front and the rest after seeing overall performance of event, to have Jason Bryant agree to give us control of the marketing and PR for the event, and be the only lodging listed. Randy Feierabend would like to ensure that the course is cleaned after the race. They would also like Jason to work on some after-race activities. Judy Decker seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- Hosting Musical Event - Amy spoke about an impromptu meeting that she had with Toby Vanderbilt about hosting a musical festival on Beech Mountain with a variety of music. Brian Barnes and Candi both liked the idea of the festival or a concert series and the board was definitely interested in exploring this further. Amy asked for permission from the TDA board to put together a committee to research and work on a proposal for the event. The board gave approval and suggestions for the committee were made by board members of Toby, Carl, Gina Phenneger and Talia Freeman.
- TDA SWOT Analysis - Brian Barnes discussed that in order to help the TDA Board to establish goals and objectives for the upcoming year, he requested that Amy compile a SWOT Analysis. He requested that each TDA member and Town Council member to submit 3 Strengths, 3 Weaknesses, 3 Opportunities and 3 Threats to Amy for discussion at the next board meeting. These will be discussed further to develop some goals and objectives.
- Bylaw Review - Brian Barnes distributed copies of the resolution that the town council made to create the TDA as well as a copy of the bylaws with changes noted that were made in the past. He asked that everyone review and come to the next board meeting with suggestions of any changes that may need to be made.
- TDA Quarterly Review to Town Council - Brian Barnes commented that the TDA is supposed to give a quarterly report to the Town Council and will begin to do this at the upcoming April meeting of the Town Council. The March meeting was not feasible, because the TDA is working to complete the SWOT analysis and establish their goals and objectives before giving their report.
- BeechMtn.com website - Brian Barnes discussed that the Beechmtn.com website is owned by the Beech Mountain Chamber of Commerce, but the TDA maintains, publicizes and advertises it (rack cards, ads, billboards, brochures, etc), but has no formal agreement with the chamber of commerce to use the website. He asked for an official resolution to give the TDA use of the website. This request was made to the chamber president Tim Fox and to Jim Brooks – chamber board member to take back to the chamber board.
- A Cool 5 Race - Brian stated the TDA was considering giving \$2000 to combine with the requested \$1000 donation from the Beech Mountain Chamber of Commerce to secure the title sponsorship. He asked that the Chamber and the TDA share this sponsorship and brand the event the BeechMtn.com Cool 5.
  - Candi commented that we should have help from Craig Distl for branding the Cool 5 Race. Tim Fox agreed that we need to market it as a difficult race, so participants will know that it is a tough race and over so difficult terrain.
  - Randy Feierabend commented that we may need to downsize the event, and not to do a big village, yoga, etc. Judy Decker commented that it must put heads in the beds,

with post race events and activities. Brian Barnes made a motion to spend \$2000 towards branding the Cool 5 event as BeechMtn.com Cool 5. Candi seconded the motion. All were in favor

- Channel 2 – Brian would like the TDA to take ownership of the Town's government channel and use it as a sales tool to communicate all of the offerings on Beech to guests. Jes Scott and James True currently work on channel 2. Amy has in the past submitted work to Jes, which are the few video's and more visitor oriented content currently on the channel. Amy suggested that James True will be needed to collaborate with the TDA to maintain the channel. Brian Barnes made a motion to request to take ownership of Channel 2 at next town council meeting. Carl Marquardt seconded the motion. All were in favor.

## VII. Old Business

- Letter to Town Council
  - Ray Costin Memorial - Amy Morrison stated that during the last town council meeting, she presented the TDA's idea of a memorial to the Town Council, and learned that the town can not rename the proposed road in town, because it is owned by Beech Mountain Resort. Randy Feierabend commented that he spoke to Ryan Costin about a memorial at the resort. The town council approved \$500 to assist with the cost of the memorial.
  - Sledding Hill Signage - Brian Barnes stated that the sledding hill signage has been taken to Town Council, but they would like to ensure that it follows the town sign ordinances and fits the spirit and theme of other signage in town and is not commercial in nature. Brian Barnes said there may be a need to change the signs by season. There was some discussion of utilizing part of the Town sign located at Charlie's property. This will be discussed further after the planning committee has met again.

## VIII. Marketing Report

- Update on Ad Schedule
  - HighCountry365.com- Amy Morrison commented that we did not receive one referral form this website. She stated that she contacted the representative and he said that they were having problems with their ads. Due to the problems, she was able to cancel the invoice.
  - WCNC - Contract was under budget and gave decent coverage.
- Proposed Budget modifications
  - Facebook Ads are not getting the same return as last year. Amy requested that the board move \$200 budgeted for Facebook to the google ad words budget.
  - Adwords are performing exceptionally, around \$.30 per click and stay time of over 2 min. She would like the board to consider an additional \$100 for Google Ad Words (in addition to the \$200 moved from the facebook ads). The cost is averaging 30 cents per click.
  - Craig Distl requested that we give an additional \$200 in the budget to Romantic Asheville to continue through March.
  - Atlanta billboard - Amy commented that the cost is around \$400 per week or around \$1500 per month. Carl asked if we could use it through March 11th for the spring skiing advertising? Amy said yes.
  - Candi said that Talia would like \$300 some money for radio ads. Calder wanted to make sure that they were an overnight market.

- Brian Barnes made a motion to approve this requested budget –
  - \$300 Ad words
  - \$200 Romantic Asheville
  - \$500 Atlanta Billboard
  - \$300 for Radio Ads
- Motion was seconded by Carl Marquardt. All were in favor.
- Retro-80's Weekend recap - Amy commented that there was much better attendance than last year. Calder Smoot stated that he had six reservations from the 80's weekend. Judy Decker and Carl stated that they did not get anything from the weekend. Dottie Moretz commented that we had a lot of phone calls and traffic on Saturday at visitor's center, and many were interested once told about the activities.

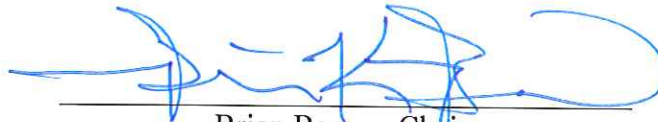
IX. TDA Coordinator Report - Amy Morrison

- Web Analytics- Amy stated that the overall numbers are down, but referrals are up. This shows our advertising efforts are working, but less people are searching for Beech, or our listing was not coming up as high as last year. The SEO was recently revamped, and should help with any problems.
- Rack Cards –Over 1000 have already been distributed, came in under budget.
- Avery Chamber Event– Amy attended the Avery Co. Tourism Summit. Whit Tuttle from the State attended, and the speakers were good.
- Governor's Conference - Amy Morrison will be attending the conference March 10th – 12th. She has secured lodging at a room close to the conference, but not the official hotel to save money.
  - She requested that she take the day after the conference (Wednesday, March 13th) to take time and visit visitor's centers and AAA offices in the region. She is creating binders with Beech Mountain info to distribute to these centers.
  - Brian Barnes stated that as long as we stay within budget, then it was fine to proceed and did not need approval.
- Beer Fest Budget- Talia Freeman and Amy Morrison are going to be working on planning the event. If the board has any suggestions for the Beer Fest, please email them to Amy.
- Social Media-
  - Twitter Followers – 310
  - Facebook Fans – 3,215
  - Pinterest Followers – 43
- Phone Calls-
  - Sledding Hill – 121, Lodging – 63, Packages - 22
  - Markets – Charlotte, Atlanta, Raleigh, Florida

X. Adjournment to Closed Executive Session

- The TDA Board met in Executive Session immediately following the meeting During this session the TDA Board unanimously approved two items:
  - Calder Smoot moved to extend the contract for Amy Morrison that expired at the end of June, 2012, through the end of June, 2013. Judy Decker seconded and all voted in favor. (Candi Catoe left the meeting prior to executive session.)
  - Carl Marquardt moved to increase the base salary for Amy Morrison by 5 percent and make this increase retroactive to July 1, 2012. The justification for this increase being the end of probation and performance exceeding expectations. Calder Smoot

seconded this motion and all voted in favor. (Candi Catoe left the meeting prior to executive session.).



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Brian Barnes, Chair