

Town of Blowing Rock

Tourism Development Authority

Minutes – September 8, 2008

The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority met on Monday, September 8, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in a special meeting. Present were Chairperson Bernie Keele, Vice-Chair Kent Tarbutton, Authority members Phil Pickett, Keith Tester, Lynn Drury, and Ex-officio members Scott Hildebran and Nicole Norman. Executive Director Tracy Brown was also present.

The purpose of the meeting was to receive the Blowing Rock Retail Strategy Report commissioned by the Authority.

Others in attendance included - Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Bobby Ball, Keith Tester, Phillip Pickett, Albert Yount and Tommy Klutz. Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Town Clerk Sharon Greene and numerous citizens were also present.

TDA Executive Director Tracy Brown welcomed those in attendance and introduced Doyle Hyett.

Mr. Doyle Hyett, of HyettPalma, Inc., a national consulting firm specializing in the economic enhancement of downtown areas retained by the TDA, made a formal presentation of the Downtown Retail Strategy. He stated Blowing Rock had many strengths; such as its quaintness, uniqueness, vibrancy, building appearance, landscaping, etc. Mr. Hyett also mentioned the quality restaurants, shops, historic buildings, trails, attractions, etc. During the public input discussions, residents and business owners wanted to maintain these qualities while enhancing the downtown area.

According to Mr. Hyett, HyettPalma conducted numerous meetings in July to receive public input regarding the preferred vision of what the downtown area should be.

Highlights of the presentation and recommendations were as follows:

- Creation of an overlay district to protect the core of downtown from Globe Road to U.S. 221. Several downtown business owners had expressed there were too many offices downtown. For example, real estate agencies were occupying too many spaces on Main Street where they felt restaurants and retail shopping should be located.
- Creation of some type of historic district in the downtown area to protect this vital core.
- Develop Design guidelines for exterior improvements to structures on Main Street.
- Conduct a study of the downtown area (Sunset Drive, Morris Street) to determine what standards for mixed uses would complement Main Street.
- Add enhancements to the entrances to Main Street by adding attractive signage, landscaping, and lighting.
- Extend free parking times from 2 hours to 3 hours with strict enforcement.
- Implement a warning ticket system for first-time parking violators.
- Install signage at crosswalks requiring vehicles to yield to pedestrians.
- Create a public art plan.
- Encourage retailers to allow the public to use in-store restrooms.
- Relax parking requirements for outdoor dining.
- Create a plan to aid hotel/motel facilities in enhancements to their facilities.
- Extend retail shopping hours to at least 7:00 p.m.
- Recruit specialty food markets, fine dining, moderately-priced and ethnic restaurants, home décor, art galleries and gift shops to the downtown area.

- Establish a Downtown Partnership to aid in the implementation of the recommendations.

After several audience members participated by asking questions regarding the retail strategy report, Mr. Hyett thanked everyone for their participation in this study.

Retail Strategy Report attached as Exhibit #1.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Bernie Keele, Chairperson

Scott E. Hildebran, Secretary

Attachments

#1 – Retail Strategy Report

