

Board of Commissioners/Tourism Development Authority
Joint Meeting
Minutes – March 8, 2010

A joint meeting of the Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners and the Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority was held on Monday, March 8, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall. Attending were Mayor JB Lawrence, Mayor Pro-tem Albert Yount, Commissioners Jim Steele, Doug Matheson, Phillip Pickett and Tommy Klutz. TDA members included Chairperson Kent Tarbutton, Vice Chairperson Lynn Drury, Rob Dyer and Phillip Pickett. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Finance Director Nicole Norman, TDA Director Tracey Brown, Assistant Director Amanda Lugenbell, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

TDA Member Dean Bullis was out of town.

Call to Order

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m. and introduced TDA Chairman Tarbutton.

Tourism Development Authority

TDA Director Tracy Brown briefly discussed TDA expenditures and income. He advised that TDA funds were lower than last year, but were expected to rebound.

He presented a power point presentation that showed revenue comparison for the year 2009 between Blowing Rock, Boone and Watauga County. He also showed several examples of media ads that were purchased by the TDA. Recent website improvements were also shown during the presentation.

TDA Chairman Kent Tarbutton thanked Council for their choice of new members to the TDA Board.

Commissioner Yount questioned what type of marketing appeal the hotels/motels in Blowing Rock were continuing to focus on. Mr. Brown stated that some hotels/motels in town had made various upgrades which included wireless internet service and he thought that other hotels/motels in town should be encouraged to upgrade. Commissioner Klutz stated he would hate to lose the small town feel that Blowing Rock currently had.

Commissioner Steele asked what marketing plans the TDA had for the next couple of years. Mr. Brown stated they would continue to try and reach areas such as Charlotte, Raleigh, etc.

Commissioner Matheson thought it would be helpful if employees who worked in various businesses in town were better educated on things to do while visiting Blowing Rock.

Council thanked Mr. Brown for his presentation and commended him on what a good job he was doing.

Hayes Performing Arts Center Update

Ms. Ginny Stevens thanked Council and the TDA for allowing representatives from the Hayes Performing Arts Center to meet with them so that an update could be given. Ms. Stevens introduced Ms. Allison West, Development Director, Mr. Ron Bryson, Board of Trustees Chairman, and Eric Davidson, Vice President/Treasurer of the Hayes Center.

Ms. West advised that a repositioning team and advisory council had been formed to aid with reaching various goals set for the Hayes Performing Arts Center. She further explained various assignments that members of the repositioning team were focusing on in order to reach these goals. Some of the strategic focus areas were to delight audiences with professional high quality arts with a balance of theatre, music, comedy, dance, children's programming and film; to enhance visitor's experience with the High Country, achieve financial viability, etc.

Ms. West also stated the core purpose of the Hayes Center was to "entertain audiences and enrich lives through intimate performing arts experiences and life-long learning in the High Country."

Ms. West commented the Hayes Performing Arts Center was the only nighttime entertainment in town and attracted many visitors which also helped other businesses in town such as restaurants, etc. She further stated their future plans were to offer a broader variety of entertainment to the public.

Mr. Bryson gave an update regarding the Hayes Performing Arts Center's financial status and their plans to reopen the facility debt-free if possible.

Ms. Stevens thanked Council for their input regarding the Hayes Center and stressed the need for the Arts Center to reopen for the good of the community.

At this time Council received a handout pertaining to the construction progress at the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum project.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the joint meeting between Council and the TDA adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Kent Tarbutton, Chairperson

Scott E. Hildebran, Secretary