

Board of Commissioners/Tourism Development Authority
Joint Meeting
Minutes – February 28, 2011

A joint meeting of the Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners and the Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority was held on Monday, February 28, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall. Attending were Mayor JB Lawrence, Commissioners Jim Steele, Doug Matheson, Phillip Pickett and Tommy Klutz. TDA members included Chairperson Kent Tarbutton, 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 and TDA Vice-Chair Lynn Drury were absent. Mayor Pro-tem Albert Yount was absent.

Call to Order

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. and introduced TDA Chairman Tarbutton and TDA Executive Director Tracy Brown.

Mr. Brown began the meeting with a power point presentation. He advised that Smith Advertising Consultants from Fayetteville had been hired by the TDA to conduct focus groups to give the authority information and direction on advertising.

Mr. Brown also spoke briefly regarding a Q.R. code located on the advertisements that visitors could download on their smart phones giving directions and information about the destination.

Mr. Brown mentioned that Blowing Rock had been voted “North Carolina’s Prettiest Small Town” and 15 different press releases had gone out regarding this designation. He also commented that the Weather Channel visit had generated \$12 million earned media for the State of North Carolina of which Blowing Rock played a significant role according to the North Carolina Division of Tourism and there had been 33 million viewers of this Weather Channel segment.

According to Mr. Brown, occupancy tax revenue had increased slightly in 2010. He also reported that 50,000 visitor guides and 25,000 shopping maps had been distributed and there had been 14,167 visitors to the visitor center and 493,349 website visitors.

Mr. Brown acknowledged the TDA had partnered with the Chamber of Commerce to fund a special events coordinator and the TDA also continued to have a great partnership with other local chambers, TDA’s, etc.

Council thanked Mr. Brown for his presentation. TDA Chairperson Kent Tarbutton, also spoke briefly stating the TDA was anticipating a 10% increase in the travel industry in 2011. Commissioner Steele asked, based on current events, how the TDA would be impacted. Mr. Tarbutton commented that he did foresee an impact especially with the

elevated gas prices, but he felt that business travel was making a comeback which was also a good sign.

Town Manager Hildebran reminded everyone of the Intergovernmental Meeting to be held on March 28, 2011 where tourism would be the main topic.

Council thanked Mr. Tarbutton and Mr. Brown and the entire Authority for their work on behalf of the Town.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the joint meeting between Council and the TDA adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Kent Tarbutton, Chairperson

Scott E. Hildebran, Secretary