

**Board of Commissioners/Tourism Development Authority
Joint Meeting
Minutes – March 19, 2012**

A joint meeting of the Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners and the Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority was held on Monday, March 19, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall. Attending were Mayor JB Lawrence, Commissioners Jim Steele, Doug Matheson, Albert Yount and Tommy Klutz. TDA members included Chairperson Kent Tarbutton, Rob Dyer, Dean Bullis and Lianne Mattar. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Finance Director Nicole Norman, TDA Director Tracy Brown, Assistant Director Amanda Lugenbell, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

TDA Member Phillip Pickett was absent. Council member Dan Phillips was out of town but available via Skype.

Call to Order

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and introduced TDA Chairman Kent Tarbutton and TDA Executive Director Tracy Brown.

Mr. Brown began the meeting with a power point presentation. (Attachment #1) He highlighted several areas in which the TDA had worked to further promote tourism in the area. He stated that approximately \$174,851 had been spent on infrastructure which included money toward parking facilities, way-finding signage, informational kiosks, etc. He also remarked the TDA had sponsored events in the area such as Winterfest, the Wine Festival, Art in the Park, etc. Mr. Brown said the TDA was continuing to follow suggestions from the Hyett Palma study.

Mr. Brown commented that the TDA continued to collaborate with other entities such as the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce, Boone Chamber of Commerce, etc. He spoke regarding “earned media” results that were very important and useful in the promotion of the area. Mr. Brown stated a total of \$172,523 had been spent on advertisement.

Mr. Brown mentioned the weekly Village Tattler was sent to tourism related business owners, and 50,000 visitor guides had been distributed throughout the area. He said that in 2011, there had been 17,738 visitors to the visitor center and approximately 6,500 phone calls received.

TDA Chairperson Kent Tarbutton also stated the parking problem in town had been remedied with the addition of the parking facilities which the TDA had helped fund. He remarked that the 321 Widening Project would impact the area somewhat but he was looking forward to a good business year.

Mayor Lawrence departed the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Klutz commented that he thought the Town continued to lose revenue by not allowing short-term rentals in town.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount requested the Tourism Authority explore ways to identify short-term rental violators as a first step in studying the issue. Chairperson Tarbuton concurred.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount thanked Mr. Tarbuton 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 6:15 p.m.

Kent Tarbuton, Chairperson

Scott E. Hildebran, Secretary

Attachment #1 – 2011 TDA Annual Report Presentation