

Town of Blowing Rock

Tourism Development Authority

Minutes – July 11, 2004 (Recessed from July 6, 2004)

The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority met on Sunday, July 11, 2004 at 2:00 p.m. in continuation of a recessed meeting from July 6, 2004. Present were Chairperson Bernard Keele, Vice-Chair Kent Tarbutton, Authority members Keith Tester, Lynn Drury, and Phil Pickett, and Ex-officio member Scott Hildebran. Ex-officio member Barbara Beach was absent.

Call to Order

Chairperson Keele called the recessed meeting to order and welcomed the Authority members.

Tourism Consultant

Chairperson Keele welcomed Beth Cardin, Executive Director of the Brevard/Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce, to provide advice and assistance to the TDA.

Ms. Cardin stated that the Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority had tremendous potential, due to what Blowing Rock has to offer as well as a healthy tourism budget. She advised that she would try to offer some information and insight, which she believes, would lead to success. She recommended that every TDA try to enhance their visitor's experience so that they come back for future visits.

Tourism Infrastructure Priorities for Success

Ms. Cardin suggested that the TDA focus on three priorities:

- **Facilities**

- welcoming/inviting/useful
- design/layout important & user friendly
- visual display of materials
- convenience (easily accessible and adequate parking)
- technology (courtesy phone & computer, database/tracking system)

She advised that their facility also has an outdoor alcove, which allows for display of important tourism materials when the visitor center is closed.

- **Personnel**

- outgoing & friendly
- customer service-oriented
- teamwork

- enjoy their job

- **Marketing** (majority of budget)

- brochures

- print ads

- media

- mailings

- website

- commercials (radio/tv)

- marketing consultant

She stated that it is important to keep pace with trends and not to get locked in on just one marketing tool. Success measures include – number of leads, number of visitations to center, mailings, occupancy rates, and a data management program/tracking system.

Tourism Conference

Ms. Cardin mentioned that they offer an annual Tourism Conference where the TDA/Chamber teach skills and hospitality concepts. She stated that this continually instills and re-enforces important hospitality traits within the tourism industry throughout the county.

Tourism Director Skills

Ms. Cardin then discussed the necessary attributes/skills of a successful Tourism Director.

Director Skills

- people skills
- management skills (financial)
- professional background
- must value teamwork
- must be a catalyst to get things done
- must be passionate about their job
- solid references

Ms. Cardin advised that the joint Brevard/Transylvania County TDA/Chamber budget was approximately \$420,000 and that she answered to both the TDA Board and Chamber of Commerce Board.

She suggested that the Authority develop a thorough job description for the director position and include all traits deemed important to the Authority. Further, she recommended that the Authority develop a 5-year Strategic Plan and outline their mission and priorities. An additional issue for further clarification would include: the TDA/Chamber relationship.

Chairperson Keele thanked Ms. Cardin for her comments.

After some discussion, the Authority by consensus agreed to schedule a joint meeting with Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors to further define and clarify the roles for both entities which would serve the best tourism and economic development interests of Blowing Rock.

TDA members decided to prepare their most important individual strategic priorities for the Authority and discuss them in detail at the next TDA meeting.

Special Meeting

It was the consensus of the Authority to hold a Special Meeting on Wednesday, July 21, 2004 at 8:00 a.m. **(changed to Friday, July 23, 2004 due to scheduling conflict)** to discuss strategic planning, website/branding, and facilitation assistance.

Adjourn

Motion by Vice-Chair Tarbutton and seconded by Member Tester to adjourn the meeting. Motion unanimously approved. Chairperson Keele adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Bernard Keele, Chairperson

Scott E. Hildebran, Secretary