

Town of Blowing Rock
Tourism Development Authority

Minutes – November 1, 2004

The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority met on Monday, November 1, 2004 at 4:00 p.m. in a regular meeting. Present were Chairperson Bernard Keele, Vice-Chair Kent Tarbutton, Authority members Lynn Drury, Keith Tester, and Phil Pickett, and Ex-officio members Scott Hildebran and Margaret Pierce.

Call to Order

Chairperson Keele called the meeting to order and welcomed the members and guests.

Approval of Minutes – October 5, 11, 21 and 29, 2004

Chairperson Keele entertained the approval of the October 5, October 11, October 21 and October 29, 2004 meeting minutes (including closed sessions). Motion by Member Drury and seconded by Vice-Chair Tarbutton to approve the October 5, October 11, October 21 and October 29, 2004 meeting minutes (including closed sessions). Unanimously approved.

Financial Report – Occupancy Tax Proceeds

Finance Director Pierce reviewed the FY 2004-05 Occupancy Tax collections year-to-date through September 2004 as well as the financial statements. She reminded the members that the collections are in arrears so that the October receipts are collected in November. Authority members noted that the September revenue totals were down slightly due to weather. Vice-Chair Tarbutton stated that he anticipated that the October receipts should be somewhat better.

Committee Reports – Tourism Data Survey & Ad Placement

Vice-Chair Tarbutton advised that Tourism Data Survey was on going with four surveys completed to date. He further stated that the ad placement for the Winter Campaign was underway.

Committee Reports – Branding/Marketing/Web site

Chairperson Keele advised that this item would be deferred until the 5:00 p.m. public session.

Report – Visitors Center

Chairperson Keele advised that there was nothing new to report on a visitors center location.

Recessed Meeting

Chairperson Keele recessed the meeting at 4:18 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. when Crown Communications would review their initial branding/marketing design concepts with the public.

Public Session

Chairperson Keele reconvened the meeting at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed the public. He advised that the TDA's advertising agency, Crown Communications, would present several concepts in development for future use in the branding and advertising of Blowing Rock as a top quality destination for visitors.

Member Drury stated that Crown Communications representatives are present to seek input from the town – residents, retail owners, hotel/motel and restaurant owners – as to what they believe will best reflect the town's image. Member Drury introduced Crown Communications representatives Kathryn Blanchard and Tim Minor.

Mr. Minor stated that Crown Communications had met with numerous local citizens and groups in gathering information on Blowing Rock, including meeting with members of the TDA, the Chamber of Commerce, NC State Tourism, High Country Host, and Southwood Corp. signage, etc.

Mr. Minor stated that in branding campaigns you must be authentic. He further stated that the brand concepts were developed based on the review of Town Center minutes, the TDA Strategic Plan, the branding vision statement and on the premise that "you deliver what you promise". He mentioned that a logo is just one component of an overall brand.

Mr. Minor then reviewed the initial branding concepts developed by Crown Communications.

A – Seal Modification (Town Seal)

Traditional, Classic

3 variations

B – Conservative Contemporary (Food, Shopping/Art, Outdoor)

Modern and Traditional, Classy

3 variations

C – Word Mark (Blowing Rock)

Clean and simple, invites exploration

3 variations

Mr. Minor then asked the audience for their reactions and comments.

Comments were received from following individuals/representatives: lodging, real estate, retailers, attractions, residential, the Chamber of Commerce and the Merchants Association.

A – Seal Modification (Town Seal)

- Beautiful, looks like entrance signs
- 4-color design expensive to reproduce
- strong, both mountains and village
- looks like a coin
- cartoon like
- too busy
- looks like signage or seal not a logo
- desire a Norman Rockwell/Charles Dickens feel
- try an oval shape
- put N.C. on logo

B – Conservative Contemporary (Food, Shopping/Art, Outdoor)

- can target symbol to audience
- looks like a stamp
- empty plate hard to distinguish
- could be anyplace
- could use a snow flake as a symbol in lieu of leaf as seasons change
- professional, upscale image to our target audience
- concept good
- difficult to reproduce, need something that can be easily placed on merchandise

C – Word Mark (Blowing Rock)

- don't like The Blowing Rock
- font similar to Biltmore House
- add Main Street to logo with mountains
- Use oval Main Street setting similar to print produced several years ago
- need something similar to Outer Banks
- add N.C. to logo
- it is just a word

Mr. Minor thanked the public for their comments and advised that they would continue to rework and refine the options. The modifications will include more vibrant colors, additional photo components and examples with variations of size. Ms. Blanchard informed those present that Crown Communications would use a focus group from the Charlotte/Raleigh/Winston-Salem areas once a consensus is reached on a concept to gain feedback from potential visitors.

Mr. Minor then discussed the web site development process and that Crown Communications would be in contact with local businesses in the next several weeks to receive information. He stated that the web site would be database driven and have active elements.

Vice-Chair Tarbutton thanked the audience for their comments. Both audience members and TDA members complimented Crown Communications on their varied branding concepts.

Next Steps

Member Drury advised that Crown Communications would take the comments received this evening and the reactions from focus groups and make modifications to present to a joint meeting of the TDA and Town Council. It is hoped that this meeting will take place later in the month.

Chairperson Keele thanked the audience members for their time and comments.

Adjournment

With no further business, motion by Member Pickett and seconded by Vice-Chair Tarbutton to adjourn the meeting. Motion unanimously approved. Chairperson Keele adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Bernard Keele, Chairperson

Scott E. Hildebran, Secretary

