

## Tourism Development Authority

Minutes – August 15, 2005

**The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority met on Monday, August 15, 2005 at 8:00 a.m. in a special meeting at Chetola Manor House. Present were Chairperson Bernard Keele, Vice-Chair Kent Tarbutton, Authority members Lynn Drury, Phil Pickett and Keith Tester, and Ex-officio members Scott Hildebran and Margaret Pierce.**

Also, present were members of Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce Executive Board, including President Pam Vines, Board members Barbara Wright, Caroline Smith, Kyle Knight and Tracy Brown.

### Call to Order

Chairperson Keele called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. He stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss various operations of the TDA and the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce.

### Discussion

Member Drury reviewed with those in attendance the primary responsibilities/functions of both organizations and their related overlapping functions.

#### TDA

- Advertising
- Public Relations
- Town Comprehensive Plan
- Occupancy Tax
- Tourism Research
- Tourism Capital
- Improvements

#### Chamber of Commerce

- Economic Development
- Business Training & Support
- Government Relations
- Member Services
- Packaging
- Business Spokesman
- Special Events

- Tourism Planning & Goals
- Visitor Center

#### Overlap

- Inquiries:
  - Mail
  - Internet
  - Phone
  - Walk-in
- Fulfillment
- Business Promotion
- Collateral
- Internet Sites
- 800 Numbers
- Staffing

After a brief discussion by both boards, attendees agreed to the Venn diagram outlining the functions and overlap of both the TDA and Chamber of Commerce (Attachment #1).

#### **Summary of Actions**

- Based on recommendations of Interim TDA Executive Director Lindsay Galvin, both boards agreed to display collateral in the Visitor Center by local area, and by regional area, and by category within both areas. Member Tester and Vice-Chair Keele (TDA Visitor Center Operations Committee) to work with Director Galvin to manage logistics of changing the current layout.
- Both boards agreed Chamber staff should have access to ACT database and share all inquiry data. Ex-officio Member Pierce and Vice-Chair Tarbutton to review ACT agreement and determine how many users are allowed.
- Both boards agreed that the Chamber Development Committee and the TDA Advertising Committee would meet together to review the following:
  - Determine whether a single packet of information can be mailed to inquirers
  - Determine what collateral material should be in that packet

- Establish inquiry process that determines the caller's needs
  - Define collateral packages that meet those needs by category
  - Recommend a combined website that replicates the structure of the Boone Chamber and CVB website; review 800 number structure; and review local visitor map alternatives
- Both boards agreed that a Visitor Center Inquiry Training Program would be developed for Visitor Center staff that supports the inquiry process once defined and implemented. Development and execution of the program would be the responsibility of Chairperson Keele and Member Tester (TDA Visitor Center Operations Committee.)
  - Ex-officio Member Pierce agreed to determine impact to budget of taking Marcia to fulltime status with benefits and will inform Chamber Board what a 50 percent share of that budget would be for the position.
  - Both boards agreed to review and take action on the operational set-up of the Visitor Center telephone system to ensure prompt and responsive customer service.

Both boards agreed to meet again in the next several weeks to follow-up on these issues.

Chamber of Commerce President Pam Vines requested an update on the status of the TDA advertising program. Vice-Chair Tarbutton advised that the proposed 18-month TDA plan would be finalized in the next week.

Member Tester stated that the TDA ad plan was more regional in approach and suggested that the Chamber of Commerce continue to coordinate local advertising co-op opportunities for their members. Ms. Vines agreed to further look into the matter.

President Vines mentioned the upcoming Gallery Stroll and encouraged local participation in the event. Chair Keele encouraged the Chamber to educate retailers on the importance of evening operating hours.

Member Tester suggested that an information booth be set up at the Art in the Park to inform visitors of local tourism opportunities. Ms. Smith and Ms. Vines agreed to pursue that idea at the September Art in the Park.

Chair Keele thanked everyone for the attendance and the positive discussions.

**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 10:00 a.m.

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Bernard Keele, Chairperson

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Scott E. Hildebran, Secretary

**Attachment**

**#1 – TDA/Chamber of Commerce Venn Diagram**