

**Board of Commissioners/Tourism Development Authority**

**Joint Meeting**

**Minutes – April 11, 2006**

A joint meeting of the Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners and the Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority (TDA) was held on Tuesday, April 11, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

Blowing Rock Town Council members attending were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Mayor Pro-tem Terry Lentz, Commissioners Bobby Ball, Rita Wiseman, Tommy Klutz and Keith Tester. Others present were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Finance Director Margaret Pierce and Town Clerk Sharon Greene. Tourism Development Authority members attending were Chairperson Bernie Keele, Vice-Chairperson Kent Tarbutton, Member Keith Tester, and ex-officio members Scott Hildebran and Margaret Pierce. TDA Executive Director Shawn Miller was also present.

TDA Members Phil Pickett and Lynn Drury were absent.

The TDA By-laws require an annual meeting with Town Council to discuss the TDA yearly achievements and future plans.

**Call to Order**

Mayor J.B. Lawrence called the meeting to order and welcomed the TDA members and assembled citizens.

**Annual Council/TDA Joint Planning Session**

Mayor Lawrence stated that per Ordinance #2003-15, which created the Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority, the TDA and Town Council are to meet at least once annually to hold a joint travel and tourism planning/goal-setting session. He then welcomed the Tourism Development Authority and TDA Chairperson Bernie Keele.

TDA Chairperson Keele introduced new TDA Executive Director Mrs. Shawn Miller to the Council. After Mrs. Miller's introduction, Mr. Keele gave a brief synopsis of the Tourism Development Authority's 2005 goals that were met and a list of anticipated goals for 2006. He also spoke of the increase in Occupancy Tax and felt the

TDA had contributed to the increase. Mr. Keele stated the TDA objectives for the future were to plan events that would bring people to town for longer than just a weekend, which in turn would fill up hotel rooms and increase retail sales.

Mayor Lawrence inquired if Mr. Keele felt the new visitor's center had been well received. Mr. Keele stated that in his opinion the new visitor's center had been very effective and the planned kiosk system would be a great improvement also. Mayor Lawrence thanked the TDA for their efforts and also welcomed Mrs. Miller to her new position.

TDA Board Member Kent Tarbutton expressed his excitement on having Mrs. Miller as the new TDA Director. Mr. Tarbutton stated that now with a new Executive Director, the Board could concentrate more on their strategic planning duties.

Commissioner Wiseman spoke of the difficulty when two separate organizations have related interest and direction, and inquired if the transitioning period between the TDA and Chamber of Commerce was coming along smoothly. Mr. Keele reiterated there were still some growing pains to work through, but he felt things were progressing in a positive manner and the TDA and Chamber had the same goals in mind for the future.

Mr. Tarbutton spoke regarding events that were planned with hopes of extending the length of stay for people visiting the area. He also stated he was very excited about the new Community Arts Center because he felt this would be another place to offer area visitors and to hold events.

Commissioner Wiseman thanked the TDA for a great job.

Commissioner Tester (also a TDA Board Member) reiterated what Council had previously said, stating that members of the TDA Board had worked diligently towards their goals and his primary concern as a member of the TDA Board was to insure constant communication between the TDA and Town Council.

With no further comments, Mayor Lawrence thanked the TDA for their attendance at the meeting.

## **Adjournment**

With no further business, Mayor Lawrence adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

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Bernard Keele, Chairperson

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Scott E. Hildebran, Secretary