

Tourism Development Authority

Minutes – October 23, 2006

The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority met on Monday, October 23, 2006 at 3:00 p.m. in a follow-up meeting regarding joint tourism issues with the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce at Town Hall. Present were Chairperson Bernard Keele, Vice-chair Kent Tarbutton, Authority members Lynn Drury, Phil Pickett and Keith Tester, and Ex-officio member Scott Hildebran and Margaret Pierce.

Call to Order

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

He stated that the meeting was a follow-up to earlier joint planning meetings with the Chamber of Commerce Executive Board to discuss a joint tourism-related effort.

Discussion

Chairperson Keele stated that he had received a telephone response from the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce regarding their commitment to the preferred business model approach (a combined TDA/Chamber organization with one director similar to the Brevard/Transylvania County model). He advised that the Chamber Executive Board had decided to retain their own director and not pursue the preferred business model with a joint director. Mr. Keele also announced that the Chamber Executive Board advised that they would develop a proposal by November 27th for the long-term management of the visitor center for Authority consideration.

The Authority members discussed their concern with the response and the continued duplication of tourism efforts. Also, they expressed concern about the commitment of the Chamber to pursue other chamber-oriented functions such as business development and business nurturing as suggested at the prior joint meeting by Beth Carden.

The Authority then considered and evaluated various options for going forward. They mentioned their concern with contracted management of the visitor center to the Chamber. Issues included – lack of control, the inherent conflict of the Chamber having to service their membership and not necessarily TDA responsibilities, and providing Chamber membership “value” via a visitor center to Chamber members outside of Blowing Rock.

Options discussed included – contracted visitor center management with the Chamber of Commerce, outsourcing fulfillment and marketing, the hiring of a visitor center manager, the hiring of a TDA executive director, contracting with the Town of Blowing Rock for visitor center oversight, or a combination of all.

Visitor Center Operation

After a brief discussion, motion by Vice-Chair Tarbutton and seconded by Member Pickett to reconsider the Chamber proposal for visitor center operation approved at the last meeting and to continue to explore other options. Motion unanimously approved.

Chairperson Keele advised he would contact Chamber President Pam Vines to inform her that the TDA was exploring various options. The Authority agreed to meet again later in the week for further discussions.

Adjournment

With no further business, motion by Vice-Chair Tarbutton and seconded by Member Pickett to continue the meeting until Thursday, October 26, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at Town Hall for further discussion. Motion unanimously approved. Chairperson Keele recessed the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Bernard Keele, Chairperson

Scott E. Hildebran, Secretary