

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Tourism Development Authority
September 3, 2019

The Town of Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority (TDA) met on Tuesday, September 3, 2019 at 3:30 p.m. at Town Hall 136 Main Street Blowing Rock N.C. In attendance were Chairman Dean Bullis, Vice-Chair Jim Steele, Authority Members Greg Tarbutton, Kevin Walker and Lance Campbell. Others present were Ex-officio Member Nicole Norman, TDA Executive Director Tracy Brown, Assistant Director Amanda Lugubell and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner, whom recorded the minutes.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes as written for the June 5, 2019 meeting was made by Vice-Chair Steele, seconded by Member Tarbutton. Unanimously approved.

Old Business

Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce – Events Update

Chamber Executive Director Charles Hardin gave the Board an update on the Savor Festival that was held in May of this year. He explained the event was a little different this year as opposed to previous years as it was held on Main Street. Mr. Hardin advised he would like to hear feedback from the Board on their thoughts going forward. Discussion centered around keeping the date in May or going back to the original April date, having the event on Main Street again or the alternate idea of holding the event on Park Avenue if permissible.

Chairman Bullis stated from a merchant stand point he felt the event went great with it being held on Main Street.

Member Tarbutton advised he felt there wasn't as much going on in town in April and this was a good event to bring people to town during that time. He further advised he felt the event needed to include some activities that gear toward families as the town has a lot of young families that vacation here.

Mr. Hardin agreed and thanked the members for the feedback. He advised there would be a Chamber Board meeting in the near future to make a decision on the event.

Mr. Hardin presented the TDA Board with a conceptual design of the Sunset Drive/Valley Boulevard intersection. Mr. Hardin additionally reviewed some of the Gateway concept ideas over the past few years and some of the reasons they didn't fit.

Mr. Hardin advised The Village Foundation had the same design firm that designed the Mayview Plaza project. Mr. Hardin explained the design firm hired by the Village Foundation took elements from town to make sure the project would fit with the town.

Mr. Hardin advised the plans had been shared with DOT and they were good with them for the most part but did have a few concerns that the Village Foundation will address in the next set of plans.

Mr. Hardin advised it was his understanding the TDA Board has set aside funding for a Gateway project. He explained he wanted to have the Board's approval since it would be funded using the TDA funds set aside for the Gateway project.

Executive Director Tracy Brown asked Ex-officio Nicole Norman what the current balance was in the Gateway fund. Ms. Norman advised the amount was \$261,800. Mr. Hardin stated he didn't think that would be enough as the estimated cost is \$400,000.

Members discussed the approximate \$138,000 gap in funding and gave several ideas for getting the extra funding including having another group in town help with the funding.

Mr. Hardin asked the board their thoughts on the concept of the project and the design element. Chairman Bullis advised he thought it was great and felt it would be very nice for the Town but wasn't sure where the extra funding would come from. Member Tarbutton advised he thought it looked great but wasn't sure if it could be done for the amount of money that has been set aside. Member Campbell asked if the project could be broken up into two phases. Mr. Hardin advised that it could be.

Mr. Hardin advised currently he needs to know if the Board approves the concept and the Village Foundation can move forward on the next steps.

Member Tarbutton made a motion to approve the concept with the current designated funding and to see where the project goes from here, seconded by Member Campbell. Unanimously approved.

STR Helper – Update

Mr. Brown stated compared from last year, April thru June, to April thru June of this year there were 187 properties listed in Blowing Rock which is up from 164 in 2018, an increase of 12.3%.

Members briefly discussed the process the Town is using to manage Short Term Rentals and make sure they stay in compliance.

Downtown Shuttle Trial – Update

Mr. Brown advised the downtown shuttle to date has had approximately 277. He further advised the busiest days were Art in the Park days when the riders were coming from the hotels or parking out and riding into town.

Mr. Brown explained if the Board is looking at funding in the future the schedule really needs to be looked at and re-worked to fit the visitor's needs. Ex-officio Shane Fox advised there will be a meeting in the near future to discuss options.

Members discussed several options that could be possible to make the shuttle work to accommodate all.

Strategic Plan Review and Adoption Consideration

Mr. Brown presented the final draft to the board and commended Amanda Lugenbell on her hard work putting the document together. The board briefly discussed. Member Tarbutton made a motion to adopt as is but requested Mr. Brown link the annual report back to strategic plan to show what has been accomplished, seconded by Vice-Chair Steele. Unanimously approved. **Strategic Plan – Attachment A**

Monthly Reports

Financial Report and Occupancy Tax Proceeds Update

Ex-officio Member Nicole Norman reviewed financials for the first quarter.

Operations Report

Executive Director Tracy Brown reviewed the first quarter operation via Power Point presentation. **Fourth Quarter Board Meeting Power Point Presentation – Attachment B**

Executive Session

None

Other

The board set the time for the Retreat and regular meeting, December 2nd at 9:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Member Campbell made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Member Tarbutton. Unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Dean Bullis, Chair

Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

Strategic Plan – Attachment A

First Quarter Board Meeting Power Point Presentation – Attachment A