

Brunswick County Tourism Development Authority

July 24, 2018

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Bill Bernier, Glenda Browning, Bonnie Cox, Dana Fisher, Jerry Helms, Melaney Robbins, Buddy Rudd, Whitney Sauls, and Eddie Walters. **Absent:** Maryann Azzato. **Also in Attendance:** Mitzi York, Executive Director.

I. Call to Order:

Bonnie Cox, Chair, called to order the TDA's regular monthly meeting at the Brunswick County TDA office at 712 Village Rd SW in Shallotte at 3:00 pm.

II. Public Comment:

No one requested to speak during the public comment period.

III. Approval of June 26, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes:

Mitzi York advised that the minutes in the Board packet have a correction in the attendance list but otherwise is the same as was emailed to the Board. A motion was made by Buddy Rudd and seconded by Jerry Helms to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2018 meeting. The motion was passed unanimously.

V. Executive Director's Report:

Mitzi York advised that income statements are not available for the month of June as we are still waiting for occupancy tax revenues numbers for June. She reviewed the occupancy tax report through May. She advised that additional dollars were received for April but April is flat compared to last year. It may be because Easter was April 1 and some Easter dollars may be in March collections. Year-to-date we are 6.58% over this time last year.

Mitzi York advised the Board of a February Charlotte Parent article "31 Ways to Explore the Carolina Coasts" that was not previously reported that included Oak Island, Southport, Sunset Beach and Ingram Planetarium. PR in the month of June included the Our State articles and calendar of event items. Reader's Digest ran online "15 Best Summer Weekend Getaways You'll Want to Book This Second". That is a repost of an article from last year. MSN online also ran the same article. Southport and the NC 4th of July Festival was featured in the online article "Your Guide to the Best 4th of July Fireworks Shows in the South" in The Southern Weekend. The earned media value over \$348,479. The earned editorial value was over \$1 million. The total circulation was over 14 million.

Mitzi York advised the Board that work is underway on a leisure FAM for the end of September. We are focusing on recruiting travel writers from Atlanta, DC and Charlotte. We are also working with Let's Golf on a golf FAM for the end of

October/early November. We are targeting female golf writers this time and the FAM will include some leisure activities as well.

Mitzi York updated the Board on the fulfillment issue discussed at the last meeting. The 10,000 vacation guides went out August 9. We have gotten all the postage reports but we can't reconcile the reports and the number of guides in stock. It is not likely that we were shipped extra guides. It is possible some prior year guides were sent out. RFPs were sent to five potential fulfillment vendors. We received responses from three companies. Mitzi York is still reviewing the proposals. Staff has been fulfilling July's leads first class. The plan is to move our business by the middle of August to a new vendor.

Mitzi York reported that she has received a proposal for the development of a new website from Simpleview. She has a meeting set up with Walker Marketing to discuss website development so they can put a proposal together. She plans to contact the two other companies suggested at the last Board meeting. We will try to schedule a meeting at the end of August to hear presentations from the web companies.

Mitzi York advised the Board that she is interviewing for the Marketing Assistant position. She has received over 500 resumes through Indeed.com.

VI. Marketing Committee Report

Mitzi York reviewed the Marketing Report for June. In June, we received 2,671 leads/request for guides including downloads and views. There were 53,541 unique visitors to our website and 57,250 views of the partner pages and from there 15,056 visits to our partners' websites. Media included Guest Quest, NC Travel Guide, SEM, and VisitNC. Leads year-to-date total 122,120 compared to 132,555 for the same time period last year. The top states were North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Mitzi York reviewed the Google analytics reports for June. We had 53,541 unique visitors in June and 164,856 page views on the website. The bounce rate was 44.59%. The number of new users was down about 11% from last year. We had less traffic to our restaurant pages and fewer referrals from VisitNC probably because of the launch of their new website in the spring. There are also more competing websites featuring local town names in their urls. We are devoting some of our SEO dollars to target the beach town names. Mitzi York asked the agency to add Southport to that list. Google organic search was the number one source of traffic to the website followed by our cost per click program, direct traffic, Facebook, our email program, and VisitNC. The top keyword was North Carolina beaches. The top landing pages were our islands and towns page followed by NC 4th of July page, Oak Island page and home page. The top pages viewed were the Islands and Towns page, Oak Island page, Accommodations page, and NC 4th of July page. The top states were North Carolina, Virginia

Georgia, and Ohio. The best conversion rate for vacation guide requests was Ohio. Charlotte was our top metro area followed by Wilmington, Raleigh, Atlanta and Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem and Washington DC. Whitney Sauls asked about the drop in leads. Mitzi York responded that the lead count includes golf and wedding leads. She also reminded the Board that we cut back on some of the fall advertising because we did not have the number of guides available to fulfill the projected leads. It is a little confusing because the lead count in the report is on a fiscal year basis and the vacation guides are printed on a calendar year basis. She advised the Board that we have updated the lists in the online wedding guide which is now the main wedding fulfillment piece.

VII. Old Business:

No old business.

VII. New Business:

No new business.

IX. Adjourn:

Buddy Rudd motioned to adjourn, seconded by Eddie Walters. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 pm.

NEXT MEETING: August 28, 2018 at 3:00 pm at the TDA's offices in the Red Apple Building, 712 Village Rd SW Unit 105 in Shallotte.