

Brunswick County Tourism Development Authority

May 22, 2018

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Maryann Azzato, Bill Bernier, Glenda Browning, Bonnie Cox, Dana Fisher, Jerry Helms, Melaney Robbins, Buddy Rudd, Whitney Sauls, and Eddie Walters.

Also in Attendance: Mitzi York, Executive Director and Brittany Dagenhart and Elaine Cheedle from Walker Marketing.

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 April 24, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made by Jerry Helms and seconded by Glenda Browning to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2018 meeting. The motion was passed unanimously.

IV. Marketing Plan Recommendations for FY 2018-19

Mitzi York advised the Board that Brittany Dagenhart and Elaine Cheedle were present to review the recommended media and marketing plan for next fiscal year. The Marketing Committee has reviewed and approved the recommendations.

Brittany Dagenhart began by recapping the current year creative, website strategies, digital, print and TV advertising. In the current fiscal year, we published new vacation and golf guides. On the website, we did a site copy refresh to enhance SEO, enhanced the fishing content, and enhanced the golf section including adding a download map and adding a photo gallery. Brittany Dagenhart also reviewed some of the stats for the website and our email marketing program. Elaine Cheedle recapped the media program and TV campaign results.

Brittany Dagenhart reviewed the 2018-19 marketing strategies:

- Build brand position as a preferred family beach vacation destination
- Increase awareness among leisure audiences and niche segments
- Fulfill 100,000 leisure & 20,000 golf leads
- Increase traffic and other key performance indicators (KPIs) for the Wedding section of NCBrunswick.com
- Increase KPIs and measureable performance
- Use search to increase visibility and drive qualified website traffic
- Use digital channels (website, email) to create interest and travel intent

- Develop new vacation guide, golf guide and wedding guide to create travel intent
 - Distribute quality content across channels to build brand and increase interest and travel intent and engage audiences
- She also reviewed creative, digital, email and website recommendations for the FY 2018-19.
- Redesign Vacation Guide to establish a refreshed look and new content, while maintaining the brand essence, feel and tone
 - Introduce new interior format options to better feature quality content to inspire travel and to be of use to audiences in vacation planning
 - Develop new copy to better reflect prominent and signature features of each sub-destination and important features of the destination as a whole (activities, etc.)
 - Update partner ads and listings
 - Update Golf Guide Cover image and design
 - Update Golf Guide partner ads, listings, and images throughout interior
 - Re-use recently updated Golf Guide interior layout as template
 - Update Wedding Guide cover concept and design
 - Refresh Wedding Guide copy
 - Update Wedding partner ads and listings
 - Develop Wedding Guide for digital distribution
 - Digital guide updates
 - Web support for backend/CRM
 - Google Search - Increase Leisure spend in December, January and February
 - Google Search - Increase Wedding spend in October, November, December, January and February
 - Monthly leisure emails (excluding November, December)
 - Golf emails in August, September, January, February
 - Fishing emails in Spring and Fall
 - Annual Email List Hygiene/Data Validation

Elaine Cheadle reviewed the recommended media strategies for the new fiscal year. Earmark dollars for guaranteed, efficient lead-generation - Consider a conversion study. Commit to Visit NC programs that help achieve lead and traffic goals - Print & digital tactics Focus print on titles that are targeted with the most efficient leads/bonus listings. Test and learn with digital partners - Applying learnings from past years to refine approach. Support Golf with approximately 10% of the budget - Using combination of tactics to surround that niche audience.

Digital Strategies:

1. Travel content - Contextual relevance increases the chance consumers will engage because they are in a travel mindset - Proven Sherman's Travel, TravelSpike and TripAdvisor engagement over the years
2. Consistent, strong calls to action - Drive more immediate site traffic, engagement and leads
3. Creative variety - Showcasing the unique features of Brunswick islands when in vacation planning mode/content - Keeping consumers' attention

Brittany Dagenhart reviewed the recommendations for YouTube and Golf and Wedding segment support. She also reviewed the proposed budget for media, publication development and printing, email marketing, creative development, and website support totaling \$755,642. Glenda Browning asked how we spent our wedding marketing dollars in the current year. Brittany Dagenhart explained the distribution of wedding search dollars over the year. There was a brief discussion about the YouTube search test conducted this spring. Melaney Robbins asked if the Board could be signed up to see the MMSI emails. Mitzi York advised she could send the Board copies of the test. Mitzi York will check to see that Board members are signed up to receive our monthly emails. Jerry Helms asked if when we have representation at golf shows have we ever considered geo-fencing around the golf shows. Elaine Cheedle advised that we have considered running TV around some of the shows. Mitzi York advised that she will investigate the possibility.

IV. Executive Director's Report:

Mitzi York reviewed the Budget Ordinance and proposed management budget for FY 2018-19. She pointed out that funds for the new website and CRM are allocated in the special projects line. The media line is less than the original adopted budget for the current fiscal year. She added that she anticipates that we will be able to budget additional funds after the audit. Other changes include small increases in the fulfillment line and public relations line. Jerry Helms motioned to hold the public hearing for the proposed FY 2018-19 budget at 3 pm at the next Board meeting scheduled for June 26, 2018 in the TDA office. The motion was seconded by Glenda Browning and approved unanimously.

Mitzi York reviewed the financial report for April 2018. Occupancy tax revenues for April in the amount of \$31,403.56 are shown in the accrual column because the deposit by the County was made in May instead of April. Mitzi York pointed out media was the major expense in April as we finished paying for TV and other spring media. Postage is higher than average due to the large of number of leads acquired in April. Total expenditures for the month were \$125,859.60 plus \$37,007.15 in accruals. Our ending bank balance for April was \$486,464.03. Buddy Rudd motioned to accept the financial report, seconded by Maryann Azzato. The motion passed unanimously. Mitzi York also reviewed the occupancy tax report. She reported that March was up 10% over last year. Year-to-date we are up nearly 6%.

Mitzi York advised that the line for the PR agency fee in the proposed FY 2018-19 budget is unchanged from the current year budget. The work program for Pineapple PR will be very similar to the current year's plan. The agency will do PR pitches throughout the year. We will conduct a FAM trip in the fall. Pineapple will also prepare our blog posts. The Best Beaches campaign which was so successful last year with national media, will be continued but with a focus on

regional media in our key markets. Pineapple will also conduct deskside visits in Charlotte.

Mitzi York advised the Board that she participated in the State's New York media mission in April. Pineapple will do follow-up with media. NCTIA's Tourism Day reception in Raleigh is tomorrow. Mitzi York and Jenny Walsh will attend.

April PR included the Southern Living article naming Ocean Isle Beach the "Best Tiny Town 2018". Our State magazine included the Oak Island Run/Walk in their calendar of events. National Geographic in Germany ran online the best beaches in the world article. The 4th of July Festival was included in an online article on AAA Go's website. Trips to Discover included The Winds in a roundup of "Best Beach Hotels in North Carolina". The circulation/UVM was 4,160,105 and the earned media value over \$776,000. The earned editorial value was over \$2 million. Mitzi York distributed copies of the June Our State magazine. We understood that Southport would be the feature in the Downtown article. Pineapple contacted Our State and because Southport has 2 spreads in the photo essay, the Downtown feature will be rescheduled.

VI. Marketing Committee Report

Mitzi York reviewed the Marketing Reports for April. In April, we received 19,415 leads/request for guides including downloads and views. There were 38,186 unique visitors to our website and 41,921 views of the partner pages and from there 11,062 visits to our partners' websites. Media media included the Alabama Media Group banners, NC Travel Guide, On-going SEM, TV - Columbus, Southern Living, AAA Go, AAA World, Better Homes and Gardens, Coastal Living, Guest Quest, Hearst Great Getaway Guide, and VisitNC.com. Leads year-to-date total 114,416 compared to 111,976 for the same time period last year. The top states were New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Mitzi York reviewed the Google analytics reports for April. We had 38,186 unique visitors in April and 120,998 page views on the website. The bounce rate was 46.02%. Comparing that to April of last year, the number of new users was down about 19%. Possible reasons for the decrease include that last year we had TV ads running in April and also Jinks Creek restaurant opened last April and they did not have a website at that time. 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. Our islands and towns page was the top page viewed followed by the accommodations page. The top states were North Carolina, Ohio and Virginia. Charlotte was our top metro area followed by Wilmington, Raleigh, Atlanta and Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem.

VII. Old Business:

No old business.

VIII. 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 4:25 pm.

NEXT MEETING: June 26, 2018 at 3:00 pm at the TDA's offices in the Red Apple Building, 712 Village Rd SW Unit 105 in Shallotte.