

Brunswick County Tourism Development Authority

May 28, 2019

Meeting Minutes

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

I. Call to Order:

Bonnie Cox, Chairman, called to order the TDA's regular monthly meeting at the Brunswick County TDA office at 712 Village Rd SW in Shallotte at 3:04 pm.

II. Public Comment:

No one requested to speak during the public comment period.

III. Approval of April 23, 2019 minutes

Maryann Azzato motioned to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2019 Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Eddie Walters and approved unanimously.

V. Marketing Plan Recommendation for FY 2019-20

Mitzi York advised the Board that the recommended marketing plan was presented last week to the Marketing Committee. Brittany Dagenhart and Elaine Cheedle are in attendance to present the marketing plan for next year but the vote and public hearing on the budget will need to be scheduled for the next Board meeting. Brittany Dagenhart began the presentation with a high level recap of FY18-19 starting with the creative for the vacation and golf guides. Web strategies for the year included updates on the About page for SEO purposes, url updates, adding language on the footer for SEO, and the website is now under a SSL certificate for SEO. The meetings page is currently being revamped. GlynnDevins is consulting with staff on the new website Simpleview is building. She provided statistics on website traffic and other engagement metrics. In 2018, there were 418,467 new users and 1,200,153 page views. There were 443,391 partner page views and 110,489 partner website clicks. Brittany Dagenhart also reviewed the creative used for print advertising for the fiscal year. Elaine Cheedle reviewed briefly results from print advertising through the year. Brittany Dagenhart reviewed the digital creative and campaigns used this year and Elaine Cheedle recapped the results. Brittany Dagenhart also reviewed the creative for leisure and golf emails. Elaine Cheedle recapped results for paid email campaigns. Elaine Cheedle also recapped the spring TV campaign. Traffic that came as a direct result from TV were very engaged.

Brittany Dagenhart reviewed the marketing strategies and recommendations for FY 19-20.

- Strengthen brand position as a preferred family beach vacation destination, setting NC's Brunswick Islands apart from competitive destinations.
- Increase awareness among leisure, golf and wedding audiences
- 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 measurable performance across all channels
- Use digital channels to increase visibility, drive qualified website traffic and create interest and travel intent
- Develop new vacation guide and golf guide to fulfill leads and create travel intent
- Distribute quality content across channels to build brand awareness, increase interest and travel intent, and engage audiences

Elaine Cheelde reviewed the media strategies and recommendations.

1. Generate 90K leisure leads from paid media
 - 20K fall, 70K spring
2. Generate 20K golf leads
3. Build quality site traffic and engagement rates with Brunswick Islands content
 - Benchmarked off of historical bounce rates, time on site, page views, etc.
 - Earmark dollars for guaranteed, efficient lead-generation
 - 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
 - Support Golf with 8% - 10% of the total budget
 - Using a combination of tactics to surround that niche audience
 - Continue with digital display partners who drove most qualified audiences
 - *NEW TEST & LEARN*
 - Extend Our State learnings by testing state-wide or key market lifestyle media outlets to gauge audience engagement.
 - Push out PR content through paid media for wider audience consumption across web.
 - Incorporate YouTube/Facebook/IG video test & learn as a driver of brand awareness in core markets.
 - Flight activity based on market vacation planning timing, based on Conversion Study learnings.

New media partnerships/campaigns include custom eblasts with regional or city publications; content distribution with Outbrain; mobile advertising with Cluep; and online video through Pixability. Wedding marketing will continue to be through search year-round. Brittany reviewed the budget for work programs in the marketing plan. The budget for the items in the presentation total \$896,362.

VI. Executive Director's Report:

Mitzi York reviewed the Budget Ordinance for FY 2019-20 and the management budget. She pointed out that the biggest change in the management budget for next fiscal year is the change in the Special Projects line as the whole cost of developing the new website was included in the current year budget. That line

will decrease next year and the Production/Research line will increase as the monthly website charges begin in FY 19-20. Most other line items remain the same or have small changes to them. Jerry Helms motioned to schedule a public hearing on the FY 2019-20 budget at the Board's June 25, 2019 regular meeting. Glenda Browning seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mitzi York reviewed the financial statement for the month of April. Revenues for April totaled \$36,207.13. She pointed out that there were significant media expenses in April due primarily to the TV campaign. There will be additional TV expenses reflected in the May statements as well. Other larger expenses in April were the agency fee and postage. Expenditures for the month included \$144,549.24 in actual expenses plus \$111,194.77 in accruals. The ending bank balance in April was \$631,392.52.

Mitzi York pointed out that the occupancy tax report shows March down 7%. She advised that revenues from one of the beaches was not included in the monthly report from the County and that last Easter was in March but was in April this year. Year-to-date we are 3.37% up over this time last year. There was a brief discussion about Airbnb going into the hotel booking business. Buddy Rudd motioned to approve the financial report, seconded by Maryann Azzato. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mitzi York advised that since the last Board meeting, we had the leisure FAM in April and the golf FAM in early May. Both FAMs were very successful. The coverage from the social media influencer that participated in the leisure coverage was immediate. Mitzi York sent photos to Northwest Georgia Living for their next issue and we should be in the next issue of the Georgetowner as well. The golf FAM was a mix of leisure activities and golf. Based on how well received the golf FAM was, we are looking to conduct another female golf writers FAM next year.

PR coverage in April included Southport being included in "best places to live on the Coast in 2019" in Food & Wine online (March 23, previously unreported); Carolina School of Surf in Charlotte Magazine online outdoor adventures near Charlotte; and several local events in Atlanta Journal Constitution online event calendar. The total circulation was 10,814,120 with an earned media value of \$107,284.31 and editorial value of \$321,852.93.

VII. Marketing Committee Report

Mitzi York reviewed the Marketing Report for April. In April, we received 24,880 leads/request for guides including downloads and views. There were 46,523 new visitors to our website and 43,455 views of the partner pages and from there 11,198 visits to our partners' websites. She reviewed the list of media that ran in April. Year-to-date, we have received 121,478 leads compared to 114,416 in April last fiscal year. Top states for leads were New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Ohio and Tennessee. The top campaign in April was the Interfuse Leisure lead generation campaign. She reviewed the partner

tracking report. Simpleview is recommending that campgrounds become a listing page in the new website. In April, we had 46,523 new users and 131,353 page views. The number of new users and page views were both up over 20% from the previous April. The top sources of traffic were Google organic followed by our cost-per-click program, direct traffic, TravelSpike display and our monthly eblast. Top keywords were North Carolina beaches and dynamic search ads. The top pages viewed were the home page, accommodations, Oak Island page, and Holden Beach page. The home page, and Fort Fisher Ferry were the top landing pages. Top states were North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, and Virginia. Top metro areas were Charlotte, Wilmington, Raleigh-Durham, Atlanta, and Nashville.

VIII. Old Business:

No old business.

IX. New Business:

No new business

X. Adjourn:

Buddy Rudd motioned to adjourn, seconded by Whitney Sauls. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 pm.

NEXT MEETING: June 25, 2019 at 3:00 pm at the TDA's offices in the Red Apple Building, 712 Village Rd SW Unit 105 in Shallotte.