

Brunswick County Tourism Development Authority

February 27, 2018

Meeting Minutes

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

I. Call to Order:

Bonnie Cox called to order the TDA's regular monthly meeting at the Brunswick County TDA office at 712 Village Rd SW in Shallotte at 3:02 pm.

II. Public Comment:

No one requested to speak during the public comment period.

III. Approval of January 23, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made by Melaney Robbins and seconded by Maryann Azzato to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2018 meeting. The motion was passed unanimously.

IV. Executive Director's Report:

Mitzi York reviewed the financial report for January 2018. Occupancy tax revenues received during January in the amount of \$49,419.32 were collected for November and other months. Revenues for January totaled \$48,581.24. The largest expenditures for the month were the guides - vacation and golf - as well as agency fees and media costs. Total expenditures for the month were \$70,224.42 plus \$142,980.85 in accruals. Our ending bank balance for January was \$1,062,270.88. Mitzi York also reviewed the occupancy tax report. At our last meeting we had an incomplete November causing November to be down 25%. Now November is up 1.74% as additional funds came in. December is down 17.48% in the report but we do not have income from all the towns yet. At this point, we are up 4.11% for the year. Jerry Helms motioned to approve the financial report, seconded by Glenda Browning. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution Amending FY 2017-18 Budget. Mitzi York reviewed the Resolution Amending the Budget Ordinance for FY 2017-18 to appropriate \$214,824.00 for the spring marketing campaign presented by Walker Marketing and approved by the Board at its December 2017 meeting. Glenda Browning motioned to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded by Maryann Azzato and approved unanimously.

Mitzi York reported that tomorrow a writer from Columbia Metropolitan Magazine (Columbia, SC) will be coming in and staying in Southport. Coming in next week is a writer from Our State magazine who will be working on the copy

for the June photo essay feature. On March 16 an editor from Our State will be in Southport for a downtown Southport feature for the June issue. The June issue should also include a blurb about the capture of Stede Bonnet in Southport. Mitzi York has spoken with a writer from AAA Go magazine regarding a feature that will highlight 4 or 5 4th of July Celebrations including the Southport festival.

In the month of January there was an article on the Brunswick Islands in TOWN Carolina out of Greenville SC online and in print. There were also 2 articles on Red Tricycle. Trips to Discover included an article on 4 Best Sunset Beach, North Carolina Hotels and Chattanooga Magazine included the NC Oyster Festival in an article "It's Oyster Season". The total circulation for those outlets is 3,842,014. The earned media value is \$40,700 and the earned editorial value is \$122,100.

The NC tourism conference is next week in Winston-Salem. We hope to get more information about changes to VisitNC.com. One additional new change is that vacation rental listings will now need to have at least 10 properties so we will need to remove 2 partners from VisitNC.com. We have not started removing restaurants yet. At the conference, the state will unveil its co-op marketing opportunities for next fiscal year. Mitzi York asked the Board to authorize her to be able to sign up for co-op opportunities at the NC 365 conference. Melaney Robbins made the motion which was seconded by Eddie Walters. The motion passed unanimously. Melaney Robbins asked if there will be an ad in the June issue of Our State magazine. Mitzi York confirmed that we will have a co-op ad similar to the one we run in the NC Travel Guide. She plans to get the sign-up information to partners this week.

Mitzi York advised the Board that she had a planning session with Walker Marketing in January to discuss the upcoming fiscal year. One item of discussion was the development of a new website which was recommended by Walker Marketing. Mitzi York advised that the current website was built in 2013 and was not significantly different in appearance from the prior website although a number of enhancements and additions were made. The website and CRM was custom built for us. Making changes to the website and CRM have been cumbersome. Building a new website would be an expensive and lengthy process but it is something we should look at going ahead with. Walker Marketing has expressed an interest in building a new website but not the CRM. Mitzi York met with the Wilmington TDA which recently built a new website and discussed their process. The project would cost over \$100,000. Glenda Browning suggested that we look at developing a RFP. Eddie Walters recommended looking at a comprehensive solution. Mitzi York provided a brief recap of the process for the last rebuild of the website. The consensus of the Board was to proceed with including the development of a new website in next year's budget.

VI. Marketing Committee Report

Mitzi York reviewed the Marketing Reports for January. In January, we received 4,431 leads/request for guides including downloads and views. There were 21,758 unique visitors to our website and 30,815 views of the partner pages and from there 8,142 visits to our partners' websites. January media included the Golf Magazine eblast, Interfuse Golf campaign, NC Travel Guide, On-going SEM, Travel Spike Golf and VisitNC.com. Leads year-to-date total 42,449 compared to 53,274 for the same time period last year. The top states were Ohio, North Carolina, New York, and Pennsylvania.

Mitzi York reviewed the Google analytics reports for January. We had 21,758 unique visitors in January and 71,937 page views on the website. The bounce rate was 40.27%. Comparing that to January of last year, the number of users was down about 4%. The bounce rate was down about 3%. Google organic search was the number one source of traffic to the website followed by our cost per click program, direct traffic, 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 Pennsylvania. Charlotte was our top metro area followed by Wilmington, Raleigh, and Washington DC.

VII. Old Business:

No old business.

VIII. New Business:

Bonnie Cox advised that dredging has started at the Lockwood Folly Inlet.

IX. Adjourn:

Buddy Rudd motioned to adjourn, seconded by Jerry Helms. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 pm.

NEXT MEETING: March 27, 2018 at 3:00 pm at the TDA's offices in the Red Apple Building, 712 Village Rd SW Unit 105 in Shallotte.