

# **Brunswick County Tourism Development Authority**

**July 23, 2019**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**In Attendance:** Bill Bernier, Glenda Browning, Bonnie Cox, Jerry Helms, Melaney Robbins, Buddy Rudd, and Whitney Sauls. **Also in Attendance:** Mitzi York, Executive Director.

### **I. Call to Order:**

Chairman 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 3:00 pm.

### **II. Public Comment:**

Velva Jenkins with Family Forward NC made a brief presentation on Family Forward NC's efforts to encourage family friendly work policies to support children's early development.

### **III. Approval of June 25, 2019 minutes**

Buddy Rudd motioned to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2019 Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Billy Bernier and approved unanimously.

### **IV. Executive Director's Report:**

Mitzi York advised the Board that financial statements are not yet available for June because June revenues will not be reported for a few more weeks and there are still a few outstanding invoices. She reviewed the occupancy tax report and advised that additional funds have been received for April. April is now 10.25% up over April of last year. May is down but Mitzi York anticipates that more May revenues will come in. Year to date, we're up 4.31% over this time last fiscal year.

Mitzi York reported on publicity featuring the Brunswick Islands in June. The June issue of Our State included several articles that included Brunswick Islands' towns and businesses including Drift Coffee in Ocean Isle Beach, Fishy Fishy and Swain Seafood Shack, Holden Beach in "Holden Beach: Sea Monkeys, Sand Dollars, and Wild Dunes", and several towns in Island Time. Our State online included the NC 4<sup>th</sup> of July Festival in the calendar of events. As a result of our FAM, the Brunswick Islands was featured in an article online and in print in The Georgetowner. The Atlanta Journal Constitution and Charlotte Observer included area events in their online calendars. Coastal Living included Southport on The Best Tiny Beach Town in America as did MSN and Press From. Readers Digest included the area in "20 Beautiful Lighthouses to Visit Coast to Coast". Local Life out of Hilton Head included print and online an article on Brunswick Islands golf as a result our Golf FAM. The Golf Fam also produced articles in Golf Gurls and Southern New England Golfer. The radio travel show "Travel Bags with Annita" included the Brunswick Islands as a result of our Leisure FAM. The total

circulation/unique viewership was 37,275,584. The earned media value was \$242,526 and the earned editorial value was \$727,579.

Mitzi York advised that the new website will launch in November. The CRM or data part of the website will be transferred next month and training will begin then. The CMS or frontend part of the website will up in October. There will be more pages on the new website so we are working on new content and photography for the website. Staff completed an update of the accommodations listing that are included in the VisitNC Travel Guide. Mitzi York added that each time we reach out to the partners, we continue to ask for photographs. On the new website the listing pages will include photos. When partners don't have photos a generic photo will be used. Mitzi York encouraged Board members to review their pages on the NCBrunswick website to make sure photos are included. Mitzi York advised the Board that she was requested to attend the County Commissioners meeting on August 5 to provide an update. She also reported that the Leisure FAM will be held in October and the Golf FAM will be held in the spring. The Leisure FAM will be held during the week of the Oyster Festival and will be more food oriented than previous FAMs. That timing would conflict with our October Board meeting. Mitzi York asked if the Board would be OK with moving the October Board meeting to October 29. Jerry Helms motioned to make the change to reschedule the October meeting from October 22 to October 29, 2019. The motion was seconded by Glenda Browning and passed unanimously.

#### **V. Marketing Committee Report**

Mitzi York reviewed the Marketing Report for June. In June, there was not a lot of media running. We received 3,230 leads/request for guides including 473 downloads and views. There were 54,159 new visitors to our website and 55,774 views of the partner pages and from there 14,667 visits to our partners' websites. During the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter – April through June – we saw an increase of 6% in sessions on the website over last fiscal. That was due primarily to a rise in organic traffic. That was especially positive as we had seen a few months of decline in organic traffic. The towns that saw the biggest increase in organic traffic in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter were Holden Beach and Oak Island. The events page increased 14% over last year. 63% of all traffic came from a smartphone or tablet. Top states for leads in June were North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York. The top source for leads in June was our website. Mitzi York pointed out in the Google Analytics that new users were up in June over last June but sessions were flat. The top sources of traffic were Google organic followed by our cost-per-click program, direct traffic, and our emails. Top keywords were North Carolina beaches and dynamic search ads. The top pages viewed were the home page, Oak Island page, 4<sup>th</sup> of July page, Holden Beach page, Southport/Fort Fisher Ferry page and accommodations page. The home page, Fort Fisher Ferry, 4<sup>th</sup> of July page and Holden Beach were the top landing pages. Top states were North Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Top metro areas were Charlotte, Wilmington, Raleigh-Durham, Atlanta, and Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem and Nashville. The highest conversion rates were from Washington DC and Nashville.

Mitzi York advised that next month we will have a writer come in to develop new golf content that can be used for the website, blog, and paid native content. Pineapple was here in April and developed some fresh new blog content. The new content is being developed as some of the existing content had become repetitive.

**VI. Old Business:**

Glenda Browning asked if Mitzi York has seen any changes as a result of items discussed last month related to Walker Marketing. Mitzi York advised that she has not seen any changes in service. Whitney Sauls asked if Mitzi York had heard any more about Airbnb. Mitzi York advised that she has not heard more than what was in the NCTIA newsletter. The bills introduced in the General Assembly about Airbnb are a big concern of NCTIA as well as the League of Municipalities.

**VII. New Business:**

No new business.

**VIII. Adjourn:**

Buddy Rudd motioned to adjourn, seconded by Whitney Sauls. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 pm.

**NEXT MEETING: August 27, 2019 at 3:00 pm at the TDA's offices in the Red Apple Building, 712 Village Rd SW Unit 105 in Shallotte.**