



ROWAN COUNTY TDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday, May 9, 2018: 12 Noon, Gateway Building

CALLED MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Attending: Steve Hall, Krista Osterweil, Amie Baudoin, Whitney Wallace, Edward Norvell, Kelly Alexander, Brian Miller, Tony Shaw,

Not Attending: Shannon Stewart-Hill, Craig Pierce, Krista Osterweil, Darrell Blackwelder

TDA Staff: James Meacham, Lesley Pullium, Tara Furr

I. RCTDA Call to Order

Kelly Alexander called the RCTDA to order at 12:04pm.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: Edward Norvell made the motion for approval of the RCTDA March 2018 minutes with the amendment to the Capital Report section of “The committee approved the structure of a long term funding agreement *in the amount of \$250,000* for the park \$25,000 per year over 10 years”.

Second: Steve Hall

Motion: Approved

Financial Report

The TDA Board of Directors reviewed the year-to-date financial statements and year-to-date occupancy tax revenues. Meacham stated that the balance sheet for the month of April shows a little over \$150,000 in current assets, \$70,000 in cash and \$84,000 in occupancy taxes from March. No changes in fixed or pension assets. Meacham noted that expenses are always one month ahead of revenue. Final fiscal year revenue from June 2018 will be received in the middle of August and final accruals for the revenue will occur in August or September of 2018 for the year-end 2017-18 budget.

Meacham reported that occupancy revenue was ahead of budget and was up 19.6% for the month of March 2018 vs March 2017. Meacham said this is a substantial jump because the Holiday Inn Express opened Feb 2017 and the Express was fully up and running in March 2017. March of 2018 offered the first full year to year comparison including the new property. The 19.6% is pure organic market growth across the entire market segment. Another area where there has been substantial growth is with Airbnb properties. Total occupancy for fiscal year 2017-18 will probably end around \$970,000 to \$975,000. That is about a \$150,000 increase.

Proposed 2018-19 RCTDA Budget

Meacham presented the proposed RCTDA 2018-19 budget and stated this was the most exciting budget that he has put together for the TDA. Ten years ago, the budget was a little over \$237,000. The proposed 2018-19 budget is \$1.2 million. Meacham reviewed each line item of the proposed budget for FY 2018-2019 in detail.

Meacham also reviewed the process for approval of the budget for the public authority. A budget notification has been posted in the newspaper noting the budget is available for review at the Visitor Center and a public hearing will be held in June.

Motion: Brian Miller made the motion to set the public hearing for June 13th at noon.

Second: Edward Norvell

Motion: Approved

Destination Marketing Report

Tara Furr said she was glad to be back from maternity leave and gave the marketing report. Furr noted that the Trolleys were very busy with year-to-date ridership of 1,223. Saturday tours resumed in April, several weddings and groups are scheduled for May and June.

The Arts & Ag program is underway and the Visitor Center staff have stocked all of the 22 kiosks around the county with Visitor Guides, event calendars and Art & Ag brochures. Furr noted that the Norfolk Southern Group will be in Salisbury next week and are staying at the Courtyard Marriott. Staff has been working with the NC Main Street group for the 2019 event. The three main venues are already booked and are being provided by sponsorships (F&M, PPT, and Salisbury Depot). Furr is also currently working with the Senior Lawyers group that is coming in late summer.

The DMC Committee approved 2 tourism support requests, including funding for Salisbury Pride Fest and the Cheerwine Festival. The Pints & Flights package produced 20 room nights and continues to grow each year. The DOWT packages are selling well and Polar Express packages will go on sale in early July.

The number of unique visitors accessing the website continues to be up from last year. There was also increase from last month in the e-newsletters. In addition, social media continues to grow as spring events and Arts & Ag picks up. New Sarum's new strawberry IPA was a polar media post as was the Salisbury Symphony Concert. Also, Arts & Ag has been heavily pushed and has gained a good deal of PR coverage. UNCTV recently completed a television shoot in downtown Salisbury, which will air in late May 2018.

Arts & Ag

Furr updated the group on the Arts & Ag Initiative. Unfortunately, due to the weather, the Beer Festival at Gold Hill on April 7th had to be cancelled. A positive outcome from that was that a good deal of the activities/vendors were moved to the April 14th Tractors & Trains Festival at the NC Transportation Museum. Staff is working with Gold Hill to support the Founder's Day event in September since the Beer Fest event had to be canceled.

The Farms & Barns tour was sold out. The Riot at Walnut Hill, sponsored by the Bread Riot, takes place on May 20th, and Pops at the Post on June 2nd. This weekend (May 12th) is the Farm-to-Table event at Patterson Farm with a five course meal and a performance by the Salisbury Symphony. Ticket sales are going well and the weather is supposed to be hot but gorgeous. Morgan Ridge will be catering, the breweries and wineries will be on hand. It looks to be a great event weekend.

Meacham said that the proceeds from the Farm-to-Table event will go to the Rowan Arts Council and the local high school FFA programs.

Meacham reported that the Cheerwine Festival is taking place on May 19th in Downtown Salisbury. There is a call out for volunteers for the event so if anyone knows of volunteers they can refer them to the City. Meacham stated that at the request of the City and DSI, the TDA staff has met with the City leadership team to offer assistance. There was a request to the TDA to consider allocating some of the DSI marketing funds for this event and DSI leadership agreed. Meacham said the funds were used to target the Raleigh/Durham area as requested by Cheerwine as well as hospitality funds for bands. TDA staff will be on hand at the Cheerwine Festival promoting the area and the Arts & Ag events.

Meacham said that staff will also be at Speed Street in Charlotte over Memorial Day weekend with Kelly Alexander's staff promoting NCTM and Rowan County. This is three full days with the opportunity to increase awareness of NCTM and all that Rowan County has to offer.

Capital Committee

Whitney Wallace stated the Capital Committee did not meet this month. Meacham gave a brief update on the Kerr Street project, stating that the project should start next week. Meacham thanked Brian Miller and City Council for giving the project a \$60,000 variance on storm water. This allows the project to move quicker and keeps the costs down. The project will substantially improve what is there now including replacement of the old pipe etc. Meacham said the final COA's with the Historical Preservation (HPC) have been completed and the county has approved the plans. The contract is with Bob Glover, R & L Enterprises and construction should begin next week. Mickey Black has also given his permission for right of way through his property during the project. There is tree that will have to be removed due to the construction and hope that HPC will approve the removal. Kerr Street (between Depot & Lee Street) will be closed during the construction. There will be city signage letting people know the street is closed and the detour. Project completion is estimated for late summer, early fall.

Meacham noted that at the March meeting, Wallace presented that the Committee had approved a funding agreement for the Bell Tower Green Park of \$250,000 over a 10-year period funds go from TDA to Robertson Foundation that being subject to an agreement in place that defines how the park will be maintained and programmed. That aspect being left for the Bell Tower Green Foundation to work out. Once those are in place, the TDA attorney will craft the funding agreement between the TDA and the Robertson Foundation for funding.

Edward Norvell said that Bell Tower Green is looking at the Hurley Park model, which if this is the case, it will be a City appointed board, with the Non-profit responsible for fund-raising. The park foundation will pay half the cost and the City will pay half of the maintenance. Norvell said \$6.2 million has been raised already. In addition, the foundation has applied for grant funds and is still working on fund-raising. The foundation is also talking with NCDOT about bricking the streets and have received favorable response. Brian Miller said that there is money in the City budget (that has not been approved yet) for a landscape plan that would align the surrounding blocks with the park area and offer a consistent look downtown.

Local Tourism Update

Meacham stated both Rockwell and East Spencer have started the branding process and converting their brands. The Rowan Arts Council has just awarded the spring ACD grants. RAC hosted a grant writing workshop yesterday with NC Arts Council staff presenting. There was a turnout of over 20 local artists and arts organization staff.

II. Adjourn

Kelly Alexander thanked the members for attending today and the meeting adjourned at 1:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Lesley Pullium, RCTDA