

VISIT ROWAN COUNTY

SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

Be an original.

ROWAN COUNTY TDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday, February 14, 2018: 12 Noon, Gateway Building

CALLED MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Attending: Steve Hall, Whitney Wallace, Craig Pierce, Tony Shaw, Krista Osterweil, Shannon Stewart-Hill, Edward Norvell, Kelly Alexander, Amie Baudoin

Not Attending: Darrell Blackwelder, Brian Miller

TDA Staff: James Meacham, Lesley Pullium, Allyson Teague

I. RCTDA Call to Order

Krista Osterweil called the RCTDA to order at 12:00pm.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: Craig Pierce made the motion for approval of the RCTDA January 2018 minutes.

Second: Steve Hall

Motion: Approved

Financial & Occupancy Tax Report

James Meacham shared the financial report with the group. He also reported on a staff change, Lauren Litaker, Director of Marketing, will not be returning to the TDA after maternity leave. No staff decisions will be made until Tara Furr, Director of Public Relations, returns from maternity leave. Miller Davis has continued to fill in the marketing needs each month.

Payroll was up in January due to three pay periods and one time disbursements of accrued vacation time for Lloyd Harding and Lauren Litaker. In addition, marketing was up in January due to holiday expenses and a payout to the Day out with Thomas promotion. The budget is based on a 9 month period.

Total occupancy tax revenues to the market were up 26% due to holiday events like the Polar Express. This will start to level off in March and April because the Holiday Inn Express will have been in operation for a full 12 months.

Destination Marketing Report

Meacham shared the 2017 year end and January 2018 destination marketing reports. There were many successes during 2017, including the NC Fine Arts Conference in partnership with Rowan Cabarrus

Community College, the opening of the Holiday Inn Express, restructuring of the tax law, hosting the Little League World Series, digital infrastructure launch, Day out with Thomas and the Polar Express partnership with the NC Transportation Museum, and In God's Own Country in partnership with Piedmont Players. Overall, the TDA generated approximately 3,300 room nights with an investment of a little over \$150,000 and an economic impact of \$11.6 million.

The January 2018 report reflects 2,500 room nights already scheduled for the year in conjunction with various events. Wine about Winter ticket sales grew to over 1,000 this year. 20 room nights were secured for this event. Also, the TDA hosted a sales conference for Husqvarna at the end of January with 60 room nights. In recent public relations, an article in Our State about Piedmont Airlines and the NC Transportation Museum was published. The Salisbury Post published articles about the economic impact of the NCTM and highlighted the hospitality service awards. In addition, UNCTV will be visiting this weekend to do a story on arts and history in downtown Salisbury.

Meacham stated the Chamber of Commerce gala went very well. The Rowan Original awards were presented to winners from Patterson Farm, Morgan Ridge, Hampton Inn, Trinity Oaks, Quality Inn, and Comfort Suites. Meacham shared a service video, produced by Miller Davis, of the award winners to promote what hospitality means in Rowan County. The video highlighted a quick background story about each winner to learn more about them. Various county branding logos were also presented.

Arts & Ag

Meacham shared an internal document with the group that highlights each event for Arts & Ag with locations and details. A potential sponsor reached out to the TDA to potentially sponsor Arts & Ag. The kickoff event will take place at Gold Hill on April 7th, including breweries, wineries, food trucks, artisans, kid's activities, strolling entertainers, etc. Another signature event is a farm-to-table dinner and show by the Salisbury Symphony at Patterson Farm. Tickets will cost \$75 per person and \$125 per couple. All revenues will be donated equally to Future Farmers of America and the Rowan Arts Council. The closing Kaleidoscope event will be held at the NC Research Campus in Kannapolis on November 3rd.

The Arts & Ag Farm Tour, on June 2nd and 3rd, is modeled after the South Carolina Arts & Ag Farm Tour, which has grown to 13 counties. It is a visitor friendly event and is meant to drive overnight guests. The Theater at the Farm will take place at Patterson Farm in partnership with Norvell children's theater.

General overall marketing will begin late February and early March. A map will be generated to pinpoint locations and outline details for each event. Also, a mobile visitor booth will be present at each event with information about the county for guests, which will be specifically branded for Arts & Ag. Additional marketing, billboards will be placed throughout the county. Arts & Ag packages are also being created to incentivize guests to stay overnight and visit multiple locations.

Initial press releases have already gone out. A website called Rowan County Weather will be partnering with Miller Davis to publish a blog on the forecast page to highlight Arts & Ag events each month. All TDA e-newsletters will include Arts & Ag promotions and the website photos and features will reflect the events.

Meacham stated the budget between this fiscal year and next fiscal year will commit a total of around \$125,000 to the Arts & Ag initiative. Most of that funding is allocated for marketing efforts.

Capital Committee

Whitney Wallace stated the Capital Committee's next meeting will take place March 14th. At that time a final pricing for the Fisher Thompson Building and the Railwalk, as well as for phase 2 and 3 for the wayfinding signage project, will be in place. A funding package will be brought to the March meeting for approval. The

TDA will be partnering with the county to request funds for projects up front, which will be paid back over time. This will assist with expediting the process to complete various projects throughout the city.

Additional Business

Meacham requested the group plan for a two hour meeting on April 11th from 11:00AM - 1:00 PM. This meeting will focus on planning for budgets, projects over the next fiscal year, and brainstorming for new concepts and programs.

The Board went into closed session to discuss a personnel matter, pursuant to NC General Statutes.

II. Adjourn

Krista Osterweil thanked the members for attending today and the meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Allyson Teague, RCTDA