

SALISBURY
ROWAN COUNTY
Authentic North Carolina

SALISBURY-ROWAN COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
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Name: Master Plan Committee
(Tourism Business Development Subcommittee/
Art and Cultural Subcommittee)

Date of Meeting: February 1, 2016

Committee Chair: Barbara Perry

Date of Next Meeting: April 12, 2016

Committee Members Attending: Barbara Perry, Lynn Raker, Edward Norvell, Michelle Patterson, Paula Bohland, Robert Van Geons, Jenn Selby, Linda Jones, Kaye Hirst, Wesley Thompson, Phyllis Steimel

Attending Guests, Liaisons, and Officials: Chris Cavanaugh (Consultant with Magellan Strategies)

Tourism Staff: James Meacham, Lesley Pullium, Tara Ludwig, Melissa Murguz, Allyson Teague

Not Attending: Bill Burgin, Darrell Blackwelder, Joe Morris, Thad Howell, Tony Shaw, Elaine Spalding, Nancy Wyrick, Anne Scott Clement, Eleanor Qadirah, Josh Wainright, Justin Dionne, Mollie Ruf

Barbara Perry called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM.

James Meacham introduced Chris Cavanaugh, SRCCVB Consultant with Magellan Strategies, to the committee and how the meeting would be a dialogue about the present state of the Master Plan and how to move forward. In turn, the group introduced themselves and shared the various organizations being represented.

Cavanaugh stated the meeting is meant to be a strategic planning discussion and congratulated the group on a well thought out Master Plan. Cavanaugh facilitated the meeting by asking the committees a series of questions.

1) What are the overall successes for the community over the past ten years, making it a better place to live and work?

- * The building of cultural infrastructure, particularly in the downtown area.
- * There is a great sense of cooperation amongst the various groups in the community, when it wasn't always that way in the past.
- * The continual increase of technology, including the implementation of Fibrant. It is a good start, but needs to be a base to build from.
- * General marketing has been very successful in all areas, including various packages that are put together.
- * The visitor economy has grown tremendously with an average of 5.5% growth each year since 2008. The growth is translated through new products, including new tours and hotels or expansions within community colleges.

Cavanaugh conveyed that the Master Plan is a guide to facilitate partnerships is very important. In addition, the creation of the SRCCVB as an umbrella organization for tourism development groups in the community is a success in itself and helps to maintain strong partnerships.

2) What is the role of the Master Plan Committee?

- * To implement the Master Plan through small business development and art and cultural development.
- * Use research to study ideas and conduct research for new projects to help decide what funding is available and what makes sense to pursue.
- * After coming together it is also important to go back to each member's organization disburse the discussed information in a positive way to create even greater success.

Cavanaugh shared a PowerPoint presentation with the group to highlight four key areas of product development, including arts and culture, agritourism, light adventure, and rail. James Meacham prefaced the presentation by reminding the committee that the information represents Phase 2 of the Master Plan, including year 5 and beyond.

The four key areas represent the passions of people and how they travel to pursue and satisfy their passions. An example would be college football fans spending any amount of money fulfill a passion to support a particular team. The reasons behind these passions reflect the need for people to spend fun quality time together, whether it be with family, a significant other, or friends. The idea behind the Master Plan is to connect people with their passions within Salisbury and Rowan County. Since Rowan County is a secondary destination, it is a more difficult task to connect visitors with their passions in order to increase overall tourism.

3) What do people look like that travel to the community for arts and culture?

- * Rowan County is a primary destination for genealogy research.
- * Visitors are motivated by the available content and performers within the theaters. The directors and actors coming to stay in Rowan has increased the interested tourists.
- * More millennials are coming to Salisbury for the increasing music scene.

- * People are looking to smaller destinations to escape the larger destinations, like Charlotte. Rowan County offers a more affordable avenue to pursue passions, for families and individuals alike.

Cavanaugh conveyed the idea of motivators versus satisfiers. A motivator is something that encourages people to visit in order to spend quality time together, while a satisfier is something that makes the experience memorable, such as affordability, wayfinding signs, decorations, etc. The Polar Express event offered by the Transportation Museum was used as an example. There were 26,000 tickets sales in 2015 for Polar Express and the passion driving those sales was a desire to spend quality family time together. Salisbury is a good destination for these types of events due to the central location between Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, etc.

Cavanaugh stated the more motivators there are, the better off Rowan County will be as a destination. As an example, the National White Water Center opened with a direct focus on white water enthusiasts. However, the White Water Center quickly learned there was a need to expand the motivators that would encourage people to visit the facility. The White Water Center expanded motivators by implementing a restaurant, ropes course, hiking trails, biking trails, rock climbing walls, etc. By increasing motivators the White Water Center increased visitation and satisfied a variety of passions for families, couples, and individuals.

Meacham requested that the committee think about passions, motivators, and satisfiers as it pertains to the four key areas highlighted in the presentation. Cavanaugh introduced an equation for the committee to think about to prepare ideas for future tourism development. (Equation: Rowan County (+) something else = would make this an even better place to visit)

There were no questions. The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:
Allyson Teague, SRCCVB Office Assistant