



Swain County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday August 15, 2024, at 12:00 noon

Present (Voting): Chairwoman, Cheryl Taylor, Phillip Carson, Sr, Robin Fronrath

Adria Litzau, Erin Smith, Pattijo Taylor,

Absent (Voting): Andy Bhakta, Janene Lancaster, and Jeremiah Wiggins

Present (Ex-Officio) None

Absent (Ex-Officio): Lottie Barker, Swain County Interim Manager, Cally Elliott, Swain County Finance Director

TDA Staff: Sarah Conley, Rita Jones, Kerry Peek

Commissioner None

Attendees: Karen Proctor, Isaac Herrin, Fred Crawford, Creeden Kowal, and Mike Drinkwater

This meeting was called to order at 12:01p.m. by Chairwoman, Cheryl Taylor. The Pledge of Allegiance was given. Prayer by Cheryl Taylor.

Call for any changes to the agenda. None

Erin Smith made a motion to approve the Minutes from 07/10/2024. Phillip Carson, Sr seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Fred Crawford, Swain County Agriculture, Karen Proctor, Swain Co Chamber of Commerce, Mike Drinkwater, Drinkwater Properties

Fred Crawford thanked the TDA board for the money that was given to the Agriculture Fair. Fred spoke about all the upgrades that the TDA has made at the event park and thanked them for that. Also. Fred said that he hopes the Agriculture Fair will be a growing event each year in Swain County and that the TDA will be there to help.

Karen Proctor gave a synopsis on the Evy Leibfrath event that took place on Wednesday, August 15, 2024. Karen thanked the Board of Commissioners for their support of the event.

Mike Drinkwater was signed up for public comment, but he just wanted to sit in on the meeting and make no comment.

Introduction of Kerry Peek, the Aquarium / Fly Fishing Museum Manager to the board. Kerry talked about what the Aquarium is and what all is inside. Kerry also talked about the new Fly-Fishing Museum that the TDA built.



The aquarium now has a partnership with Western Carolina to get a student in there for a semester and for the student to get earned college hours. We have two other employees at the aquarium, Darren Barker that does the maintenance on tanks and the heavy lifting. Marissa Brett is an aquarium assistant that does the water testing and helping with open days.

Executive Director Sarah Conley

Marketing and Public Relations:

- Marketing projects:
 - 2025 Visitor Guide Planning underway meetings are scheduled for August
 - Working on the final list of 2024/2025 Influencers with Pineapple
 - Smoky Mountain Christmas Light Show Spectacular getting finalized
 - Meeting with Melissa Barker to discuss the volunteers for the light show
 - Pitched Small Town Christmas to Southern Living for major feature for 2025
 - Bike Trail sent to printer
 - Fall Campaigns for Print & Digital are being worked on

Financial:

- June Occupancy Report is \$290,134.92

Administrative & Committees:

- Beautification
 - Nothing to report—Will need to meet and discuss put RFP out for Spring Flower Boxes and Baskets.
- Finance—Nothing new to report.
- Marketing----Nothing new to report

HR

- LGERS application approved working on being set up for October 01.
- Finalized Principal Dental & Vision plan
- Employees now have insurance ID cards
- Set up employees BCBS App
- Doing payroll reports needed for auditors from ADP each payroll cycle



Board Discussed:

Upon going over the new Memorandum of Understanding between Swain County and Swain County Tourism Development Authority for properties located at 117 Island Street which houses the Aquarium and the Fly-Fishing Museum.

The property that is located at 2 Everett Street that houses the Swain County Visitor Center and Heritage Museum and the TDA staff offices.

Erin Smith made a motion to accept the new MOU and have this presented to the Board of Commissioner's at their next meeting for approval. PattiJo Taylor seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

The TDA Board will be doing a site visit at the event park on Friday August 16, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. to look at the Christmas light show and where it is going to be placed for the 2024 season with Mosca.

Phillip Carson gave kudos to the board for all the hard work and all the financial support that has been given to the event park. Phil said that this was a dream that past commissioners had wanted to have when the land was purchased years ago.

PattiJo Taylor made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Erin Smith seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Board Member Signatures:

Chairwoman Cheryl Taylor _____

Andy Bhakta _____

Phillip Carson Sr _____

Robin Fronrath _____

Janene Lancaster _____

Adrian Litza _____

Erin Smith _____

PattiJo Taylor _____

Jeremiah Wiggins _____