



Swain County Tourism Development Authority Board
of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, September 11, 2024

Present (Voting): Presiding Chairwoman, PattiJo Taylor, Andy Bhakta, Phillip Carson, Sr, Janene Lancaster, Adrian Litzau, Erin Smith,

Absent (Voting): Cheryl Taylor, Robin Fronrath, Jeremiah Wiggins arrived@ 12:45 p.m.

Present (Ex-Officio) Cally Elliott, Swain County Finance Director

Absent (Ex-Officio): Lottie Barker, Swain County Interim Manager

TDA Staff: Sarah Conley, Rita Jones,

Commissioner None

Attendees: Tim Hines, Bryson City Alderman, Courtney Dills, Mark Van Ostell, Carolina Bound, Sharla Stoltzfus, Mae Blue, Mary Anne Shea

This meeting was called to order at 12:05p.m. by Vice-Chair PattiJo Taylor. The Pledge of Allegiance was given. Prayer by Phillip Carson, Sr. A moment of silence was given to those that lost their lives in the 09/11 terror attacks 23 years ago.

Call for any changes to the agenda. None

Erin Smith made a motion to approve the Minutes from 08/15/2024. Janene Lancaster seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Tim Hines, Bryson City Alderman

Tim Hines came asking the board to consider a parking study be done downtown due to the parking spaces being taken by Department of Transportation.

Executive Director: Sarah Conley

Sarah addressed the changes on the MOU that was returned to the board by the Swain County Commissioners with the changes that they wanted implemented.

After much discussion, Janene Lancaster made a motion that the TDA will do 100% upkeep on the Aquarium/Fly Fishing Museum at 117 Island Street, since the TDA help build the Fly-Fishing Museum.



The county maintenance will still do the upkeep on the actual buildings and grounds Andy Bhakta seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

TDA Board would like Swain County to be responsible 100% for the Swain County Visitor Center/Heritage Museum. The TDA staff will have offices in the building and be the caretakers of the museum, and the visitor center which is at 2 Everett Street. The changes will be made to the MOU and returned to the Swain County Commissioners for their next meeting.

Marketing & Public Relations:

- Switching to all Fall campaigns
- Talked with Smoky Mtn Times on 2025 Guidebook and 2024 Visitor Guide
- Launched Garden & Gun Fall campaigns online travel section
- Pineapple PR attending East Coast Regional Travel Conference
- Finalized with Melissa Barker Volunteer details and set up Everbrite online ticket sales for the for Christmas Light Show.
- Visitor center is preparing for Fall Décor, Pumpkin men, decorations in front of visitor center and at the county administration building.
- Participated in the Back to School Bash for elementary school children. Distributed over 300 bottles of hand sanitizer and school supplies for the children.
- Worked on Christmas Campaign—Heart of the Holidays which is the Christmas Tree Lighting and Cocoa & Cookies at the visitor center.
- Personalized cookies are being bought for the Christmas Tree lighting ceremony

Financial Report: July occupancy \$339,480.41

General Administrative & Committees:

- Beautification will meet this month to work on RFP for Spring 2025 Flowers.
- Finance—nothing new to report
- Marketing—nothing new to report
- Meeting with Professor Christopher Mclaughlin UNC School of Govt to discuss topics surrounding occupancy.
- Event Park Walk Through with Jay/Mosca, also, talked with Jay regarding the Radio Transmission that will be needed for the Light Show.
- Large Fans installed/ Power Amps installed for Food Truck Alley at the Event Park.

- Finalized Principal Dental Plan
- Finalized billing procedure with Health Insurance



- In our biweekly staff meeting organized the items needed for October-thru end of the year •
• Decoration schedule for October thru December

Board Discussed:

Sarah brought up the letter from the Town Merchants. Sarah has spoken with the NC School of Government regarding some of the issues that were in the letter. The advice from the School of Government was that the TDA may need to seek legal counsel that deals with occupancy tax. Jeremiah Wiggins arrived at the TDA meeting at 12:45 p.m.

Several of the board members spoke and asked Mr. Hines some questions regarding the water issue. Mr. Hines gave an updated structure amount that the town was now going to in the next billing cycle. Mr. Hines has reached out to Commissioner Kevin Seagle asking for a meeting with him and the merchants' association.

Janene Lancaster made a motion for Ms. Conley to seek legal counsel for the TDA. Adrien Litzau seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Janene Lancaster made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Phillip Carson, Sr seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Board Member Signatures:

Chairwoman Cheryl Taylor _____

Andy Bhakta _____

Phillip Carson Sr _____

Robin Fronrath _____

Janene Lancaster _____

Adrian Litzau _____

Erin Smith _____

PattiJo Taylor _____

Jeremiah Wiggins _____