



Swain County Tourism Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
11-09-2022 Regular Meeting

Present (Voting): Jeremiah Wiggins, Chairman, Andy Bhakta, Shannon Lackey, Janene Lancaster, Afton Roberts, Cheryl Taylor. Eugene Shuler arriving at 12:12p.m.

Absent (Voting): PattiJo Taylor

Present (Ex-Officio) None

Absent (Ex-Officio): Cally Elliott, Swain County Finance Officer, Kevin King, Swain County Manager

TDA Staff: Mary Anne Shea, Rita Jones, Selena Hyde

Attendees: None

The meeting was called to order by Chair Wiggins at 12:05p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was given. Prayer was then given by Cheryl Taylor.

Changes to the agenda. None

Cheryl Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes for 10-12-2022 regular meeting. Afton Roberts seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Erin Smith made a motion to approve the minutes for 10-19-2022 emergency meeting. Afton Roberts seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None

Executive Report given by Executive Director Mary Anne Shea:

Update on the Fly-Fishing Museum MOU between the County and the TDA. The updates that the board requested have been submitted to the county commissioners:

1. Add statement to paragraph 3: In the event that either the aquarium or the fly-fishing museum is unable to continue to operate, the TDA will continue to have the option to operate other tourism related functions from the aquarium building and museum building.
2. Last paragraph: The initial term of this agreement be ten years, with an extension option of ten years be granted to the Swain County Tourism Development Authority.

The changes were sent to the County Manager because the commissioners have asked to review the changes prior to their October 27 workshop. The commissioners will then discuss the changes and the MOU on their November 10 meeting.

Alen Baker confirmed that his board has approved the transfer of ownership of the fly-fishing museum artifacts over the County. Alen's board will sign a resolution listing specific assets being transferred. Also, that assets being transferred go from a 501c3 on their end to a 501c3 on our end.



### Marketing and Public Relations:

- Christmas Light Show-Marketing
  - All aspects of the marketing plan has been completed. Photo and video production is ongoing.
  - Between October 1—November 8, we have received 13,000 page views to the light event on our website.
  - Online ticket sales are live. Mary Anne trained the Family Resource staff on the ticket sales at the gate for point of sale, and prepaid online tickets.
- Other Christmas Projects:
  - 24' Tree and décor for the visitor center complete.
  - New snowflakes for the Duke Energy poles completed.
  - Town has given permission for the black poles be decorated. No outlets on these poles therefore, no lighted poles this year.
  - Letters to Santa, cookies and cocoa will start on November 9. This runs through December 31.
  - A Tree Lighting event at the Visitor Center is on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Live Nativity, Christmas caroling, hot cocoa and cookies, letters to Santa, lighting of the tree by the mayor.
- 2023 Visitor Guide- Mary Ann writing content and updating photos. Delivery date February 01, 2023.
- Website:
  - Google Analytics reports- the light show event is driving a lot of traffic for October, and social media is our number one source of website traffic.
  - Ongoing work includes search engine and media pages.
- Public Relations
  - October report attached
  - We have several Instagram Influencers in the next couple of months. Mary Anne is working the PR agency on itineraries including lodging/attractions/dining.
  - Visitor totals for visitor center and aquarium

### Financial

- September Occupancy tax of \$174,895.10
- Christmas bonuses for employees. Full time \$300.00, part time \$100.00. Afton Roberts made a motion to give employees a Christmas bonus, full-time \$300.00, and part-time \$100.00. Janene Lancaster seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried
- A check for \$5,000.00 has been presented to the Swain High Track team for the purchase of their state rings. This is in exchange for volunteer hours to the TDA for upcoming events.

### Administrative & Committees:

- The last meeting with the developer on the 3 new digital exhibits for the Kid Zone in the Heritage Museum has been completed. Delivery date expected November 2022.
  - 3D Animation of construction and flooding of Fontana Dam
  - Native animal and forest sounds with push buttons
  - Nantahala River Kayak Race Digital Game
- Finance Committee: Nothing new to report
- Marketing Committee: Nothing new to report.
- Beautification Committee: Coming up next is the spring flower RFP for downtown.



Board Discussion:

Mary Anne gave some dates for up coming meetings.

- December 14 meeting—No Change
- January 11 meeting -Canceled
- January 25 meeting—Retreat @ Mckinley Edwards 10am to 2pm
- February 08 meeting—Canceled
- March 08 meeting—No Change
- April 12 meeting—Changed to April 19 to avoid Spring Break conflicts
- May 10—No Change
- June 14—No Change

On the EV charging stations, CIC has sent Mary Anne an estimate of finishing up this project. Hoping to have completed in the very near future.

Chair Wiggins made a motion to set the date for the Strawberry Jam Race for May 20,2023. Race will begin at 7:00am at the Darnell Farms area. This race will be organized by Glory Hound Events at a cost of \$7500.00 as was the previous year. Erin Smith seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried

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

Meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Board Member Signatures:

Chair Jeremiah Wiggins \_\_\_\_\_

Andy Bhakta \_\_\_\_\_

Afton Roberts \_\_\_\_\_

Shannon Lackey \_\_\_\_\_

Janene Lancaster \_\_\_\_\_

Eugene Shuler \_\_\_\_\_

Erin Smith \_\_\_\_\_

Cheryl Taylor \_\_\_\_\_

PattiJo Taylor \_\_\_\_\_