



Swain County Tourism Development Authority Board
of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, November 13, 2024

Present (Voting): Chairwoman, Cheryl Taylor, Andy Bhakta, Phillip Carson, Sr, Robin Fronrath, Janene Lancaster, Adrian Litzau, PattiJo Taylor

Absent (Voting): Jeremiah Wiggins

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

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

TDA Staff: Sarah Conley, Rita Jones,

Commissioner None

Attendees: Mary Anne Shea

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

Andy Bhakta made a motion to approve the Minutes from 10/16/2024, Regular Minutes and Executive Session Minutes. Phillip Carson seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None

Executive Report:

Marketing & Public Relations:

- Media campaigns have switched to Holiday Travel and Lightshow
- Flyers, mini rack cards and standalones have all been distributed • We are now on our last 6 boxes of 2024 Visitor Guides

Website:

- Google analytics—organic search is our number one source of website traffic

Public Relations:



- We had 2 influencers' visit—both huge success
- Influencer arriving on Thursday to ride Polar and Light Show (NCT Tripping)
- Interviewed for Charlotte Today via Zoom regarding Swain County Holiday travel and impacts of Helene.
- Worked with VisitNC for late Fall/Early Holiday travel social feature
- Visitor and Aquarium Totals attached.

Light Show/Tree Lighting:

- All staff for Light Show have been trained on gate ticketing program---Eventbrite
- Designed and ordered all signage/banners for show.
- Music broadcasting a huge success!!
- Tree lighting ceremony scheduled for November 30. Paper ads and flyers are going out this week.
- Mayor Sutton will be at the lighting ceremony! New this year will be The Greenville Caroling Company—a Charles Dickens Style Quartet that will perform throughout the event.
- Cookies and cocoa are at the visitor center.
- Décor up with Gabe still working on some issues
- Pooh would like to see a more uniform coloring scheme on Main/Everett.

Financial Report:

- Financial reports sent via email.
- September Occupancy tax \$205,731.96
- October dip will not hit until December meeting

HR:

- Staff received staff incentive turkey cards for Thanksgiving.
- Staff Holiday Dinner is set up.
- Light Show Staff will be part-time active under TDA payroll.
- Aquarium now has an intern working until Jan.

General Administrative & Committees:

- Beautification Committee
 - A meeting will be scheduled to get the flower RFP out for bid.
- Marketing—nothing new to report
- Strategic Planning



Erin Smith made a motion to cancel the January 2025 meeting, due to having a strategic meeting in February 2025. Janene Lancaster seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

PattiJo Taylor made a motion to have a strategic planning meeting in February 2025 at the Mckinley Edwards Inn. Andy Bhakta seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Board Discussion:

PattiJo Taylor made a motion to not have the Strawberry Jam 5K for 2025 due to not having the turn out that had been expected over the 3-year period that was a trial. Erin Smith seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

The board talked about the attendance policy. The Rules and Procedures Policy that to be counted as being present for a meeting you must attend at least 50% of the meeting.

Adrien Litzau made the motion for the amendment, to be counted present at a meeting you must be there for at least 50% of the meeting. Robin Fronrath seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried. This will be added to the Rules and Procedure Policy part of the handbook.

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

Meeting adjourned at 1:22 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 _____