

**Alamance County Tourism Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting**

**August 30, 2022
Historic Depot - Burlington**

Present: Kavita Patel
Anderson Rathbun
Chuck Marsh

CVB: Grace VandeVisser
Reed Northcott
Financial: Susan Evans

Moment of Silence

Kavita Patel called the meeting to order and a moment of silence was observed.

Approval of Minutes

Anderson made a motion to approve the July minutes and Chuck seconded. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Collection Report

Susan Evans, Financial Representative, presented the Financial Reports as of July 31, 2022. Overall, the TDA has total assets of \$1,734,881.00. Total expenses to date were \$50,498. To date for FY2022, we collected \$1.3 million in occupancy tax. Final fiscal year numbers will be reflected in the final audit as Susan reminded us that these numbers are a month in arrears. Investments total \$585,114. Year to date sales tax collections were \$43.4 million.

Visitor Bureau Updates

Grace reported that all counties experienced an increase in travel expenditures due to visitor impacts. Alamance County travel expenditures experienced a growth of 54.7% in 2021 over the previous year. Grace stated that our growth percentage is based on lodging, food, beverage, recreation, retail, and transportation. Alamance County ranked 14th out of 100 counties for growth.

As a follow up to our onboarding the Zardico, which allows us to capture data about where our visitors come from and spending data, we should be up and running in a few weeks. Grace is hoping the board will have a presentation from Zardico at the next meeting so we can see how detailed this coverage is for Alamance County.

Grace updated the board regarding the welcome signage entering Alamance County. The idea was submitted to DOT suggesting the sign be changed from Welcome to Alamance County, Home of the Carolina Corridor to Home of the Haw River Trail. Once the drawing is provided, it will be presented to the board for approval and then onto the county for approval. When the signage is approved, it would be erected at the time construction in Mebane is complete at Exit 154.

During a previous commissioners meeting, Commissioner Craig Turner discussed an interest in pursuing a feasibility study on a convention center in Alamance County. Brian Baker has submitted a draft RFP for review by Commissioner Turner.

Anderson stated that the City of Burlington is adding a new venue at the ballpark to host parties, concerts, and other events. The new construction will include a full kitchen for food preparation. Anderson is hoping construction will begin as early as November and completion to be prior to the Sock Puppets opening day in 2023. Anderson stated the Sock Puppets attendance is up around 40% from 2019.

Grace provided updated on marketing efforts. This included a brewery promotion in October for beer month. Highlighting all Alamance County breweries along with the Toasty Kettlyst in Gibsonville. There is an upcoming holiday campaign tentatively called "Sip and Savor," and it will run the first 2 weeks in December. This event will highlight establishments that choose to participate with the theme with holiday beverages and meals. The bureau is hoping this will become an annual campaign.

Grace reported advertising both digitally and in print in the Sports Planning Guide, along with O'Henry's Magazine, Southern Travel and Lifestyle, Carolina Day Trips, Our State-including branding with Outdoor NC. We are also highlighting our historical sites within the annual Heritage Guide, which is distributed statewide. Some of the events highlighted in September and October are the Balloon Festival, Art Extravaganza, The Oleander Pier at the Paramount, and Autumn Fest. There is a partner cooperative ad in the November edition of Our State with Persnickety Books, Alamance Arts, Animal Park, Studio One, Freehand Market and Burke Manor Inn, participating.

Visitor Guidebooks, Civil War Trail maps and our attraction maps are being updated and reprinted.

We have experienced a growth of 34% over last year, in digital traffic. The Balloon Festival has been the biggest hit within the last 30 day with approximately 2,800 visits to our website, followed by Saturdays in Saxapahaw, and folks exploring our community followed by Autumn Fest.

Our top referral pages were Facebook, City of Mebane, Visit NC, Instagram, and the County. Digital traffic came from across North Carolina, Northern Virginia, New York, Georgia, Ohio, California, and Florida over the last 30 days. The visitor's center has had sixty-eight visitors this month. In the past 30 days, we have received 195 media mentions. These mentions have an ad equivalency value of \$2 million. This information is based on data collected through Cision from digital outlets and through social listening. Our highest ranked points of interest this month, based on reporting pages, are Glencoe Mill Village, followed by recreation, and recent newcomer, Crafted the Art of Taco in Mebane.

Anderson reported the Burlington Sock Puppets were named the 2022 Appalachian League Organization of the Year.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:22am.