

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ALAMANCE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Tuesday, August 24, 2021 at 10:30 A.M.
Country Inn & Suites

Present:	Anderson Rathbun	CVB: Grace VandeVisser
	Matt Patel	LaToya Marsh
	Jessalynn Strauss	Brian Baker
	Katie Dukeshire-Geoffrion	Financial: Susan Evans

Moment of Silence

Katie Dukeshire-Geoffrion, Chair, called the meeting to order and a moment of silence was observed.

Approval of Minutes

Katie asked if there were any additions or corrections to be made to the May minutes. No updates were needed. Jessalyn motioned to approve the minutes and Anderson seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Collection Report

The July financials are not final due to still closing out fiscal year. Numbers are tentative now until updated. Assets are \$1.5million. Collected \$10 in interest. Expenses of \$31,106. No collections reported for month of July. Investments hold steady at \$585,093. Sales Tax is two months in the rears, so there is no sales tax to report at this time.

Visitor Bureau Updates

As we use 2019 as a baseline year and comparing month to date occupancy against 2021, occupancy levels were 65.1% and 59.4%, respectively (based on the STR Report). YTD revenues were slightly down by -3.7%, compared to July 2019. However, hotels experienced a slight increase in the average daily rate.

During the 2018-2019 period, we participated in a digital marketing program with IMG/Learfield, to promote the area within Elon's sports platform along with additional school sports platforms including Carolina, NC State, Duke and Wake Forest. We have received a proposal that would include all except Wake Forest. Although this is not a budgeted expense this year, we do have available funds in our fund balance. The proposal would provide upwards of 100,000 impressions, per school, through the spring, at a cost of \$8,610 (\$269.06/month per school). We will geo target this year. The Board asked about other schools about considering other schools including Wake Forest, UNCG and Charlotte). Grace will look into this.

Our annual marketing grant program will open again in November. In addition to this program, there had been some preliminary interest in expanding our grant program. Some ideas included an increase in existing grant funding, increase current grant frequency, municipality marketing

grants, sports marketing grants (as an incentive when bid fees are non-existent), matching marketing grants. Grace will email these ideas out for input.

Recently, stories/blogs from outlets such as Newsbreak, featured Main Street Bakery as one of the five best cupcakes in NC. Triad Moms on Main created a blog on favorite Triad restaurants which included Burlington Beer Works, Mosca's, The Mission, St. Jacques, da Vinci's, Michelle's Kitchen, Tangent, The Root and Prego's. In addition, The Cottage Journal highlighted a home in Burlington.

Since our last meeting there have been 43 brochure requests and 20 walk-ins. We have 2,073 Facebook followers, up by 80, and 73 new page likes, 2,267 engagements, 232 pageviews, and 13,777 impressions. Our monthly Facebook advertising reach is 8,016, with 726 engagements and 655 clicks. Twitter now has 160 followers, and 3,341 profile visits. Our Instagram followers are now up to 2,420, with 977 engagements this past month. We are currently doing a promotion on Facebook to increase website visitation and engagement.

Website analytics compared to July 2019, have seen an increase in new visitors up by 49.88% and return visitors up 44.46%. Page views are up and there is an increase in organic returning/referral traffic since Jan 1st. Website users continue to come from Greensboro, Raleigh, Charlotte and Atlanta with an increase in visitors this month from Myrtle Beach.

Recent ad placements, for the Fall, included Go Escape Southeast edition within USA today offering AAA and agency distribution both in print and digital, Outside Magazine-dedicated newsletter promoting recreation in cooperation with Visit NC through their outdoor NC initiative, Southern Travel Magazine and Our State. We picked up a PBS e-newsletter/guide opportunity to reach their NC audience and will do this through December.

We are finalizing our partner cooperative ad for Our State Magazine's December edition. Based on partner interest, this will be a four-page spread and be released mid-November. There are 3 spots left with 21 filled.

We also continue marketing with WCHL/Chapelboro.com and have partnered with them to provide another cooperative opportunity for (10) partners to receive (20) :60 second commercials that will air 20 times during a single month beginning in October. The normal price is \$1,350 and we are offering it for \$200 to our partners. To date, seven partners have expressed interest. Due to the availability and overlapping interest in dates, partners will be selected from a lottery. Partners will be responsible for coordinating their time to make the commercial. This will be available through June 2022.

In regards to the BB&T building for a future visitors center, Jason Cox continues to be interested in the purchase of the property with us leasing the property. He provided a preliminary outline with terms that included a lease with no less than 15 years. There is not an opt out clause. The vision for this would be that we could pull traffic off the interstate and be a showcase for what Alamance County has to offer. This building would also make available another site for community meeting space. Graham would be a great location for this since it is the county seat. We have had safety concerns in our location in downtown Burlington as well as the perception

from those visiting. Salisbury has a visitor's center off the interstate, and we could check with them and several others to receive their input on their visitation traffic.

The board had several concerns/questions including the benefits to moving and collecting information from area visitor centers. Would there be a partner available to share the space, thus offsetting the cost? There were also concerns about visibility and is this the best use of funds. Grace and Brian will meet with Jason to discuss further.

Adjourn

Katie adjourned the meeting at 11:52 am
Minutes submitted by LaToya Marsh

Upcoming TDA Dates:
September 21, 2021 – Alamance Arts