

Tourism Development Authority  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Thursday, January 22, 2014**  
**1117 East King Street**  
**Edenton, NC 27932**

Present: Keith Nixon, John Dowd, Jerry Climer, Diane Pariseau, Katrina Barnes, Adele Jones, Ben Speller and Katy Ebersole

Absent: Giuliano Giannone

Ex-Officio Members present were Nancy Nicholls, Kevin Howard, Anne-Marie Knighton, Willie Mack Carawan and Susanne Stallings

Chairman Nixon called the meeting to order.

**Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Nixon noted he would need to remove the agenda item for committee appointments noting the Board of Commissioners was still working on Board appointments and he would like to wait until the final appointment of TDA Board members.

Ms. Barnes moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Speller seconded the motion. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (8-0).

**Public Comment**

Chairman Nixon called for public comment, there was none.

**Consent Agenda**

Mr. Speller moved to approve the consent agenda that contained the minutes of the December 2, 2014 meeting. Ms. Barnes seconded the motion. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (8-0).

**Financial Report/Golden Leaf Report**

Finance Officer Willie Carawan provided the financial report. He provided information on the Golden Leaf funds that need to be expended prior to June 30, 2015. He noted that \$90,705.68 remains unspent. He stated that Golden Leaf will allow the TDA to have invoices of for expenses encumbered. Mr. Carawan stated he would review the monies and invoices that have not posted yet to that can be assigned to the Golden Leaf funds. He noted the final draw of \$30,000 will not be received until after June 30, 2015. He reviewed the TDA revenues to date and noted \$105,820.73 have been received.

**Audit Report**

Mr. Carawan reviewed the TDA audit. He noted the revenues were \$156,244 and expenses were \$154,824 for FY 2013-14. He noted revenues exceeded expenses by \$1,420.

Chairman Nixon asked how much of the fund balance Golden Leaf was funds.

Mr. Carawan noted most of the funds in the fund balance are unrestricted.

Mr. Carawan noted that the Golden Leaf Grant expires June 30, 2015. He stated that he would like to have all invoices by mid-May. He stated that Nancy and the Media Committee have identified some expenses that would qualify for Golden Leaf monies.

Chairman Nixon asked for clarification that approximately \$65,000 needs to be spent of Golden Leaf Monies.

Mr. Carawan stated yes.

### **2015 Meeting Schedule**

Ms. Nicholls stated the proposed meeting schedule for 2015 is to meet on the 4th Tuesday at 12 noon. She stated that she proposes to meet January, February then every other month.

Mr. Climer moved to adopt the proposed 2015 meeting schedule and allow flexibility to accommodate any holiday changes. Mr. Speller seconded the motion, Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (8-0).

#### 2015 Meeting Schedule

January 22, 2015

February 24, 2015

April 28, 2015

June 23, 2015

August 18, 2015

October 29, 2015

December 1, 2015 or December 8, 2015

### **Preserve Tax Credit Resolution**

Ms. Nicholls provided the Board with a resolution prepared by Mr. Climer in support of preservation of the NC Preservation Tax Credits.

Mr. Climer moved to approve the resolution.

Mr. Dowd seconded the motion.

Chairman Nixon recommended the language regarding encouraging residents to sign the petition to be removed.

Mr. Climer agreed to amend his motion to approve the resolution with revisions.

Mr. Dowd seconded the motion. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Chairman Nixon asked that Ms. Stallings forward the final copy of the resolution to the Board members for their review before the resolution is signed and mailed.

## **Resolution Supporting the Reinstatement of the NC Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program as The Governor's Historic Rehabilitation Investment Plan**

WHEREAS, The Chowan County Tourism Development Authority utilizes Edenton and Chowan County's historic buildings and areas as a catalyst for economic development; and

WHEREAS, the Chowan County Tourism Development Authority recognizes that a healthy, vibrant community makes other economic development initiatives in the community easier to achieve; and

WHEREAS, many private investors have made significant investments in the community by investing in older, often vacant, buildings; and

WHEREAS, the Chowan County Tourism Development Authority understands the importance and wealth of historic structures, public and private, that offer unique opportunities for differentiating Edenton from other communities; and

WHEREAS, Edenton's community has benefitted from large and small historic preservation tax-credit projects that have increased our tax base and the appearance of our communities; such as the Edenton Cotton Mill and Cotton Mill Village, the Edenton Peanut Mill and numerous residential and retail buildings; and

WHEREAS, Historic Preservation tax-credits have made otherwise unsuccessful projects an enormous success and benefit to our community by generating additional economic activity and reducing blight and environments that degrade our communities; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Chowan County Tourism Development Authority, that it does hereby support the Governor's effort to reinstate the North Carolina Historic Preservation Tax Credit program and the continued availability of the tax credits as a tool to spur economic development in Edenton and Chowan County, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Legislative Delegation and other partners related to historic preservation projects

Adopted this 22nd Day of January, 2015:

### **Survey Update**

Mr. Climer stated that the responses have slowed from the visitor's survey. He stated the resident survey is still open for comments and he hoped to have the survey completed and begin distribution in February.

### **Hospitality Report**

Ms. Barnes provided information regarding areas that are most represented at the Hampton Inn. She stated that Raleigh, Greensboro, Charlotte, Washington DC, Maryland, Virginia cities (Norfolk etc), New York, Richmond, Wilmington, Philadelphia and Atlanta are the most represented.

Ms. Pariseau stated that North Carolina and Virginia are most represented at Captain's Quarters.

### **Media Committee Report**

Mr. Climer reported that the Media Committee continues to meet to look at how to use Golden Leaf funds. He stated that the Committee agrees that events are most effective in bringing visitors. He stated the committee is looking into billboards and other locations. He stated that google analytics has been helpful in tracking media successes.

Mr. Dowd thanked the Board for the monies appropriated for the DC show.

Ms. Nichols noted she is working with Jessica to track inquiries. She stated most of the inquiries have been mobile. She noted that she continues to keep visitors and others engaged with the events page of the site.

Chairman Nixon stated he would like for the media committee to look into more TV advertisement.

Chairman Nixon noted that Pembroke Creek is nearing completion and stated he hoped to have an opening event at that location.

Mr. Howard noted Phase II of the project at Pembroke Creek is scheduled to begin in the Spring/Summer.

Mr. Climer stated he felt that TV advertisement should be tied to an event to be the most effective.

### **Historic Edenton State Historic Site**

Ms. Nicholls provided the Board with a report from Karen Ipock. She noted that Karen's last day with the Edenton site was that same day (January 22, 2015).

Chairman Nixon commented on the excellent work that Ms. Ipock has done since coming to work at the Edenton site. He stated that he felt the TDA should send a resolution to the State that requests that individual sites be allowed to select their working hours to fit their locations. He stated that he felt that Sunday and Monday off schedule was not compatible with the visitation in Edenton.

Ms. Knighton noted that the Roanoke River Lighthouse is the only visitor's site in the state that is open seven days a week.

Mr. Howard suggested that the TDA forward the resolution to other Authorities in the State.

Mr. Climer moved to authorize the Chairman to draft a resolution to encourage local visitor centers to be allowed to have the flexibility to set their operational hours and added that the resolution be forwarded to State, Legislative, Department of Cultural Resources, Governor's Office and other local representatives for support.

Ms. Barnes seconded the motion.

Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Staff will forward the resolution to the TDA Board as FYI.

### **NC East Alliance**

Mr. Dale stated that the former North Carolina Northeast Commission has merged. He stated that two local employees have remained employed by the new NC East Alliance. He stated that they have reached out to the Chambers, Economic Developers and Tourism Development Authorities to hold a meeting to discuss the importance of all three endeavors for commerce. Mr. Dale noted that as part of the merger, in four years, he expects the NC East Alliance to request local funding.

### **Director's Report**

Nancy provided the Board with a copy of the activities of the TDA Director. A copy of the report is in the meeting file labeled January 22, 2015.

### **Timely and Important Matters**

#### **Snooky Bond 2014 Tourism Award.**

Ms. Nicholls stated that in the past the TDA has provided an award to someone who has assisted in the promotion of Travel and Tourism in Edenton/Chowan County. She asked for nominations.

Mr. Climer nominated Karen Ipock.

Chairman Nixon noted that in the past the TDA has made a policy to not nominate persons who are paid to promote travel and tourism.

Mr. Climer nominated the Cupola House.

Ms. Pariseau nominated Glenn and Anita Andersen.

Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor of the Cupola House motion. The motion failed (4-4).

Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor of the nomination of Glenn and Anita Andersen. The motion passed (7-1).

### **Steamers Grant**

Chairman Nixon stated that the TDA should consider a grant or match to the Steamers to assist with advertising efforts.

The Board discussed that the Steamers would be required to provide proof of advertising and expenditures and request reimbursement.

Ms. Barnes moved to approve the grant for the Steamers up to \$5,000. Mr. Speller seconded the motion. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (8-0).

#### Occupancy Tax

Mr. Climer stated he would recommend inviting the accommodations to a meeting to discuss occupancy tax rates in the County. He stated he felt that Board should look into scheduling a special meeting. He stated he would like to make his suggestion a motion.

Mr. Speller seconded the motion.

Chairman Nixon asked for comment.

Ms. Knighton stated that the TDA is leaning on the support of Representative Steinburg for his support of the Tax Credits and she felt that the timing may not be good to ask for his support of an increase in the occupancy tax rate.

Mr. Climer stated his concern is over the decline in occupancy tax collections and that TDA will no longer have Golden Leaf funds next year.

Ms. Barnes stated she disagreed with the discussion regarding increasing the occupancy tax rate, and stated she felt this would create a loss in revenues for the accommodations in the Town.

Chairman Nixon stated he felt that since the Board of Commissioners is looking at a possible increase in the fire tax, he felt the Board would most likely not support an increase in the occupancy tax.

Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor of the motion, the motion failed (2-6 Dowd, Pariseau, Barnes, Jones, Ebersole and Nixon).

#### Highway 17 Interchanges

Chairman Nixon stated the Board of Commissioners is considering revamping the Highway 17 interchanges flower beds. He stated the County will look into signage and a landscape design for these beds. He stated DOT has indicated the brown signs may be able to be relocated.

#### Adjourn

Being no further business, Mr. Speller moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Barnes seconded the motion. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (8-0).