

Tourism Development Authority
Regular Meeting
Thursday, May 8, 2014
Chowan County Public Safety Center, 2nd Floor
305 West Freemason Street
Edenton, NC 27932

Present: Keith Nixon, Diane Pariseau (came in later). Katy Ebersole (came in later), Katrina Barnes (left early), Ben Speller, Giuliano Giannone and Jerry Climer.

Absent: John Dowd

Ex-Officio members present were Nancy Nicholls, Willie Carawan, Anne-Marie Knighton, Kevin Howard and TDA Clerk Susanne Stallings.

Karen Ipock with the State Historic Site was also present.

Chairman Nixon called the meeting to order.

Public Comment

Chairman Nixon opened the floor to public comment, there was none.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Nixon presented the consent agenda that included the minutes of February and the acceptance of the Wayfinding workession meetings. Mr. Speller moved to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Giannone seconded the motion. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Survey Update

Mr. Climer provided an update on the survey.

(Ms. Pariseau and Ms. Ebersole joined the meeting. Ms. Barnes requested to be excused)

Mr. Climer noted the additional survey for local residents will begin and there will be three drawings for that also. He stated that some of the questions on the survey would be cleaned up as well as some proposed clean up to the visitors' survey.

Financial Report

Mr. Carawan provided the financial report through April 30, 2014. He noted that revenues currently exceed expenditures. He provided the TDA with proposed TDA FY 2014-15 budget.

Ms. Nicholls stated that there is little change between the proposed budget and the current budget. She also provided the Board with a copy of the Budget Message from the TDA director. Noting the following highlights:

- An increase in revenue from Occupancy Tax of \$5,000
- Golden Leaf carryover from the first year of the grant along with \$75,000 2nd year funding
- A four page budget with a full analysis of 2012, 2013 and year to date 2014
- \$3,000 – 2nd half of Wayfinding Signage commitment
- Increase employee training \$1,000 due to loss of regional funding for such
- \$600 increase in digital advertising with Google Ad Words and partnering with Golden Leaf

A total budget of \$197,875.

Mr. Climer and Ms. Nicholls discussed the extension of the Golden Leaf grant.

Ms. Nicholls noted that this would require Golden Leaf board approval. She stated that she may be able to pre-pay vendors but she is uncertain if Golden Leaf would allow such. She noted that Golden Leaf holds the last \$20,000 of the grant.

Mr. Carawan stated he felt that the TDA should honor the original grant agreement as it may hinder future grant funding from Golden Leaf.

Mr. Climer noted that to date \$60,000 of the \$150,000 has been spent.

Mr. Carawan stated the additional \$90,000 would have to be spent by June 30, 2015.

Media Committee Update

Mr. Giannone provided the Board with ad examples from the Media Committee. He stated information on ads that are running in April. He noted that tracking from the advertising shows the Southern Living ad has been the most successful.

1886 Roanoke River Lighthouse

Ms. Ipock stated that the construction meeting was cancelled. She stated she hoped the project would be completed by the end of June however July may be more realistic.

The Board discussed celebrating the opening on July 4th but it was decided that invited dignitaries schedules for July 4th may make it difficult to have the opening celebration at that time.

Ms. Ipock and Mr. Climer discussed creating a committee to jointly plan and determine its individual responsibilities for the opening celebration of the lighthouse. Ms. Ipock noted the

State Historic Site is responsible for taking the lead on the celebration but would include other local groups in the planning.

The Board discussed implementation of interactive exhibits at the lighthouse.

Wayfinding Signs

Ms. Knighton stated the groups have met twice on the project. She stated that concerns were raised regarding the height, size and scale of the proposed signs. She stated some changes have been recommended and that she presented the plan to the Edenton Historical Commission. She stated that size, color and placement of the signs were the main concern of the Commission. She stated she has spoken with the designer of the plan and he stated these concerns are typical. She stated that she has requested the signs be made as small as possible to make the impact. She stated that she discussed how to tie the signs into the walking museum however the monies for the walking museum have not been incorporated into the plan.

Ms. Ipock discussed the freezing of State funds and other plans for On Cell tours. She stated that these projects are not currently funded in the State budget however she would follow up with a state representative who is in charge of researching On Cell tours.

Chairman Nixon recommended that the committee meet again and discuss the signage.

CRCP Update

Ms. Nicholls noted that the Town of Edenton has received the designation and they are working on putting together a portfolio and creating ads for retirees. She stated that plaques are being put together to put up in local establishments in Town noting that Edenton is now a Certified Retirement Community.

Ms. Ebersole suggested incorporating baseball into the advertisement.

Eastern Shore Field Trip

The Board members who attended the field trip discussed their trip to the Eastern Shore. Mr. Climer stated that the following items need the most focus

- What do we offer?
- Organization
- Promotion

He stated that the attendees of the trip have filled out a survey. He stated that the information obtained will be compiled and further information would be shared with the Board. He stated that one key factor noted is that the water assets are underutilized.

TDA Director's Report

Ms. Nicholls provided the Board with updates on her activities for the past month. She provided the Board with a handout highlighting upcoming activities. She shared information on the DC Media trip.

Timely and Important Matters

Occupancy Tax

Mr. Climer recommended the Board look into the Occupancy Tax Rate and determine if an increase in the tax is necessary.

Chairman Nixon stated this decision is political. He requested that staff research the occupancy tax legislation and report it back to the Board.

Pembroke Creek

Mr. Howard noted that the County is waiting on a permit from CAMA.

Occupancy Tax for Rentals

Chairman Nixon stated that the Board needs to continue to look at rental properties that should be collecting occupancy tax in the Town. He noted the County can also look at additional tax revenues on these properties.

Ms. Nicholls noted the law states that if a property is rented for more than 15 days in a year then it is required to collect occupancy tax.

Adjourn

Being no further business, Mr. Speller moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Climer seconded the motion. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).