

Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority

Minutes of 8/27/20 Virtual Board Meeting

Present: Aaron Baker, Layton Parker, Mac Morrow, Libby Freeman, Tracie Trusler, Mike Hawkins, Tad Fogel, Grant Bullard

Absent: Dee Dee Perkins

Staff Present: Clark Lovelace, Prentiss Brewer, Mary Jo Gordon, Karen Tessier, Nathan Jordan

Guests Present: None

Call to Order – Layton Parker

The meeting was called to order at 8:30AM by Layton Parker.

Presentation of Minutes – Layton Parker

The minutes of July 23, 2020 were presented for review by Layton Parker. Mike Hawkins made a motion to approve as presented. Aaron Baker seconded. Motion passed.

Office Report – Clark Lovelace

Financials – As indicated in the advance packet, June occupancy revenue returns were much higher than expected, coming in at 34% over prior year and 24% over budget. Short Term Rental returns were 2.5 to 3 times a normal month, accounting for much of the increase. Year-end will be much better than our projections, causing a less-than-anticipated impact on the fund balance. No need to approve financials at this time as there are still some i's to be dotted and t's to be crossed.

Office Report and Tourism Updates – Clark covered the following:

- MJ helped to organize a video shoot with Black Folks Camp, Too at Clay Sikes' farm. The video will be released in September and will give a positive diversity and inclusion message to visiting Transylvania County.
- The Leave It Better/ENO sweepstakes is under way.
- The Steep Canyon Rangers drive-in concert is tonight.
- Local Tourism News:
 - Clark and Sally went to the Toxaway Visitor Center this Thursday. We've supported this effort and hope it will entice visitors to spend time in Lake Toxaway and throughout TC.
 - A new chocolate shop, Kilwins, is opening on Main Street in downtown.

Chair Report – Layton Parker

- **2021 Board of Directors** – Layton asked the board to begin thinking about new board members for 2021. Tad and Layton's terms are expiring this year, and both are eligible for a second term. Tad has decided not to pursue a second term. There are some old applications on file at the county. If we are interested, we can reach out to determine if they are still interested. We should also consider if there is anyone else we want to consider. Clark mentioned considering an individual from an underrepresented group. Clark will reach out to them to see if they are still interested in serving. Aaron will be rolling off the chamber board so will no longer be serving on the TCT board on its behalf. Layton asked Aaron to consider who on the board might be a good fit for next year and connect with Clark. Both Aaron and Tad were asked to consider staying involved through one of our committees.

- **Occupancy Tax Rate Discussion** – Layton led a discussion on the possibility of increasing the occupancy tax rate. The finance committee met recently and decided it needed to be a full board decision. After discussion, a straw poll was taken, and the majority wanted to look further into raising the occupancy if it was tied to an initiative. The board decided to table the issue and bring it up again under old business in October.
- **Committee Updates** – Layton covered a recap and update of the committees assigned to provide updates at the first six meetings of FY21 as follows:
 - July – Destination Infrastructure / Transylvania Always
 - August – Market Connections / Marketing
 - September – Finance
 - October – Market Connections / Transylvania Always
 - November/December – Destination Infrastructure / Board
 - January – Market Connections / Marketing

Marketing Report – Nathan Jordan & Karen Tessier

Nathan & Karen shared key goals and strategies for moving forward.

Old Business

None

New Business

Prentiss informed the board of her bittersweet decision to leave her position and pursue a career in real estate.

Public Comment

None

Meeting Adjourn

Libby Freeman made a motion to adjourn. Grant Bullard seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 10:29 AM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Prentiss Brewer
