

# **Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority**

## **Minutes of 12/3/20 Virtual Board Meeting**

**Present:** Grant Bullard, Aaron Baker, Layton Parker, Mac Morrow, Libby Freeman, Tracie Trusler, Mike Hawkins, Dee Dee Perkins, Tad Fogel, Jonathan Griffin

**Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Clark Lovelace, MJ Gordon, Corey Gafnea

**Guests Present:** Earl Hunter

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### **Call to Order – Layton Parker**

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 AM by Layton Parker.

### **Presentation of Minutes – Layton Parker**

The minutes of October 22, 2020 were presented for review by Layton Parker. Dee Dee Perkins made a motion to approve as presented. Grant Bullard seconded. Motion passed.

### **Office Report – Clark Lovelace**

**Financials** – Financials were sent out in the advance packet. Clark noted it was another record-breaking month with occupancy revenue. Expenses are in line. Dee Dee made a motion to approve the financials as presented. Tad seconded. Motion passed.

**Office Report and Tourism Updates** – Clark covered the following:

- Transylvania Tomorrow relaunched. TCT donated \$10,000. Over \$50,000 for this winter iteration raised to date. Rolling monthly applications Dec 1, Jan 1, Feb 1.
- TCT Annual Report sent to county commissioners. Clark offered to present.
- Clark sent recommendations for open board seats.
- Chamber has appointed Jessica Whitmire to serve on the TCT board
- Clark has been in conversations with AirDNA, a third-party company that provides detailed data on short-term rentals in a community. He was able to get a quote lower than was previously reported, which was \$6K+. Following a conversation with Layton, we are entering into an annual contract for \$4,200 with funds from our strategic plan expense line. We will receive certain data on our destination going back five years and monthly information on our destination, plus a few “comps” for each month.
- Local Tourism News
  - Deerwoode Camp Property is in the process of being sold. It’s a really neat property with 15-20 units and lots of land with a conservation easement.
  - Under Canvas is considering Transylvania County as a WNC location for Yurt style rentals adjacent to our public lands.

### **Guest Speaker – Earl Hunter – Black Folks Camp, Too**

Earl spoke about the importance of diversity and inclusion in outdoor recreation, not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is the financially prudent thing to do. He shared his personal story in the outdoor recreation industry and his movement to his new business, BFCT. He is working on a number of deals that could be really cool and meaningful to have our support and get started locally. He does not have a specific ask at this time, but will be in touch.

## **Chair Report – Layton Parker**

### **Finance Committee Recommendations**

- **Updated Revenue/Expenses** – Layton directed everyone to the October financials Clark provided, which included a column with recommended changes. The committee recommends amending the FY21 budget ordinance for the Authority as follows:
  - Increasing the occupancy revenue to \$1,175,364 to more accurately reflect what we expect based on what we know now regarding the impact of the pandemic on occupancy revenues
  - An additional \$100,000 to Advertising/Marketing
  - An additional \$50,000 to Strategic Plan
  - An additional \$25,000 to Transylvania Always
  - An additional \$2,000 to Promotional Items
  - An additional \$8,000 to Partnership Funding
- **Other Possible Expenditures**
  - The Ecusta Trail was discussed at length, relating to the closing of the current agreement to purchase, required engineering reports, getting support by local leaders, and more. Ultimately, it was decided to set aside \$50,000 of the fund balance as funds specifically.
  - Mark Weinstein with the Brevard Music Center has approached Layton and Clark about TCT financial support of making their new Parker Concert Hall a fully equipped conference facility. Layton has slated Mark for a presentation at our January meeting. We should keep this project in mind when considering other possible destinations for our funds.

Layton made a motion to amend the FY21 budget ordinance for the Authority as covered in the committee motion with the addition of \$50,000 from the fund balance being set aside for the Ecusta Trail. Grant seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

### **TCT / Chamber Contract**

We signed a one-year agreement last year for various reasons, including COVID-19. We need to move on a new contract. Past structure has been for two individuals from each board to form a joint committee and meet together, along with Clark, to work out necessary details. Layton suggested that he get another board member to join him as a representative and proceed with a meeting. Consensus was for him to move forward accordingly.

### **Early 2021 Board Plans**

- **January Meeting** – We will be initiating new board members and assigning committees. Market Connections will attend and Mark Weinsin will present at our next meeting on Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>.
- **February Meeting** – Annual ½ day retreat. It will be a 3-hour extended meeting without a facilitator on Thursday, February 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Destination Infrastructure Committee** – Clark shared that at the most recent DIC meeting the committee approved a recommendation of TCT committing \$3,000 in funding support for the new dog park, with the funds to come from the strategic plan line item. Mike seconded the committee motion. Motion passed.

## **Old Business**

None

## **New Business**

None

## **Public Comment**

None

## **Meeting Adjourn**

Meeting was adjourned by Layton Parker at 10:31 AM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Corey Gafnea

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