



Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority Minutes of 1/28/21 Virtual Board Meeting

Present: Grant Bullard, Layton Parker, Mac Morrow, Libby Freeman, David Guice, Dee Dee Perkins, Jonathan Griffin, Ali Lien, Jessica Whitmire

Absent: Tracie Trusler

Staff Present: Clark Lovelace, MJ Gordon, Corey Gafnea

Guests Present: Mark Weinstein (BMC), Kat Warner (BMC), Keith Arbogast (BMC), Karen Tessier, Nathan Jordan

Call to Order – Layton Parker

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 AM by Layton Parker, followed by a brief round of introductions for the three new board members; David Guice, Ali Lien and Jessica Whitmire.

Presentation of Minutes – Layton Parker

The minutes of December 3, 2020 were presented for review by Layton Parker. Libby Freeman made a motion to approve as presented. Grant Bullard seconded. Motion passed.

Director's Report – Clark Lovelace

Financials – Financials were sent out in the advance packet. Clark noted occupancy revenue continues to exceed projections with short term rentals leading the way. A new line was added per the October meeting showing the Funds Committed to the Ecusta Trail. Dee Dee made a motion to approve the financials as presented. Layton seconded. Motion passed.

Budget Amendment: Motion to create a new expense line titled EDPNC CARES Expenditures. This is a formality that will allow this money to flow through this year's budget. Grant Bullard seconded. Motion passed. Budget will be updated.

HOB Grant Request – Clark indicated that a request for funds was made by the Heart of Brevard, similar to past years. This was shared with the finance committee who discussed it recently. He asked Layton if he would share the results of that conversation. Layton covered the details of the request, along with a recommendation from the finance committee to approve the full \$10,000 for 2021 marketing and programming, with caveats that this is a one-time increase from what was previously \$7,000 due to the pandemic and funds should be used on creative programming assuming no festivals. Dee Dee seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Office Report and Tourism Updates – Clark asked if there were any questions on his report with the advanced board packet. The downtown hotel development came up and he gave a brief update noting that there are no detailed plans at this time, but his limited interaction with the developer has been very positive. He has an impressive track record and his plans fit very well with our brand.

Board Emails: Clark shared that following our public information request for staff and board member emails regarding reopening to visitors, Jamie Laughter suggested setting up a separate dedicated

email address for each board member, similar to what's done for the commissioners. While it creates the extra step of having to check another email account, it provides protection in that only the emails in this account can ever be accessed by public records requests, so no personal information. Nathan presented the new email platform and how to access the Network Solutions log-in. Corey has created a user guide that will be sent to each board member. Just a reminder that we always want to comply with open meeting laws and that these email addresses are not to be used for general chatter among the full board. If there is a specific topic that needs to be addressed Clark will send out an email and ask that each board member respond directly to him and he will compile the answers. David Guice brought up the fact that texts can also be requested for public information. The only texts from TCT to board members will be a reminder to check their explorebrevard email account if something requires immediate attention.

Chair Report – Layton Parker

2021 Committees - Layton led a conversation on committee representation, noting that each board member needs to serve on one and some on two, resulting in the following:

- Finance Committee – Same as prior year, with Layton (chair), Grant, and Libby
- Transylvania Always Committee – Grant, Ali, Jessica, with Aaron Baker continuing to serve as chair, although now as a community member representative.
- Destination Infrastructure: Dee Dee (Chair), Mac, and David.
- Marketing Committee – Dee Dee (Chair), Layton, Tracie. There is an opening for a community member.

2021 Retreat Agenda - A reminder that our next meeting is our retreat and will be virtual from 8:30am-11:30am on Thursday February 25th. We will cover the following topics including fund balance, the Ecusta Trail, the Chamber/TCT Contract, BMC Grant and Parker Concert Hall. A reminder that each committee will need to present an update at the retreat. We will also look at Chris Cavanaugh's strategic action plan.

Guest Speaker – Mark Weinstein, Kat Warner & Keith Arbogast with the Brevard Music Center

The Parker Concert Hall was built specifically for the shoulder season and off-season events. It will have the ability to be used as a convention/conference venue as well as for local and destination weddings and other galas and private events. It cost a total of \$6.5M to build and over 80% of materials and labor were locally sourced. The modular retractable seating system came from Belgium. Kat Warner has been hired to handle all marketing along with Market Connections. BMC is the number one man made attraction in our County and it's a big reason why people move here. BMC anticipates 4,000 - 6,000 heads in beds from October to April. Concert Hall is ready to go but in order to use it as a rental space BMC needs to spend \$100,000 to purchase all items necessary for special events. If TCT gives a grant for \$50,000 BMC will match it for a total of \$100,000. Kat spent some time discussing her background as a professional event and wedding coordinator and marketing. She has over 30 events published nationally and internationally. She also discussed destination wedding spending. Target markets will be Central and Southern Virginia, Atlanta, Charlotte, Raleigh.

Following the presentation it was decided to make a decision about the request at next month's meeting. Please send any questions requiring follow up to Clark.

Marketing Update – Market Connections

- Nathan introduced Market Connections to the new board members and gave an overview of TCT marketing efforts from July of 2020 to January of 2021 and what is planned for the remainder of the fiscal year. The total marketing budget is \$553,336 with \$17,074 in contingency.

- The marketing committee chair, Dee Dee, plans on having the market analysis study occur in FY22 and make a decision in July based on the climate of the pandemic and other factors. Therefore the \$25,000 allocated for the market study in the strategic plan line item will not be spent this year.

Destination Infrastructure Committee Funding Request

Dee Dee shared two requests that had come to the committee since our last meeting. First is the **Jordan Street Crosswalk Mural**, which came from the Heart of Brevard. They are requesting \$5,000 from TCT toward a street mural painted by local artist Billy Smith. Total budget is \$11,000. Goal is for completion by spring of 2021. It will be a collaboration with Heart of Brevard, City of Brevard, and Blue Zones. Dee Dee made a motion to approve \$5,000 as requested with the funds coming from the strategic plan expense line.. David Guice seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Next is the **Downtown planters project**. This request is for \$14,500 from the City of Brevard for downtown new planters, upgrade existing planters, plants and ongoing maintenance. These planters will also help with a streetscape plan and the City of Brevard's application for a larger BUILD grant. Dee Dee made a motion to approve \$10,000 to fund the installation, but not the maintenance, with those funds coming from the strategic plan expense line. Grant seconded. Motion passed.

Note: Grant funding for the above grants will come from the strategic plan expense line.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Comment

None

Meeting Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned by Layton Parker at 10:24 AM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Corey Gafnea
