

# **Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority**

## **Minutes of 6/25/20 Virtual Board Meeting**

**Present:** Aaron Baker, Layton Parker, Mac Morrow, Libby Freeman, Tracie Trusler, Dee Dee Perkins, Tad Fogel, Grant Bullard (arrived at nine as notified)

**Absent:** Mike Hawkins

**Staff Present:** Clark Lovelace, Prentiss Brewer, Mary Jo Gordon (Karen Tessier & Nathan Jordan arrived at nine as requested)

**Guests Present:** None

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### **Call to Order – Layton Parker**

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

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

The minutes of June 25, 2020, were presented for review by Layton Parker. Dee Dee Perkins made a motion to approve as presented. Libby Freeman seconded. Motion passed.

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

**Financials** – Clark touched on key points on the financials, noting that detailed comments were sent in advance. May's returns were above the updated year-end projections, mainly due to remarkably high Airbnb returns. Based on this, we may end up ahead of the new year-end projections. No need to approve financials as they will not be final until next month.

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

- Local Tourism Economy
  - Clark presented to City Council at their last meeting regarding Transylvania Tomorrow. In his preparations for the meeting he interviewed business owners and felt it would be good to give a quick recap here. Retailers and outfitters are back at normal levels....there's actually a national shortage of bikes, hotels and restaurants are down 25-50%, everyone is experiencing staffing challenges, the public lands are getting hit as hard as ever. Mac noted that sales tax returns were only down by 11%. Dee Dee mentioned that it could be due to record sales at Lowe's and at grocery stores.
- Local Tourism News
  - Clark reminded the board of the upcoming Steep Canyon Rangers' concert in Brevard and reviewed how we will be promoting it.
  - Clark explained the shift from our "Heart of Adventure" campaign to an "Escape to the Heart of Adventure" campaign.
  - Brevard Diner and Love, Eat, Thai are now open.
  - Lake Toxaway will be opening its new Visitor Center soon. TCT has worked with them to help make this happen.
- Misc.
  - Clark thanked the board for their cooperation in collecting emails related to the public records request we received. Libby reminded Clark to check on the status of the board's separate TCT emails.

### **Chair Report – Layton Parker**



- **FY21 Committee Actions** – Layton reminded the board of the schedule for committee reports. Transylvania Always and Destination Infrastructure are scheduled for today. If there is time, we will discuss the few items that were assigned to the board from the strategic plan. Marketing committee and Market Connections are next month. A marketing Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday. MJ will be sending out a reminder. Aaron asked if the board could get an update on the Ecusta Trail at some point. Clark to look into getting Conserving Carolina to report at one of the next two meetings.
- **Occupancy Tax** – Layton led discussion on the possibility of increasing the occupancy tax rate. He explained where we are now (5%) and where we are allowed to go without additional state approval (6%). He also noted that this discussion had come out of the strategic plan and was initially about funding an unidentified special project. After discussion, it was decided that the Finance Committee should investigate further and report back to the full board. Prentiss & Clark to schedule Finance Committee meeting.

### **Transylvania Always Committee – Aaron Baker**

Aaron gave an overview of the Leave It Better campaign. Nathan Jordan presented details of the campaign, including the marketing plan, retailer partnerships and the social media sweepstakes with ENO. Nathan then showed the three videos and posters related to the campaign.

### **Destination Infrastructure – Clark Lovelace**

Clark gave an update on the Destination Infrastructure Committee on behalf of Mike Hawkins. He noted that this is a new committee, born out of the strategic plan, and that the first step was to form the committee. In addition, the three TCT board members, it includes representatives from HOB, TEA, COC and TCT. Learning more on key issues was a first step, so City and County Planning Departments attended a meeting. A follow up with the city showed that a new Downtown Master Plan is in the works, they have applied for and hope to receive a large BUILD grant, completing the depot and bike path is a priority, as is the roundabout at the entrance to Pisgah. Based on this info, the committee is currently finalizing plans for FY21.

### **Old Business**

Layton led discussion on the items from the strategic plan that the board was assigned. He asked for input on priorities. Consensus was to focus on getting local support for tourism.

### **New Business**

None

### **Public Comment**

None

### **Meeting Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 AM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Prentiss Brewer

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